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What can the Ministry Do to Vitalize Their Churches in Religious Work?

BY REV. Z. D. ROBY, D. D.

There are two assumptions in this interrogative proposition: 1. That our churches need vitalizing in religious work; and, 2. that the ministry can do something that will vitalize them.

We are not asked to prove the truth of these assumptions, but we are asked to perform a much more difficult task; that is, to show what the something is, and then tell how that something is to be done by the ministry, so that their churches will be active and earnest in religious work.

1. Here is a pond of water and here is a boy. You know he can swim and he knows that he can not swim. You are both right; and yet, the boy knows you are wrong and you know he is wrong. What is to be done? It would be unfair to ask the boy to prove that he can not swim, for this would be requiring him to prove a negative, and to do so in this case would be to drown himself. You then must prove to him that he can swim; but how are you to do this?

2. You might plunge in and swim a few rounds yourself, just to show him how easy it is to swim; but when you had done your performance the boy would say, "Why, yes, I knew you could swim; I haven't disputed that." Then you might reason with him, by telling him that his hands and feet and lungs are all fashioned just as yours are; and that his body is made of the same material that yours is; and that he can use his limbs as well as you can yours; and hence he can swim, for you can swim. In reply to this logical argument, the boy would simply say, "Yes, but I know I can not swim." You might then try persuasion: tell him that swimming is pleasant exercise and fine sport; that you are anxious for him to swim just because he will enjoy it so much. Tell him that you will go with him into the pond; that you will not let him get over his depth; that you will guard him from all danger; and if he will go, he will enjoy it splendidly. This will call up what manhood there is in the boy, and he will say to you, "Sir, I don't want to swim." He has now told the truth, and while this is true, so long as the boy does not want to swim, he will not try; and so long as he does not try, he can not swim. So it turns out that you did not know what you did know, for in attempting to prove that this boy could swim, you have proved just the reverse, that is, that he would not try, and you admit that he could not swim, without trying.

3. Evidently the thing to do in order to get this boy to swim, is to create for him and in him the desire to swim. This done, he will at once try, and when he tries then he can swim. This is the development of what has hitherto been latent swimming powers; this is vitalizing a swimmer.

Here are your church members and here is the work you want them to do. You say they can and they say they can not. You are both wrong and you are both right. If they really desired to do the work, they would not say, "We can not," and by so saying they prove that they will not, and so long as they will not, their powers for doing will continue latent—they will remain unutilized.

The something to be done to vitalize our churches in religious work is to control the wills of our individual members that they will desire to work for Jesus.

This, I think, answers the question as to what must be done? But this answer brings up another and a still more perplexing question: How are the wills of our church members to be so controlled that they will desire to work for Jesus?

1. This thing of creating desire, producing disposition, manufacturing will for others, or for ourselves, is a department in the furnishing business with which some of us are but little familiar and for which we have supposed ourselves possessed of but meager facilities. In fact, as Baptists, we have depended on other sources for supplies in this department of the work. Whether we have been too much or too little dependent; or, whether we have sought at the right source; or, whether from the right source we have sought properly, are questions which, in this discussion, can not be considered. But to our way of thinking, the supply of the disposition to work for Jesus is far below the demand.

2. Baptist churches receive into their membership only those who profess to be already possessed of the disposition to serve the Lord. The possession of such disposition, is the condition upon which members are received. This disposition, we are told, is wrought and supplied in the hearts of these persons by the Holy Spirit through their faith in Jesus Christ, their Savior. This gets us over one difficulty, for God alone, we are told, can give to sinners a disposition for Christian work; and only Christian work, we think, can evince Christian vitality.

3. Well, this is all nice and very comfortable, but why don't they work? If they desire to work, why do they not get about it and thus show their vitality? Are we to suppose that God has taken away the disposition he once gave? Has he withdrawn his Spirit from them? Has he ceased without accomplishing the work he began? Have these persons fallen from grace? The Scriptures do not so teach, nor do we believe. These persons still say they love Jesus as

their Savior and trust in him as such, they still desire to serve him. These professions are honestly made by honest people; they do really desire to do something for Jesus.

The question, then, is reduced to this: How are church members to find and how are they to perform that work which will most and best discover their vitality and develop and increase their powers for usefulness? This, to my mind, is the question. This is the problem with which pastors are ever wrestling. Though unable to solve the problem satisfactorily, yet I suggest—

1. That, as these church members are the servants of Christ, they should be instructed and urged to go individually, personally and humbly to him and there earnestly inquire, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" They should be encouraged to expect an answer from him, and to look out for that answer to be suggested to them by some providence, person or impression. They should be reminded, in this connection, of the absurdity of any one calling himself a servant who renders no service.

2. Church members should have the great necessity for Christian work, in all its vast variety, kept plainly and constantly before them; and with this necessity pressing upon them, their minds should be impressed with the solemnity and imperiousness of their individual obligations to do each his or her share of this work.

3. This necessity and these obligations should be pressed upon churches by their pastors in view of the grand aim of Christianity. Somehow or other, the idea has gone abroad (whoever may be responsible I do not know, but I fear preachers are, to a great extent) that Christianity only aims to keep the souls of men out of endless perdition; hence, you find religion and religious work so closely and constantly associated in the minds of the people with dying. "It is a good thing to be a Christian when one comes to die, but for living purposes we prefer to be without it, or to have just as little of it as possible." Church members, in many instances, need to be re-educated on this subject. The aim of Christianity is to make men Christ-like and to make them so now and here in this world. God's plan for saving the world is to have every man help every other man as far as he can. This plan, this Christ-likeness, gives men something to do; and if the employments thus discovered and presented to Christians bring them no peace and happiness in this world, why should they suppose that there is or that there can be a heaven for them anywhere? "God himself can not make any one happy without first making him holy." If, therefore, holiness is rejected, happiness is necessarily forfeited.

In short, I suggest that the gospel must be preached, that the whole counsel of God must be declared to our churches. As to how the gospel must be preached—the whole counsel of God declared, so as to vitalize our churches—I suggest—

1. That the preachers must themselves have clear, profound, positive convictions of the truths, and the importance of the truths, which they are commissioned by Christ to preach to his churches and to the world.

2. That preachers must have that deep, serious earnestness which springs naturally and spontaneously from such convictions as I have described, and which can come from no other source. No man, in any vocation, can attain maximum success unless his earnestness closely approximates enthusiasm. Surely, then, preachers should be intensely earnest in all gospel ministrations.

3. That preachers must be bold men and preach boldly. With real faith in the Divine presence and power and promises, they should teach as those "having authority," for theirs is the highest of all authority. I can think of nothing more pitiable, nor say contemptible, than a man calling himself a minister of the Lord Jesus, standing before the people whining out his message, as if he was ashamed of his mission and afraid of his hearers.

4. That where the gospel is boldly, earnestly, faithfully, plainly preached, the preacher may confidently expect that the minds and the affections of his hearers will be so influenced, their wills so controlled, that they will earnestly desire to work for Jesus; and, desiring, they will try; and, in trying, they will be vitalized.

Now, brethren, pardon me for saying a few words on another branch of this subject.

When the Apostle says to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 14:26), "Let all your things be done unto edifying," the exhortation is certainly broad enough to demand our careful study. Reading, singing, praying, teaching—all sorts of discipline are included. That the planning and conduct of the various meetings of a church have much to do with the vitality of its members, is certainly and obviously true.

5. Your members will not be overly anxious to attend the conference meetings of your church if such meetings are held once every month, whether there is any need for them or not; and your members will not be eager to work in these meetings, for the simple reason that the meeting discovers nothing to do.

6. Your members will not be greatly interested in the prayer meetings of your church if the prayers and the talks are made up of worn-out phrases, which mean in the aggregate that the speakers do not mean what they say.

7. Your members will not be strongly inclined to participate in a sickly, sullen Sunday-school, where nothing, save the need of patience, is taught,

and where they are frequently reminded that even patience sometimes ceases to be a virtue.

8. Your members will not manifest any extravagant fondness for singing in church where this part of God's worship is conducted so as to exclude from "the Spirit and the understanding" also.

"Let all your things be done unto edifying."

From Tallahassee.

Bro. Editors: I promised some time ago to say something about Tallahassee, but other pressing engagements have prevented my doing so.

This little town of 1500 or 2000 inhabitants is situated on the east side of the Tallapoosa River, opposite the falls from whence it takes its name. Here the thundering voice of the waters is always heard, as they fall over a rugged cliff of rocks. This doubtless is the best water power in the South, and, I am sure, can not be surpassed in the United States. The great wonder to me is that all this power is not utilized, for its capacity is sufficient to turn twice or three times the amount of machinery that it does at present.

About one hundred yards below these falls are the huge stone buildings which contain the celebrated Tallahassee Cotton Mills. These mills furnish employment to 450 or 500 persons and consume from 20 to 25 bales of cotton per day. Col. Millstead is the superintendent of these mills. I congratulate the company in being so fortunate in securing such an efficient gentleman at the head of their manufacturing interest. During his administration the buildings have been enlarged, the capacity of the mills increased, and many valuable improvements made. New machinery is now being received and put in place for successful operation. I think this is only a prelude to what will be done. In this connection I must not forget to mention the very efficient manager of the Company's store, Mr. A. J. Noble, through whose influence I have been furnished with a good house, free of rent.

I feel proud to say that the Baptist cause is growing here and seems to be putting on new life. I have been well cared for since I have been in the midst of this people. My church is poor—all of the members, male and female, have to work for their daily bread, but I am not ashamed of them. They love the cause of Christ and are very much devoted to their pastor. I know this, for I have had a manifestation of it, not in words only, but in real deeds of kindness. As I have not done so, this will be a good place to tell you what happened to my wife and myself on the first day of April. Early in the morning I called at the postoffice and, to my utter astonishment, found two April fools. Of course I hurried home to see what it meant, fearing I was "sold out," but when we unfolded the April fools and spread them on the bed, they fit exactly. I have never been "pounded" and consequently do not know how such treatment makes one feel; but to be "quilted," even in spring or summer, produces a very pleasant sensation. Many thanks to the sisters and ladies of my congregation for two nice quilts.

The Sunday-school is in a flourishing condition, numbering last Sunday one hundred and twenty-six pupils. I am satisfied this number will be largely increased, for all have gone to work in good earnest. I have offered a nice Bible to the one bringing in the greatest number of pupils by the first Sunday in September. Many of the old brethren are pupils in the Sunday-school.

We have in the church a young men's prayer-meeting, which meets every Wednesday night. It did not die during the winter. I feel that great good has resulted from it. (This is the kind of Y. M. C. A. that I like, and not a heterogeneous mass of unconverted and converted men.)

Last Sunday night we closed a most precious meeting which had been in progress for three weeks. We can truly say, "The Lord hath done great things for us whomever we are glad." The church is greatly revived, backsliders have been reclaimed, sinners have been converted and added to the church, and those who were holding old letters were induced to search their trunks and bring their letters to the church. Forty-four persons were added to our number. There was no excitement during the meeting. Everything was quiet and attentive. The closing service was one of the most precious seasons I ever enjoyed. Since the first of last September about one hundred and twenty members have been received into this church. To God be all the glory for the great victory he hath achieved in our midst.

At present we are heavily taxed with very expensive repairs on our house of worship; but as soon as we get this off our hands (which will take several months yet) we expect to do something for missions. I hope the Lord will put it into the heart of Dr. Bailey to pay us a visit soon. We feel that the Baptist cause at Tallahassee has been greatly neglected, but that a brighter day is dawning. God grant that it may be so.

J. L. THOMPSON.

Tallahassee, June 26th.

P. S. I had no ministerial aid during my meeting.

Man should trust in God as if God did all, and labor himself as if man did all.—[Chalmers.]

Good has but one enemy—the evil; but the evil has two enemies—the good and itself.—[Julius Muller.]

His Last Hymn.

From the Herald and Presbyterian.

The Sabbath day was ending
In a village by the sea;
The uttered benediction
Touched the people tenderly,
And they rose to face the sun.

In the glowing lighted West,
And then hastened to their dwellings
For God's blessed boon of rest.

But they looked across the waters,
And a storm was raging there;
A fierce spirit moved above them
The wild spirit of the air,
And they looked and shook and toze them.

Till they thundered, groaned and boomed,
And alas! for every vessel
In this yawning gulf entombed.

Very anxious were the people
On that rocky coast of Wales,
The dawn of coming morn
Should be telling awful tales,
When the sea had spent its passion,
And should cast upon its shore
Bits of wreck and swollen victims,
As it had done heretofore.

With the rough wind blowing round her,
A brave woman strained her eyes,
And she saw along the billows
Should be telling awful tales,
When the sea had spent its passion,
And should cast upon its shore
Bits of wreck and swollen victims,
As it had done heretofore.

Then they pining hearts hurried
From their homes, and thronged the beach,
Oh, far power to cross the water,
And the perishing to reach!
Helpless hands were wrung in sorrow,
Tender hands grew cold with dread,
And the ship, urged by the tempest,
To the fatal rock shore sped.

She has parted in the middle!
Oh! the half of her gone down!
God have mercy! Oh! to Heaven
Far seek the souls who drown!
Lo! when next the white-shoeked faces
Looked with terror on the sea,
Only one fast-clinging figure
On a spar was seen to be.

And near the trembling watchers
Came the wreck, tossed by the wave,
And the man still clung and floated,
Though no power on earth could save.
Could we send him a short message?
Here's a trumpet; shout away!
'Twas the preacher's hand that took it,
And he wondered what to say.

Any memory of his sermon—
Firstly, Secondly? Ah, no!
There was but one thing to utter
In this awful hour of woe.
So he shouted through the trumpet,
'Look to Jesus! Can you hear?'
And, "Ay, ay, sir," rang the answer
"Or the waters, loud and clear."

Then they listened. He is singing.
'Jesus lover of my soul!'
And the music brought back the echo,
'While the nearer waters roll,'
Strange, indeed, it was to hear him—
'Till the storm of life is past!'
Singing bravely from the waters,
'O receive my soul at last!'

He could have no other refuge—
'Hangs my helpless soul on thee!'
'Leave, ah, leave me not!—the singer
Dropped at last into the sea!
And the watchers looking homeward
Through their eyes with tears made dim,
Said, 'He passed to be with Jesus,'
In the arms of His Father!

For the Alabama Baptist.

Reunion of Howard Students.

During the session of the Baptist State Convention in Marion, a meeting of all former students of Howard College was called in the Philomathean Society Hall. Col. J. B. Shivers, President of the Alumni, was called to the chair. The following resolution was offered by J. S. Dill:

Remembering with becoming gratitude the pre-eminent advantages bestowed upon us by the nourishing care of our loved Alma Mater in years past, when within these walls we prosecuted our studies and prepared to meet the battle of life; appreciating, too, the fact that no institution of learning in our State is better prepared to give to young men a proper mental and moral equipment, and that to the greatest degree its continued success depends upon the influence of its friends to secure a liberal patronage, therefore be it resolved:

1. That we, a band of its former students here assembled, unite in a pledge to render to our noble Alma Mater more faithful services.

2. That we especially pledge ourselves to influence the attendance of young men upon Howard College, and aid to the extent of our ability the collection of the proposed fund for the support of the ministerial students.

3. That we do hereby call for a reunion of Howard College students to be held in connection with the next Commencement exercises of the College, June, 1884.

The above resolutions, after discussion in a number of short, animated speeches, were passed with hearty unanimity. One motion, the Chairman was instructed to appoint a committee of five to take in charge the proposed reunion. On motion, also, the Secretary was required to furnish a copy of the proceedings of this meeting to the ALABAMA BAPTIST for publication. J. B. SHIVERS, Pres.

J. S. DILL, Sec.

Madison Church Fund.

Dear Brethren: I wish to say to the brethren contributing to the Madison Church Fund, that I raised at the Convention at Marion \$38.00, for which I feel profoundly grateful. I raised at Town Creek Church in May, \$20.00; also at Tusculum in June, \$10.00; making in all up to the present, \$68.00. We must have \$132.00 more by the last of October, with what the church at Madison can do, to secure the house.

Madison church is a child of the Convention, organized by Dr. F. C. David, a State missionary. May God bless that man of God and the Board who sent him to North Alabama.

J. I. STOCKTON.

Trinity, Ala., July 16th.

Sun days mark only the bright hours. Would it not be well if most people could imitate them?

Social Dancing.

An Essay by Mat. Lyon on Fashionable Amusement, read at the District Meeting of the Mobile Shoals Missionary Baptist Association, convened with Liberty Church, April 27th, 1883, and voted by said body for publication in the ALABAMA BAPTIST.

QUESTION: "The fashionable and worldly amusements of the day: how shall our churches treat those of our members who engage in them?"

I will not discuss individual, solitary dancing, though some claim that its moral influence is the same with the social habit. Solitary dancing may be an innocent exercise for aught I know, but it is not fashionable, and I presume it is very rarely practiced.

RELIGIOUS DANCING.

Let us who dispose of a pretence on the part of dancers, that it is right to dance because God approved of dancing among the Israelites in worship. The companions of Miriam danced before the Lord on the deliverance of his people from the Egyptian host (Ex. 15); and David danced with all his might before the ark of the Lord (2 Sam. 6). Every acceptable ceremony in religion God prescribed; and as there is no hint of his disapproval of these exercises in religious worship, we presume God approved of them. We know that dancing in religious worship was not only accepted, but prescribed in Psalms 149:3 and 150:4. Occasional dancing in worship by the Jews was right, simply because it was commanded, for what is not prescribed in worship is a sin. Religious dancing is not commanded in the Christian dispensation, and therefore it would be sinful. But it may be replied, that it would still be dancing, and the nature of the exercise is not changed. Certainly; and the killing of a beef, a sheep, a goat, or a bird, was a religious service commanded under the Jewish dispensation; but it is not commanded now, and it would therefore be a sin for us to offer them in sacrifice; yet the nature of the action is not changed. Instrumental music was commanded as a religious service in the Mosaic ritual, and we therefore know that it was right; it is not commanded in the New Testament, and we therefore do not know that it is right; and many Christians with good reason think it injurious in our worship and sinful because not commanded; yet the nature of instrumental music is not changed.

The dancing of the Jews in worship was sometimes by one person only, and the instance at the Red Sea was expressly restricted to women; so that even in religious dances there was no mingling of men and women together. And if people would not so desecrate sacred things as to make the religious dancing of the Jews an excuse for their worldly social dancing, they are condemned by the fact that this occasional Jewish exercise was confined to one sex, while the social dancing of our day, and of every age in all heathendom, is with a mingling of both sexes. If this feature of social dancing were abolished and there were no women where men danced, I presume there would very soon be no dancing by either.

WORLDELY DANCING.

Our opposition, therefore, is not to such supposed dancing, which is perhaps never practiced, but to the indulgence in social dancing by men and women together. This mingling of the sexes in the dance is manifestly a worldly amusement, for we see that it did not originate with the people of God. It is none the less a worldly dance, whether men hug and whirl one another around, or merely take hold of each other's hands, or whether they come into contact at all. One of these ways of dancing may be more worldly and sinful than another, just as there are degrees of wickedness in other bad practices. If men and women are thus mingling together in the dance, the natural tendency is to bring about a worldly and sinful social excitement, and personal contact in many if not in most cases generally follows, and sometimes unbecoming, not to say immodest, movements result. I presume this is the reason why "round" dances were not long ago forbidden by a Roman Catholic bishop to the people of his charge. It makes no difference that some persons, male as well as female, feel sure of perfect innocence and purity in these exercises; this does not affect the general character of the amusement or the general result of habitual indulgence in it, which is worldly, wicked, mischievous and sometimes morally disastrous.

I need not say much of the waste of time and money essential to this indulgence, nor of the fostering of vanity and pride, of envy and malice, which are so often and painfully exhibited on ball-room occasions. The whole spirit and practice of fashionable dancing, and all its vicious concomitants of indulgences of other descriptions are totally opposed to the spirit of the Christian profession, and tend to give the professor of religion a distaste to the Word of God and to spirituality of life. We need not wonder, then, that non-professors consider Christians out of place at a dancing party.

I wish now to call attention to one of the most deceptive and harmful phases of this peculiar kind of convivial indulgence. Not a few members of many of our churches—or, I think, at least of many of them—attend dancing parties, while yet they are either conscientiously opposed to dancing, or are not willing to violate what they understand to be the rules of the church (whatever that expression means), and do not actually join in the dance, and to some of them the self-imposed restraint brings suffering

rather than enjoyment. They thus subject themselves to the taunts of those who do dance: "You may as well dance as to wish you might," and, "If I thought it was wrong for a church member to dance, I would not go to see other people dance," and, "If it is wrong for you to dance, it is wrong for anybody to dance; for sin is sin, no matter who commits it." This is not the devil rebuking sin, but it is the sinner rebuking the inconsistent Christian. Ann Hasseltine, in her young worldly days, was at her glass one evening preparing for a ball. She had been religiously brought up; her Bible lay open before her, and she glanced at these words: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."—1 Tim. 5:6. She did not go to that ball; and if she had not happened at that time to read those words, perhaps the whole world would never have been blessed with the example of the faithful laborer and the patient, heroic, self-sacrificing sufferings of that consecrated Burman missionary, Mrs. Ann Hasseltine Judson. Party-going Christians ought to study the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man [or woman] who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly [goes not to the dancing room], nor standeth in the way of sinners [looking on longingly while others are engaged in the dance], nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful [spending the evenings (which sometimes extend into the morning) in indirectly endorsing the sin of the ball-room, encouraging sinners to keep on in their worldliness, and enticing other younger and weaker Christians to follow their own misleading example]." When these party-going, non-dancing Christians go to prayer after their return from the dance, they ought to remember this text: "If I regard iniquity in my heart [though I do not act it out fully by actually dancing], the Lord will not hear me."—Ps. 66:18.

IN REGARD TO THE QUESTION PROPOSED TO ME, "How shall our churches treat those of their members who engage in this fashionable amusement?"

I think that church members who indulge in social dancing, or in attending dancing parties, whether they dance or not, ought to be carefully and kindly instructed in regard to the evils of the practice and its interference with the conscientious convictions of the brethren as to church fellowship; that such instructions ought to be given both from the pulpit and in social or private conversation; that they ought to be earnestly prayed for by all the church; and that such delinquents ought to be borne with in love and tenderness as long as reason may demand, and exhortation may avail.

Forever this worldly and sinful practice. But if they seem to be incorrigible, and if longer forbearance would itself become sinful in the church, such persons ought to be sorrowfully excluded from church fellowship; yet they should be treated as erring Christians and followed with the prayers, good advice and reclaiming efforts of the pastor and other members of the church.

An Appeal for Prohibition.

BY JOHN E. GOUGH.

I heard a young man in a railway carriage tell his own story, while conversing on the Maine law. He said: "My father was a drunkard for years; my mother was a strong minded, energetic woman, and with the help of the boys managed to keep the farm free from debt. When my father signed the pledge that which pleased her most, next to his having signed it, was that she could tell him there was not a debt nor a mortgage on the farm. My father used to drive into the city, about eight miles distant, twice a week, and I recollect my mother saying to me: I wish you would try and persuade your father not to go any more. We don't need that which he earns; and, George, I am afraid of old temptations and old associates." "O," said I, "don't think of it; father's all right." One evening we had a heavy load, and were going home, when my father stopped at one of his old places of resort, and gave me the whip and the reins. I hitched the horse, tied up the reins, and went in afterwards. The landlord said: "I am glad to see you; how do you do?" You are quite a stranger. How long is it since the temperance god hold of you?" "O, about two years," said my father. "Well," said the landlord, "you see we are getting on pretty well, and they chatted together for some time. By and by he asked my father to have something to drink. 'Oh, but I have got a little temperance bitters here,' said the landlord, 'that temperance men use, and they acknowledge that it purifies the blood, especially in warm weather. Just try a little.' And he poured out a glass and offered it. I stepped up and said: 'Don't give my father that.' To which he replied: 'Well, boys aren't boys hardly now-a-days; they are got to be men amazingly early. If I had a boy like you, I should bring him down a little. What do you think Mr. Myers? Do you bring that boy to take care of you.' That stirred the old man's pride, and he told me to go and look after the horses. He sat and drank till 10 o'clock; and every time the landlord gave him a drink, I said, 'Don't give him that.' At last my father arose up and said: 'I was drunk. When he got up to the wagon, I drove. My heart was very heavy, and I thought of my mother. Oh, how she will feel of me. When we got about two miles from home, my father said, 'I will drive.' 'No,' said I 'let me drive.'

The Main Point of Attack.

From the Journal and Messenger.

1. The controversy that scientific philosophy has stirred up between itself and the common interpretation of Scripture, there is one main point of attack that must be guarded with jealous care. In an article published some weeks ago, the writer called attention to the clear and comprehensive account of this conflict, given by Rudolph Schmid, in his "The Theories of Darwin," and would again refer to the same volume, as showing exactly the point which has been and must be most hotly contested. The main stress of the scientific argument is against a single truth, and if that point be carried, the enemy have a clear and sweeping victory over Christian faith. That central and strategic point is Design in Creation. Give the enemy that and we give him all. It is hardly worth trying to defend the rest if that be yielded.

Design in nature, or that doctrine of nature that is called teleology, is the idea that God has created this universe for a purpose; and that purpose goes on unfolding with advancing time; and that for that unfolding and the right consummation of this purpose, the presence of Deity in his universe is essential. In a word, the doctrine of design demands theism for its resting-place; and theism means not only a God who is Creator, but also a God who is Providence.

But the purpose of evolution, as developed again and again, is to separate God from his creation. The first step back of theism is deism, which permits God to be, but allows him no present interest in that which he has created. The next step back of that is agnosticism, which will not even know whether there be a God or not, and which will not by any means admit that a God exists. Evolution plainly advertises its purpose to lead man back from theism, through deism, to agnosticism; and yet it recognizes the difficulty of getting man to break with a belief which he has held so long, and which he has built up out of his convictions; and so it tries to carry man back to this denial of God by degrees. Right here is the point of present danger. Any one who has read in this line, knows that the constant endeavor of the Evolutionists has been to get the Christian world to say that God was not in such intimate connection with the world as it had believed. And the Christian world, at least the philosophical part of it, has been all too ready to fall in with the view advanced. And it has come to be not an uncommon thing to hear a Christian speaker express himself as so far accepting the conclusions of the Evolutionists, as to believe that God may have created this world in the beginning, endowing it then with all the powers and capacities it needed for its career; but that since that act of creation he has not in the least modified nor assumed to control the forces then set in motion. "It is true," say these Christian philosophers, "that it removes God a little farther away from us than the old time theory, but it still leaves him the glory and dignity of being the author of all things, and that is sufficient." It is true, and dangerously true, that the doctrine removes God a little farther away from his creation. That is the point to be resisted; for it is just this very movement that proposes to slay our Deity and leave as nothing but a name. It purposes to get increased momentum by these small concessions, until it shall have acquired power enough to sweep the whole thinking, believing world back from faith in a present God, a God of providence, to a belief in no God. It is the entering point of the wedge that shall rive the world from its God, and leave the creation a lost thing in the wastes of space. Not that it is necessary in holding to God as a present worker in his universe, to believe in the old theory of special creations. We must revise our belief as to the manner in which God stands related to nature. But we must be sharp enough to discriminate between that necessity and the movement that would deprive us of God altogether; and that seeks to do it by striking at the idea of design, first removing God only a little way back, that when the Christian world has become somewhat accustomed to that, a still farther removal may be accomplished. In other words, to remove God from the present world to its utmost limit, as having no relation to it but that of Creator, is but the first step toward removing him altogether from the world, as a thing in which he has no present interest; the whole dispensation of grace is cancelled, and prayer and faith are mere, barren idealities with which the world has deceived and mocked itself since the world began.

Whoever finds anything attractive in a world without God may lend himself to that movement, but it is the part of all who love to think of God as necessary to his creation, and of the Father of the children of the kingdom, as the hearer and answerer of prayer, to stand staunchly to the last against that insidious effort to undermine the doctrine of Design. God has not turned this world out to take care of itself; we are not orphaned children in the great universe of life. God is our Father; God is our Providence; and the traces of his presence in this world of ours are plain enough to all eyes but those that will not see. Design means theism; and theism is the only thing that appeals to our hearts as true. It is the central point of the present struggle and must be held against all foes.

Two Great Words.

Partial teaching of God's word works mischief in the hearts of men. To give undue prominence to one truth and to ignore another is to issue false coin for circulation in the King's country. Much of the preaching and teaching at "revival meetings" and "special services" has been of this incomplete and distorted kind. Take, for example, the word "whoever." It is a blessed word. We find it in this passage, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is found also in John iii. 15, Rom. x. 11, and Rev. xii. 17. Great stress is often laid upon this word "whoever." It is shouted in every accent, illustrated by vast similes, and reiterated a score of times in a short address. And then, probably, is sung the words—

"The fountain of life is flowing, flowing, freely flowing,
For you and for me."

Now, no one believes joyfully in a free and universal salvation more than I do. Whosoever believeth in Christ, shall be saved—is a glorious and a true gospel. But, there is another word which Christ has linked with it, and that is too often a hidden word so far as "revival preachers" are concerned. I refer to the word "whatsoever." Consider, my friend, who readeth this little paper of mine, the following narrative:—

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them in heaven and in earth."

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and

Alabama Baptist.

SELMA, ALA., AUG. 2, 1883.

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The Board of Ministerial Education

OF THE ALA. BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION.

E. B. TRAUER, Pres.; E. J. FORRESTER, Sec.; W. E. WALTON, Treas.

E. T. WICKLER, JNO. L. WEST.

Brother desiring aid from this Board will address Rev. E. J. Forrester, Secretary of the Board, at Selma.

All applicants must appear before the Board for examination.

The Board will be in session in Selma, Sept. 24th, 25th and 27th, to examine applicants.

LAST YEAR we were invited to take part in the organization of the Montgomery Association at Wetumpka.

On the 24th of July we were glad to be with the brethren in their second meeting at Pine Level.

Bro. H. C. Taul presided with dignity and appeared quiet at home in the moderator's chair.

Bro. J. I. Lamar was the efficient clerk, and Bro. Jesse H. Dickson, treasurer.

The Association held a profitable, interesting meeting and promises to become one of the most active bodies in the State.

We were glad to notice a number of the younger brethren coming to the front and making for themselves places among the efficient workers in the cause of the Master.

All the various interests fostered by the Convention received the serious attention due them.

There was not the slightest hesitation in adopting the apportionment suggested.

The subject of ministerial education touched the hearts of the brethren, and we feel confident they will do their part in this direction.

Bro. Woodfin spoke earnestly and well in the interest of the Judson.

Bro. Yancey was present and represented the Central.

Col. Murfee represented the Howard, and Bro. Bailey pressed all the various interests under consideration.

We were glad to meet the venerable Dr. Chambliss, and listened with great pleasure to his sermon and addresses.

He gave us an admirable address on ministerial support.

We were delighted to meet Bro. Yarborough and to find him well enough to be with us.

Bro. Wright made several earnest, pointed, practical speeches.

Brother Orme and Jackson are among the strongest brethren in the ministry.

The church at Pine Level entertained the Association most hospitably and made us all feel at home.

The Committee on Hospitality was careful and attentive.

The Association will meet with Bethesda church next year on Tuesday before the first Sunday in September.

Lack of space forbids a more extended notice of this interesting occasion.

LAST Saturday, July 28th, eleven churches sent representatives to a meeting held with the church at Shiloh, in Dallas county, to consider the propriety of organizing a new association.

Bro. Bozeman, of Meridian, Miss., delivered a most interesting gospel sermon in the morning, after which the representatives elected a moderator and secretary and proceeded to business.

It was determined to form the new association at Shiloh on Tuesday before the first Sunday in November.

Eleven churches were represented—nine from the Alabama Association and two from the Cahaba.

It is expected that other churches will unite with these in the near future.

After disposing of the matter which called the meeting, a liberal collection was taken for the church at Aniston.

After the collection, Bro. Crumpton introduced the subject of temperance in an earnest speech, and was followed by brethren Bozeman, Baber, Fortune and the writer.

We had a most enjoyable day.

OUR work will call us away from the office almost constantly for several weeks.

Our readers will find nothing by our absence, as Bro. Renfro has kindly consented to assist us in filling our editorial columns.

We expect to attend as many associations as possible.

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST will be represented at all of them.

We hope brethren will come to the associations prepared to renew or to subscribe.

When you see us, brethren, feel at liberty to approach us.

We will always be waiting to receive subscriptions and renewals.

A NOTE received a few days since in regard to the address of Bro. Trauer on the distribution of denominational literature, makes it clear that he was misunderstood.

Speaking of different papers he referred to "a vile sheet published in a western city."

We communicated with Dr. Trauer, and have just received the following: "The paper alluded to is a political paper, which I said I had stopped. It often contains accounts of crimes at great length."

BRO. WM. A. DAVIS, of Bufala, is at Chautauqua—a delightful place for intellectual, social and physical enjoyment. It is cool enough now for an overcoat at night. At a spelling bee in which seventy took part, of whom at least forty were teachers and college presidents, Bro. Davis won the second prize, the first being won by an Indiana lady, who once spelled in a contest fourteen hours. Three cheers for Alabama, Howard College and Bro. Davis!

PROF. SUMNER B. FOSTER will open a male high school in Selma Sept. 24th. We have had the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with Prof. Foster for several years. He is a gentleman of superior attainments and is an experienced and successful teacher. We recommend him most cordially to those who have sons to educate.

We have received a letter and circular from Dr. G. A. Nunnally, Secretary of the Church Building Department of the Home Mission Board. They came too late for this issue. We have only space to express our most hearty approval of this much needed new departure on the part of the Home Mission Board. We will have more to say next week.

For the Alabama Baptist.

The Marion Convention.

Though it was not in my power to attend the Convention in Marion, after reading the reports in the paper and several private letters from brethren, I feel that it has been my privilege to enter into the spirit of the meeting, and to profit by it almost as much as if I had been there.

I have read the excellent report over twice, and had the Convention all by myself. Some letters which I have received indicate that it was a real good Convention, and that the brethren were profoundly impressed with the importance of the work which they had in hand. Let me make a few extracts from these letters. One brother says:

"As we plod along at home and the year round prosecute our work the best we can, we often become discouraged and are disposed to look too much at the dark side of our denominational prospects. We forget the power of our Baptist hosts in this State, and we forget how sublimely God is leading our work on to success. One who attends the Convention only occasionally, and this as you know is true of myself, feels very much strengthened by spending four or five days with that body; and I can but think how many of our brethren would find great advantage in going at least occasionally to our State Convention—I mean many of those who never go."

Another brother says: "I thought the spirit of the meeting was fine, and especially the almost perfect harmony which marked its proceedings. It occurs to me that the Baptists are giving a complete illustration of the fact that a Christian people of democratic institutions with perfect and universal freedom of speech can harmonize into a unit in doctrine and practice, better than a people under the dictation of clerical and official courts. Witness the harmony of our brotherhood at Waco, at Saratoga, and in every Baptist Convention in the United States."

Another brother says: "I have not attended the Convention for the last year or two, until the recent one at Marion. Several things impressed me favorably, others not so favorably. The Convention has been presided over by Bro. Haralson until he knows the name of almost every person who wishes to speak. He is a splendid presiding officer, and the Convention is a model in the transaction of business. The Secretary, Bro. Davis, can not be excelled by any living man. The Convention closed its business on Saturday night and on Monday morning the manuscript for the printing of the minutes was in the hands of the printer in good style. The speeches, essays and addresses before the Convention for the most part were strong, forcible and well delivered; some complaint was made that some of the speeches and essays were too long. An opinion obtained by many was that in the Convention speeches should be cut down to fifteen minutes, and that the President should enforce the rule. If this rule were adopted and rigidly enforced, it would give an opportunity to hear many of the brethren who never get the floor. Some of our brethren speak on every subject, and speak well, but if the above rule should obtain, there would be more diversity and variety in speeches, even if not so good. The Ministers' Meeting was emphatically an old-fashioned experience meeting. One of the logical conclusions reached by some of our brethren was that in some instances churches are better off without a pastor. Some of the pastors thought it a good hint for them to go home and resign, that their churches might be strengthened. It was a capital joke. Some of the subjects were discussed with enthusiasm, among them were State Missions, Ministerial Education and Prohibition. Noticeable among the active and efficient workers in the Convention were brethren who have moved into Alabama from other States in the last few years—among them Brethren Eager of Mobile, Phillips of Tuscaloosa, Edens of Gadsden, and Bailey of Birmingham. These, with others, are good workers and strong men."

And still another brother says: "I regretted very much that you could not be with us at the Convention. We had a good meeting. The Ministers' Meeting was pleasant and profitable; you would have enjoyed it. The spirit of the Convention was all that could be desired—not a jar, not an unkind word. The speeches were practical rather than eloquent. Every subject was pretty well discussed. I would have liked a little more enthusiasm. * * * I think that all our

enterprises received an impetus in the right direction." These are not the only letters that I have received in regard to the Convention, but these quotations from four letters written in the confidence and freedom of private correspondence will show the order that I have had a Convention of my own; and they show further that the brethren returned to their homes from Marion all the better for having been there. And so one will learn from reading the reports in this paper for the last two weeks.

And now, reader, how easy and agreeable it should be to render fealty, devotion and co-operation to the counsels of our brethren in the Convention, when we understand perfectly that there is nothing constrained; that we are left to act with entire freedom. All over the State Baptist Associations will meet within the next three months. May we not expect that the spirit of the Convention will distinguish every association and that they will take hold of these great enterprises with more than usual zeal and energy? May we not expect that our churches and pastors will begin at once a hearty response to the counsels of the Convention? Now is the time for a movement along the whole line for Missions, for our colleges, for ministerial education, and for every cause affecting the great cause of our blessed Lord. Much is lost every year by unnecessary delay in action. Study about it, prepare for it, decide which course you will urge first, and then another, and another, until your people have done their duty. R.

For the Alabama Baptist.

Our Recent State Convention.

No criticism; nothing censorious; love for all; hatred for none; good wishes; sincere desire for peace, happiness and prosperity to one and to all of the Israel of our God. Yet—

1. Too much merriment on grave subjects is not in place. I love pleasures; I love genial spirits; I love warm hearts; but there's "a time to laugh" and "a time to weep."

2. Too little attention to the morning prayer-meetings is not a good sign. I own up. I had palliating reasons, but might have done better. Devotional exercises must not be dispensed with on these occasions; but, to make them edifying, they must engage the presence and hearts of the brethren.

3. Personal allusions in commendation of a college or other enterprise should be practical, looking to the widest and best effect. Very few people, comparatively, care much about men away off yonder with high honor, easy living and lucrative compensation for pleasant services. But when the people, especially Baptist people, know a man, that he is a self-denying, faithful and effective servant of Jesus, his impress is true and abiding. Such a reference meets the case.

4. Speeches should not be such as are calculated to impress the minds of the audience, especially Pedobaptists, that there are two classes of Baptists, held together by a sort of nominal church union, with but little if any real sentiment of mutual and appreciative fraternity. Baptists generally are as generous as others, according to their means and instruction. Churches in the country and in villages, if plied with preaching every Sunday, would show a corresponding improvement in benevolent contributions; but preachers who meet their congregations once a month only, however well disposed and qualified, can not give the needed instruction and attention. The main reason is, there are so many local demands on their ministry that they have little time to preach on and attend to other demands. And churches generally are not able to support more than monthly preaching. 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Alabama Baptist.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

From the Christian Union.
Is This Your Likeness?

One of the subtlest forms of selfishness is that which comes from self-absorption in work. The greater the work the more ready conscience is to palliate or even to justify altogether this selfishness. Just now the world of critics is howling over Carlyle's careless unconcern for his sensitive, sometimes sick, and often suffering wife. It does not relieve him from just condemnation that his sin is a common one; but if none but a sinless critic could throw the first stone, Carlyle would not get much hurt.

When first married the husband is everything to the wife. Housekeeping cares are small, or none at all; there is little society; the days are long and lonely; the wife counts the hours and even the minutes for husband's return; and everything is ready for his coming, as though he were all the world contained, as indeed he is to her. But this cannot continue long. Children come and divide attention, care, and love. Society interposes its claims. The church demands time and thought. There are calls to return, and meetings to attend, and dresses to make, and baby to care for; and the husband has to take a second place. Now, though it is never easy for an idol to step off from his pedestal or put another one alongside himself, the husband who has a moderate share of common sense will not expect the wife and mother to give the same exclusive thought to him that the young bride gave. But it is no rare experience for the wife and mother to become so absorbed in other duties that her husband recedes steadily from the first place to the third, and finally goes out of sight altogether. She no longer watches for his coming; she is surprised when he appears, and half disappointed, too, that he is home so soon, for this bit of household work is not quite done, or that last stitch is not yet taken, and she is really more anxious to finish the seam than to see her husband. The little things that make home happy are forgotten because of the supposed larger duties due to society or the church; and the wife by her self-absorption in a busy, bustling life outside does more to make her husband pagan than to make him a Christian, because the one she touches very nearly and the other she influences only afar off. We call this life of self-absorption a subtle form of selfishness, because social ambition makes social care a delight and social duty a pleasure; and what the good woman imagines to be a self-denial is really an enjoyment, if not a passion. We have known women who were never weary of inveighing against society who would die of ennui if they were taken out of it.

But this subtle form of selfishness is far oftener seen in the husband than in the wife. He gives himself up to his business, and gives only a fringe and fragment of thought to the woman he idolized for a month, or even, with rare fidelity of masculine affection, for a twelve-month. When he comes home he leaves his mind in the counting room and only brings his body to the supper table. He is generally abstracted, and often positively cross. His wife has received so many rebuffs from him that, if she be sensitive, she learns to study him furtively before she ventures to address him, even in the quiet of the evening fireside; and if she be not sensitive she answers back, and each sharp battle of words separates them farther and farther from each other. The best men are most easily subject to this unconscious form of subtle selfishness. The higher the thoughts and the larger the work, the greater the danger and the easier the self-excuse. The minister who is devoted to the interests of his church, who in full tenderness in the pulpit, and of respectful consideration in society, appears not unfrequently at home unaccommodating, thoughtless, of others, easily irritated, in a word, selfish. He may be wholly unconscious of selfishness. In one sense he is not selfish, for his thoughts are not on self, but on his master, his church, or his perplexed parishioner. But he puts his work first and his family second; and forgets Paul's declaration that he who fails to provide for his own family is worse than an infidel. And to provide for one's own family is to provide not merely food and clothing, but consideration and love.

Reader, we will not say as Nathan to David, "Thou art the man;" but we will say interrogatively, Art thou the man? If you want to know, ask your mate—husband or wife—to read this article, and then to-night tell you whether anything of your face can be seen in this mirror.

A Safe Rule.
Clinton Mills went into his mother's room with a light heart and a bright face.
"Mother," he said, "is it not a splendid day for a drive? I am going to tell John to get out my pony, and then I am going to take my run down to the beach. It will be great fun."
Mrs. Mills dearly loved her merry boy, and could not bear to say anything to mar his joy; yet she answered in a very different way from what he expected.

"Have you learned your lesson, Clinton?"
"Oh no; I forgot," said Clinton.
"But what if I do not learn that stupid lesson just for once?"
"Your teacher complained of you yesterday, Clinton."
"Well, what is he?" said Clinton, hastily. "This charming weather is too tempting. I can put away my book and fix my mind upon my book."
"But it was just the same in the winter."

"I know it. But then there was the coasting and the skating; I could not resist them. It is no great matter if I do not get on very fast in my studies; my father is rich, and I shall have plenty of time to go to school."
"And so, because your father is rich, you choose to be an idle, ignorant, useless man?" said his mother, sadly.

Clinton looked both grieved and vexed.
"Why, mother," he said, "how you do talk to me! You know that I do not choose to be such a man as that; I mean to be like my father, and to have every one respect me."
"Then you must begin to form such a character now," said his mother. "When your father was a boy he made this maxim a rule of his life: 'Duty before pleasure.' And however rich you may be, you will never succeed in any useful pursuit unless you do the same thing. A baby can not learn to walk unless he uses his limbs, and a boy can not grow wise unless he uses his mind."

Clinton was a lad of sense; he saw that his mother was right. He took his book, threw himself face downward upon the carpet, and so applied himself to his task that he soon sprang to his feet, crying out:
"I know it now, every word of it." "And there is plenty of time left for your drive," responded his mother, as joyfully. "You can now take your pleasure with a clear conscience."
—Messenger.

Mr. J. H. Strode, Huntsville, says:
"I have taken Brown's Iron Bitters, and it benefited me when suffering from dyspepsia and indigestion."

Making Shadow Pictures.
The three children—Mary, Phil, and little Dick—arrived at the school house too soon. Mary had a bit of chalk in her hand, and, catching sight of her brother's shadow on the sunny wall, she exclaimed:
"Stand still, Phil! I'm going to draw your picture!" Phil was a funny fellow, and put on a grand air, which made baby Dick laugh. Mary plodded over the dark outline, and had just finished, when other pupils began to ascend the hill, and the school bell rang.

The three children went into school; but several girls outside went up to Mary's drawing, and began whispering together.
When lessons were over, one of the girls said to Mary, "You've been drawing teacher on the school wall!"
"Indeed, I haven't!" cried Mary.
"I only drew my brother Phil!"
"It isn't much like him, then," said Kate, coolly; "and it is just the image of teacher's nose."

At this all the children laughed; and Mary, who liked her schoolmistress, was ready to cry.
"What's the matter, Mary Barton?" asked an under teacher.
"She's been drawing teacher, and she says it's her brother," eagerly shouted several.
The face certainly did resemble the schoolmistress, and Mary saw every one disbelieved her. Phil drew near; and they all pointed at him, saying:
"Look at him! Is he like that?"
The dispute was high, when Phil said:
"You come here at twenty minutes to nine to-morrow, and I'll stand here, and you'll see—that is if the sun shines enough to make my shadow."

Next morning the sun did shine, and quite a party stood waiting for Mary, Phil, and Dick.
Baby Dick gave a shout of delight as Phil's face fitted neatly into the chalk outline.
"Well, I never!" said the big girls, and they did not know their teacher was behind them until she said:
"Why did you disbelieve Mary?"
"Please, ma'am, it didn't look like Phil!" said one girl in a low voice.
"No; but you should not have doubted the word of a truthful girl for that. I did not hear till last night that you had thought Mary had drawn my picture on the wall, or I should not have waited till now to tell her that her word was enough for me."
Mary got rosy with pleasure, and her companions with vexation. Phil snickered off to the boys' school, saying:
"I shouldn't try for being an artist, Mary, if I were you. I don't admire my picture much!"

BED-RIDDEN AND CURED.
W. E. Huestis, of Emporia, Kansas, says that his wife had been sick nearly seven years, and for the last four months bed-ridden. She has been treated by a number of physicians and only grew worse. Her attention was called to Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery" and "Favorite Prescription," which she commenced using. In one week she could sit up, and in three weeks could walk about. By druggists.

Homespun Religion.
Bear in mind that whatever the work you have to do, that work is given you by God. Are you a shop man? Well, behind your counter sell your goods and do your work as if it were God's work. Are you a lawyer? Well, work on in love to the great Lawgiver, defend the right and defeat the wrong, remembering that your plowman's sower? Well, steadily use your shovel, merily drive your horses to the field, cheerily make your shuttle fly till the pattern stands out before you in the web, remembering that you are engaged in a heaven appointed task. You have a Master in heaven. If it were so, would not all trickery disappear from trade, all quibbles and quibbles from the law, all eye service, all unfaithfulness, all discontent from the ranks of the laboring population? Depend upon it, we in general take too low a view of our calling. We look upon our labor as merely drudgery; well, it may be so, but it is divine drudgery. While we work we are doing good, and everything that is good is Godlike. Such a conception as this enables the meek and lowly Jesus, the poorest of men, to take too low a view of our calling. We look upon our labor as merely drudgery; well, it may be so, but it is divine drudgery. While we work we are doing good, and everything that is good is Godlike. Such a conception as this enables the meek and lowly Jesus, the poorest of men, to take too low a view of our calling. We look upon our labor as merely drudgery; well, it may be so, but it is divine drudgery. While we work we are doing good, and everything that is good is Godlike. Such a conception as this enables the meek and lowly Jesus, the poorest of men, to take too low a view of our calling. We look upon our labor as merely drudgery; well, it may be so, but it is divine drudgery. While we work we are doing good, and everything that is good is Godlike. Such a conception as this enables the meek and lowly Jesus, the poorest of men, to take too low a view of our calling. 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