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## Stand by the Old Symbols of Faith.

A Lecture before the Class of Ministerial Students in Howard College, delivered in Miami Baptist Church in Marion, Ala., December 15th, 1884.

BY J. J. D. REEFROCK, D.D.

(Published by Request.)

I am before you, young brethren, not at my own election, but at the request of those whom I have recognized as in position to make such request important, and in harmony with the pleasure of the President of Howard College, to deliver the first of an irregular series of Theological Lectures which may be given you by different brethren during your present session. And I have chosen to invite your attention to the vital importance of standing by the old symbols of faith in preserving the great life work which you propose to undertake, and for which you are now in course of preparation.

I mean by "the Old Symbols of Faith," the grand fundamental Articles of Evangelical Christianity, with which eighteen centuries have fortified the position of the Church of God, and which have been tested by conflict with every form of error in every age of the Christian era, and which have ever been held as constituting the bulwarks of Protestant Christendom, and are so recognized to day. And as touching our own denominational credenda, I mean those distinctive truths which have always lain at the bottom of our church order and ordinances, distinguishing us from other Christian people.

The Venerable Ministry

who are now soon to pass away, are profoundly anxious over the fact that they are leaving their sons in the gospel, surrounded by a false condition of things which urges a surrender of these old symbols of faith, and demands a retreat to new positions and a search for new doctrines. Any father in the natural relations of life, as he passes away, cannot fail to be deeply concerned about the future history of his boy and the estate for which he has spent his life, and especially so when he sees that that boy has to contend with new difficulties, new issues, and new phases of life and business. The veteran knight, who as a last service, buckles the war harness on his stripling son, and sends him forth to battle for the holy land, must be gravely agitated as he discovers that the enemy comes on with increasing forces, with new tactics, with improved implements of war, and strikes from a new point of assault.

The retiring ministry of the current age see the enemy coming in like a flood. The Apostles had to meet the effete and fallen forms of Judaism and the ancient forms of Paganism; the coadjutors of the Reformation contended with the heresies and ceremonies of a fallen Christianity; and the ministry of this age—especially of the age now opening on us—have to meet a cold and heartless unbelief, fostered by the assumptions of superior learning. We have contended with sin in its grosser forms of vice and immorality fostered by ignorance; and while our ministerial successors still have all this in staid form before them, they are called upon to meet a current of popular sentiment in addition, which demands the abandonment of doctrines which we had supposed to be settled forever; and it is insisted by many learned and well disposed people, that the very foundations of our religion are open questions. And it is a most painful sign of the times that men who wear the livery of Heaven, and stand as teachers of religion, admit that our grand old Bible is on trial with the odds against it. And it is a further significant fact, that those who assail evangelical religion from the assumptions of higher learning, almost invariably address themselves to the clergy. With a complacency as devout as that of an arch-bishop, and an effrontery as bold as the encyclicals of papal infallibility, they teach the clergy what must be preached, what must be believed, and what this age of advanced thought demands that they shall do.

Proposition for Compromise.

The tacit proposition from them is, that they will agree with you if you will agree with them. With the show of great condescension, they will concede the necessary existence of religion, and that it is a good thing, provided you will consent that the religiosity of classic Paganism, and of Confucius, and of the False Prophet, and of Darwinism, equally good with the religion of the Bible.

As an instance, Robert Dale Owen will address one hundred pages of one of his last books to the clergy, and form a saintly truce with them, not, however, until he compiles a bible (?) of fragments of the Old Testament, and the first three Gospels, and the Epistle of James, with the so-called rappings and writings of departed spirits. The writings of Paul are to be set aside, because he says too much about original sin, predestination, and justifications by faith alone. The writings of Peter are to be proscribed for the most part for similar reasons. And the writings of John are to be rejected for the reason that he insists too much on the divinity of Christ, the necessity of faith, regeneration, and the office work of the Holy Spirit; and all these are to be eliminated from the sacred Scriptures, because they too frequently assume that they speak and write by revelation and inspiration of the Spirit of God. A large class of restless spirits, of whom Mr. Owen has been a leading star, will join you in advocating revelation and immortality, provided you will not insist that "life and immortality are brought to light [alone] in the gospel," and provided you will agree that the science is an improvement on the college of Apostles, and the revelation of the spirits through the medium more reliable than the afflatus of the Bible; and provided for another class you will concede that the lessons of a fossil are superior to the lessons of Moses, and the revelations of the rocks and of the earth's strata are far more reliable teachers than both Testaments.

Oppositions of Science.

Prof. Tyndale, in his famous Belfast Lecture, arrays the pretensions of skeptical science in terrific war with the clergy, and then in his Birmingham Lecture on "Science and Man," after putting forth a batch of deductions which can mean nothing but atheism, he closes with such complimentary references to Christianity as would do credit to the village pastor; indeed it seems that he reaches his peroration from a hermit's cell and not from the study of an infidel scientist. The physical sciences in the hands of skeptical learning, are forced to protest against the Mosaic story of creation as untrue. At least they will maintain that Moses did not write history, but an allegory; the story of creation is an allegory of the system of development under natural laws without Supreme intelligence. It is assumed that Adam never existed and therefore never sinned, but the story of man's fall is an allegory meant to teach us that to violate law is the common way with man; and the Genesis of the human family as stated by Moses, is only a mistaken view of the grand process of evolution which brought us up, possibly from an oyster bed, possibly from the monkey, possibly from some lovely germs of the vegetable kingdom, possibly from the star-dust which has been cast off by other planets through infinite ages, and these sublime molecules gathered by their native forces of attraction, and made to produce animal life from natural causes, and the whole fed on some mysterious protoplasm, the cosmos of the globe is made out, (?) and in the survival of the fittest this lord of creation, out of whom we sometimes develop a preacher, stands before us a perfect man! Let us rejoice that, after all, possibly we can trace our cosmogony to the stars; and thus finding that we came, not from the dust of the earth, but from the dust of the stars, let it animate us that it is still true that one star differeth from another star in glory according to the ratio of the precious molecules which organize in our constitution and shine in our life. And thus all nature and all science will sing of this evolved man.

"Behold, how he shines among the stars, with all the glory of the red-hot ball of Mars!"

Who shall be the first?

Pardon me, my brethren, I know you did not expect this allusion to a form of error about which we know so little. We, however, are not the only class who know but little on these subjects. The infidel scientist himself, admits that he delves in the mazes of conjectural inquiry. Hypotheses! problematics! and conjectures!—this is the best that he can do. And while he has settled nothing on which faith can rest the sole of her foot, he only insists that you shall, for the present, concede that the foundations of your own faith have been overturned. And yet, while there is nothing new in the true inwardness of this assumption, coming under a new guise, it is the gravest form of error with which the rising ministry will have to contend. First, because it adjoins the context from the domain of the warm, abiding heart to the cold logic of the brain; and, secondly, in its multifarious guises and steady energy, it is spreading itself widely over the intellectuality of the land, and

also finding its lurking places in a lower style of mind, which hitherto has not thought on such subjects.

The use which I have for its introduction here, is to remind you of the infinite importance of the great first principles of our holy religion. "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" Any one of these "oppositions of science, falsely so-called," may bore the hole which will spring the leak that may sink your faith out of sight in conjecture and doubt. I insist that it is the duty of the ministry to stand in the old paths and proclaim the old truths: I do not say, defend the truth. God will defend his own truth. It is the preacher's business to proclaim it—to proclaim it as if there were not an infidel on the earth. When God needs to set a Paul for the defense of the gospel he will find one. It may be that you are one; if so, your Master will appoint the field of battle and open the door of utterance. If he intends that you shall preach the gospel in Rome, or fight with wild beasts at Ephesus, or stand among the classic scenes of Mars Hill, he will direct your steps and force the necessity.

The Lord Jesus, as the perfect model preacher, set us an instructive example here. In his conflict with the unbelief of his age he did not always answer the attacks of his enemies, except to denounce them as false teachers who were leading the people to destruction. And while he often passed capricious and skeptical questions unanswered, he plunged into the secret thoughts of his foes, showing them that he understood their feelings of opposition, and that he could read the unuttered queries of their inmost souls. His word and Spirit comprise the Omnipotent and All-wise Searcher of hearts until this day.

A Dogmatic Book.

The Bible is a most dogmatic book. It rarely ever discusses anything. It propounds its doctrines and its history in independent declarations, sustained by the authority of Jehovah, and leaves men to receive its dogmas as the verity of God, or reject them at the loss of their souls. "If our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost." It is still true that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to the believer it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The eternal "I Am" has declared, "My word shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that whereunto I sent it, and it shall prosper in the thing which I please." Here is our encouragement to preach the gospel, not in the willingness of man's heart to receive the gospel, but in the power of God to conquer the heart—the power of God's Spirit to send his word as a two-edged sword into the centre of human consciousness, and leave it quivering there until that heart shall cry out for the living God. Therefore those who undertake the preaching of God's word should speak that word very plainly. "Our sufficiency is of God," and this is our strength. We are to preach the plain old story of Jesus and his love, assured that as many as are "ordained to eternal life will believe."

Popular Demand.

And therefore the popular demand for new theories and themes and styles; the wish of the itching ear for sensational preaching; the declaration that we must have a new order of things with new doctrines to lift us out of the old ruts, which means an abandonment of the fundamental principles of Christianity—all this should be bravely avoided and stoutly condemned. It is our duty to bring before our people things both new and old; to avail ourselves of everything in harmony with the truth, which will give us power with the people. Read everything—that is, provided you can take up serpents and not get bit. Some men can handle false doctrines with perfect safety; others cannot with any more safety than they could handle an asp. You have a right to become learned. It is your duty to get wisdom, to get understanding, to become as scholars as circumstances will allow. You should try to be familiar with the advance of scientific investigation, and travel the whole range of scientific theology if possible; it is your privilege to be familiar with the pure style of letters, and to master the sacred languages, and especially to master our own grand old English, and imbibe everything that will give you a pure eloquence based on pure knowledge. Yes, it is your duty to covet the best gifts, and to adorn those gifts for the glory of God. He who keeps God's honor in view will not go too far nor rise too high, but he who works for his own aggrandizement will soar in much deceptive plumage, and will not be

satisfied unless he can meet the popular demand and make his flight among the stars. We should never forget that the men we are trying to save are not up among the stars, but they are poor sinners down here on the earth.

No Conflict After All.

1. And now, my brethren, in confronting the great errors, indicated above, and all of their class, you are never to admit that true science and the word of God are at variance, or that the essential articles of biblical deduction or the well tried symbols of Christian faith, are in conflict with any branch of true learning.

The late Prof. John William Draper, of New York, grand man that he was, in his learned work on the "Conflict between Science and Religion," commits a mistake in conducting almost his entire investigation in controversy with the Vatican. Roman Catholicism with him is religion. He seems to see the Christian religion in nothing else; and then we are all held to account for the conflict between science and religion! The cruel persecutions under false forms of Christianity which have cursed the world and dishonored Christendom, together with the ignorant prejudices which have often held sway over vast districts of the earth in union with the civil power, are arrayed against science and liberal learning, and this is called a conflict between religion and science! The minister of the gospel must not commit the mistake of replying as in opposition to science, or as conceding that there can possibly be any conflict between true learning and true religion, or between science and the word of God. The God of the Bible and of Bible religion is the God of science. The present state of scientific discovery may be in conflict with somebody's religion, and doubtless it is in conflict with the unscriptural dogmas of some forms of faith; and by infidel scientists it may be forced to bear testimony against the holy Scriptures, but the correct exegesis of the word of God will stand in harmony with, and in beautiful propinquity to, all real science. Therefore let not the gospel preacher be afraid of science; let him not make haste to admit the existence of the conflict. And when questions arise that are too deep and weighty, too dark and mysterious for him, as they often will, he should not look through the darkness and the mystery at the word of God, but let him look through the word of God at the darkness; test not your Bible by the questionings of men, but try the queries and cavilings of men by the Bible.

Know the Scriptures.

2. In order to the best use of this test the minister of the gospel must be "mighty in the Scriptures," and, as far as practicable, posted in all departments of knowledge relating to the Scriptures. This is his most important intellectual attainment—that he shall "know the holy Scriptures"—that he shall know them thoroughly; that he shall have his mind stored with the text of the word of God; that he shall understand the bearing of the text on all doctrines; that he shall know what it has to say on all subjects, and that he shall be so familiar with this that he can readily draw from that quiver at any time the very arrow needed, and send it forth as the missile of the Lord against the enemies of righteousness.

With the precise language of the Holy Spirit, or as nearly so as possible, with the analysis of the human heart as there found; with the utterances of condemnation and consolation with which it abounds, and proclaimed in the incomparable eloquence of holy men, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the minister enters the domain of the heart and mind and conscience, and thunders away at the bar of man's soul, and the Holy Ghost sends that word into the very life thereof, and in spite of depravity and unbelief of that soul, the sentence of God's judgment in his Word brings that soul to feel,

"the farther off I go,  
The swing of justice deals the mightier blow."

As the late Dr. Francis Wayland puts it, "We are too liable to overestimate the sort of preaching that men of intellectual culture want. They have enough of the intellectual in their daily work. They want discourses directed to the heart, that will make them feel their moral obligations, and render the Sabbath something very different from the other days of the week." You remember that this was the nature of Mr. Webster's expressed wish—that he might hear the plain simple gospel when in the house of God on the holy day, teaching his conscience and leading him in view of his obligations to God and man. Standing by these old truths, and preaching them as the

truth did, as Paul and Peter did, "teaching 'the truth as it is in Jesus,'" "teaching 'the truth in love,'" we shall in the ecstasies of glorious success, realize that "God always causeth us to triumph in Christ." There is no condition of heart or mind known in the history of human consciousness which is not addressed, searching and addressed, in the word of God. No man living can read this book for a half day in an honest and intelligent private mood, without an inward sense that it is talking to him and about him personally.

Read Thoughts of the Reformation.

And it is a great truth as yet only partially evolved in its true character, that the seeds of the learned sciences, the first principles of all philosophy, are to be found in the word of God. Nelson's Letters on Infidelity indicated this for the plain reader long ago, and it could be better done now. The Bible is not a book of science and does not assume to be, but the first thoughts of all science are found in its declarations. No true scientific writer on education has attempted to surpass the Savior's doctrine of the evolution of the Christian life in the life of a man. First, the germinating grain of seed corn, then the tender blade coming through the earth's surface, then the strong young stalk, then the shoot or sheath for the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; and thus he illustrates the process of the Holy Spirit in so using the incorruptible seed of the divine word as to bring the sinner to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But mark you, "its seed was in itself," as was true of the trees, and grass, and all animal life, in the waters, on the land, and in the feathery heavens; at the beginning when God created our planet, every variety of every species carried its seed within itself, so that it brings forth after its kind, and under the natural laws of God it perpetuates its own succession, and spreads itself in all ages over all countries; and as was true of the works of nature, so of the word of God and the Church of God, "whose seed is in itself," and under the Spirit of God it reproduces its kind and its forever, and the gates of hell

the Church, or their legitimate offspring. And this same principle scientifically involves as a certainty the doctrine of a glorious resurrection. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," and then "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory." And so if you follow it through the whole realm of human thinking, it will be found that the very seed thoughts of the sciences gloriously cluster around or grow out of the sublime truths of our religion, which must forever stand as the science of the sciences.

The Old Symbols.

3. Not only familiar with the word of God, further, it is of great importance that the minister shall have a proper conception of the old symbols of faith as they lie bedded in the Christian literature of the past and of the present times. For it is against these that the combined forces of so-called advanced thought direct their continued assaults. Take a few of these as illustrations.

Standing out in all ages will be found the declaration that the sacred canon has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any admixture of error for its matter. Man must have infallibility as the basis and guide of his faith. Roman Catholicism is a powerful system made of the perversion of great truths. It claims infallibility in the church and in the papal see; evangelical Christianity lodges infallibility in the word of God. Concede the mistakes of copyists, and interpretations, and errors of translations, still if it be possible to get back to the original record, you will there have the revelation and inspiration of God as infallible as God is infallible. And when this is denied it is absolutely impossible to set bounds to the extent of that denial. History shows nothing more plainly than it shows this. And so of the great Calvinistic doctrines, which I would prefer to call Pauline doctrines. In fact they are found far back behind Paul, found among all peoples, found in the Old Testament as well as in the New, found to be the want of the human heart. They all gather around the one great doctrine of the sovereignty of God who works all things after the counsel of his own will. The prophets appealed to these principles in the hours of greatest trial; and the great Christian reformations have been propelled and sustained by the same great truths.

The doctrine of the spirituality of the Church—that the existence of the Church contemplates a converted membership, is the leading distinctive doctrine of our own denomination; it appears with its earnest protest and demand through all the ages of Christian advancement, and stands to-day as a great recognized triumph in all Protestant Christendom. You, my brethren, cannot afford to be unsettled in any of these important questions. It has been said by a distinguished thinker, that the abandoning of any single Christian truth in a given community for seven years, will supplant that truth so far as regards that people. It will virtually pass from the minds of the old, while the young will know nothing about it. Since your pulpits seven or ten years on the divinity of Christ, the work of the Spirit, the doctrines of grace, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, and on Christian giving, and your people will have no convictions and no settled opinions on these great articles of faith.

The Baptist Ministry.

4. I devote the remaining part of this lecture to the proposition that it is pre-eminently the vocation of the Baptist ministry to stand by the old truths. Baptists have always been dependent on the power of truth for their very existence. We can safely fall back on nothing else. We have ever been a plain, unpretending republican or democratic people, making no profession of authority over men's consciences, having no authorized creed other than the New Testament, paying no obedient respect to councils or bishops, having no great church court to direct us or to unify us, we, of all others, can never dispense with that preaching which reaches the heart; with the faithful dispensation of that word which is the fire and the hammer that break the flinty rock, or that mould the hard steel; that word which is the author of simple ecclesiastical forms, plain doctrines of great potency, and beautiful ordinances of most impressive symbolical significance. Others may bind their ministers and churches by making these formulated symbols authoritative, and these being a sort of umpire may be an end to many a controversy and serve as bonds of union; but having no such bond of union, and being left without machinery of commanding power, our ministry, whether with extensive or limited learning, must be Bible men. And though we have no authorized creed other than the New Testament, yet no people should stand more firmly by the consentient judgment of Evangelical Christendom than we. It has been the history of our fathers to stand there. With few exceptional cases our people have always unflinchingly maintained the recognized fundamental Articles of the Christian system. However far away and often others may diverge, we cannot afford to take the range. As these great Symbols are not by us formulated into an essential and binding creed we find it necessary to test them at every point by the word of God, and then with a freedom of will to hold them but the more firmly.

A distinguished minister of another denomination said to Mr. Spurgeon, "The truth lies deeply bedded in the solid rock; it takes learning and deep thinking to discover and bring out our position, whereas the Baptist position lies out on the surface of the Bible in plain view for the ignorant and illiterate." Mr. Spurgeon's ready reply was that Christ then must have preached as a Baptist, for "the common people heard him gladly," and Paul must have preached as a Baptist, for he said that "not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble are called."

No, sir, God's Book is not sealed from the masses. Its treasures are not hid in the depths for those only who can sink a shaft, or tunnel a mountain, or mine the rocks, or dive to the ocean's bottom, but as well they hang in the rich clusters of Eschol, are found in the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley, and are perfected in the seamless garment of the Son of God,—the mendicant may touch and be healed. "And as many as touched were made perfectly whole."

Every minister of the Gospel should be thoroughly trained and posted in the distinctive views of his denomination. I think I meet some Baptist ministers of liberal education and cultivation, who, though they preach right well, seem never to have given any attention to the distinctive principles of our people. This is inexcusable. They should not only know the faith of their people, but also the current of ecclesiastical and theological investigation as relating to that faith. Within my recollection the ecclesiastical controversy has passed

several stages in this country. The conflict over church government, the rights of the laity, personal responsibility in matters of religion, and the much tried questions concerning baptism, are all virtually settled in our favor.

New Ecclesiastical Issues.

And while the ghost of these old disputes will rise occasionally and attempt to affright us, our coming preachers will have to contend with other phases of learned sectarian criticism as relating to church lines and church life. You are to be tried with the questions of liberation within and without. The question is to be tried as to whether baptism is not too small a matter to affect church membership, or to vitiate church membership, or to limit the church privileges of a good man. The question is on us as to whether religious organizations of parish of all sects, and leading evangelists who claim connection with no sect, and who seem to aim to break down all denominational boundaries, are to be recognized as authorized ministers, and their agencies as essential parts of the Kingdom of Christ. The question is on us as to how much of skepticism and heresy are to be tolerated in our pulpits and fellowshiped in our churches, and how far we are to concede that the integrity of the Bible may be questioned in the household of faith.

All these things affect our church life and the integrity of our faith, and the rising ministry must either yield to them or confront them. Hence the tremendous importance of every Baptist minister's being substantially and intelligently fixed in the principles of our faith.

Riding Hobbies.

That minister is unwise who concludes that he must have a *passion* and have a *doctrine* of his own,—that he must have a hobby on which to ride into distinction, or that he must at least sing the praises of some one else who has strided a hobby. Many an otherwise noble preacher has wrecked himself on these hobbies. He feels that unless his hobby is established everything will be out of joint, and the first thing he knows he is all out of joint himself. I know that we are sometimes called *foibles*—sometimes *rut-men*, for such sentiments, "but none of these things move me"; the immemorial faith of our Baptist fathers is broad enough for me. I have found that faith in lines of immortal light in the word of God. It has possessed a divinity which has come down through the ages, asserting itself in the convictions of our ancestral confessors amid all forms and conditions of opposition, and has wrought out this vast system and this great people among whom we have the honor to live and to labor. After watching and searching for the third of a century, I stand among these young men to say that "the old is better."

Concluding Charge.

When this tongue is silent, young brethren, you may be rising to the meridian of your ministerial power and splendor. Let me exhort you to "hold fast the form of sound words." "Walk about Zion; go round about her, tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following. For this is our God forever and ever; he will be our Guide even unto death." "These things command and teach." Put yourself into them and let them take deep root in your heart. "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee."

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, \* \* \* preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season." Study—study—"study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God, giving to each his portion." "In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." As a Christian man, your first great business shall be to "have yourself." And as a Christian minister, your first great business is to "save them that hear you." In order to this, in your life and in your ministry, maintain the old truths; stand by the old symbols of faith.

Without freedom there can be no responsibility and hence no sin. Without divine sovereignty there can be no authority worthy of his regard, and hence nothing to sin against. Without freedom man is a mere machine. Without divine sovereignty he is a machine undirected.

Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky, but the stars are there and will reappear.—[Carlyle.]

## The Georgia Frolic.

Bro. Editor: I was pleased with your strictures on the "Baptist Ball," given by Senator Joe Brown, of Georgia. It is proper, I think, for the editors of our denominational papers to enter their protest against all such conduct upon the part of those who are looked upon as leaders in our denomination. I heartily endorse all that Bro. Brewer has said upon the subject in your paper. If Senator Brown, and the prominent Baptist ministers of Atlanta, see fit to set such an example as they have done, it is eminently proper for the denomination to enter its protest, and give the world to understand that we do not approve of it. It grieves me very much to know that such men,—men who have occupied such a high place in the estimation and affections of their brethren, on account of their ability and reported piety, should bow to the god of fashion, and countenance, by their presence even, such revelry, as is reported to have taken place, at this so-called "reception"—dancing and wine drinking.

It is to be hoped that the brother who has recently taken charge of one of the leading churches in this State, and who, as report has it, countenanced, by his presence, this "frolic," will see the error of his way, and refrain from giving the influence of his presence to similar frolics in Alabama, whether given by Baptists or anybody else. Baptists do not depend upon men who occupy high position for their existence, or their prosperity. It may be that some men in high position depend upon Baptists for their position, and if they do go back on their religion and their Baptist principles, and for the favor of the world are willing to compromise their character as Christians and as Baptists perhaps it would be well for Baptists to refrain from assisting them to positions, which seem to make them forget the old fashioned religion of the Bible, and of the fathers. But some one may say, You are meddling with something that concerns you not. I answer—as Bro. Brewer has answered—it does concern me. It concerns every Baptist. These men have been looked upon as representative men. They have no right by their action to endorse a practice which the denomination condemns. Silence upon the part of Baptist papers and Baptist ministers and the denomination generally, would be construed by the world as an endorsement of their conduct. This thing was not done in a corner. It was published by the secular papers, one of which seemed to take pleasure in letting it be known that church members formed a very important part of the company present at a "reception," where dancing and wine drinking were the distinguishing features of the occasion.

The good old Book tells us, "Be not among wine bibbers." Our Baptist ministers and deacons and members, whether senators, governors, members of the legislature or private citizens, were in the wrong place, I think.

JOS. SHACKLEFORD.

Trinity, Ala., Dec. 30, 1884.

Dear Baptist: Being a reader of your most excellent paper, I desire to present through its columns a few thoughts for the Baptists generally, on the inconsistency of letting their deacons and prominent members get drunk and swear, and they are not excluded from the church. It is true if they are ruled, they shed a few tears, and even repeat and repeat it time and again. The inspired writer says no drunkard shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. A tree is known by its fruits. Again, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his own soul," and you all commune together. Let one of your members commune with a Pseudo-Baptist, who is good, honest, highly respected, and upright in all his walk, and he is not only ruled, but he is excluded entirely, simply because he has communed with one who has not been immersed. Now I want some one to show me which is the greater sin, to commune with a drunkard or with an upright Christian who feels that he has been baptized with Christ's baptism, the Holy Ghost, which has been poured out upon his soul until he feels that he is meet for his Master's use.

Please do not mistake me. I write for information not for argument.

Wishing you an abundant success, I am respectfully an observing

METHODIST.

Valley Home, Dec. 9, 1884.

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

I have learned more of experimental religion since my little boy died than in all my life before.—[Bushnell.]



# Alabama Baptist.

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capacity for "eloquent nothings." The rage for a few months or years, their productions are assigned to the moles and bats in some dark receptacle for rubbish. Huge piles of sermons are being published and applauded, occasionally for their spirit indeed, that nobody will read or know of in a few years. Why cannot the men of thought bawl down what they have to say in readable volume? A big book is on the average a big absurdity these days. We have sometimes been tempted to regret the discovery of the art of printing with its power presses, stereotypic, lithographic and electrotyping processes; and to wish that writers were remanded to the waxed boards and stylus of the Greeks and Romans. No doubt these slow processes saved their readers many a weary hour of search for thought amid an interminable jumble of verbiage.

Why should our newspaper writers take up a column where a paragraph might suffice? Who does not often give long articles the go-by? Who does not look for the short articles first?

## PENDING TREATIES.

Treaties regarded mutually advantageous by the contracting parties, have been negotiated and communicated to the U.S. Senate, between Spain, San Domingo, Mexico, and Nicaragua, and the United States. The admission of certain grades of sugar free, we see, is discomposing sugar growers in this country, and we have heard the admission of leaf tobacco, is having a like effect upon the city of Key West, built up mainly by cigar making. As a part of current events we note the following views of the president of the National Sugar Growers' Association at their late meeting in St. Louis.

American sugar-growers, "in their early career, made sugar profitably. With increased experience the way would have opened to them to increased profits, and the Northern sugar industry would soon have been put on a secure foundation. As though the recent great fall in prices was not in itself a sufficient calamity to American sugar interests, it was now proposed to form a sort of reciprocity treaty with Spain, and to open the ports of Cuba and Porto Rico to American, and admit sugar grown on these islands free of duty. If that treaty were ratified the United States Government would lose \$50,000,000 of duty collected on sugar, and still the price of sugar would not be lessened, as the Spanish planters would sell no lower than just to shade the price of sugar in other markets. The \$50,000,000, too, would have to be collected from duties imposed on other commodities. The Spanish planters would therefore derive all the benefit and the consumers would be no better off. The American sugar industries would be sacrificed to build up the interest of the Spanish planters."

We may however expect that all these treaties, however finally shaped, will greatly quicken trade between the countries immediately concerned and the United States, vastly to the mutual benefit of all. Meanwhile, we have confidence that the Senate will sanction nothing unjust to any part of the country.

The treaty with Nicaragua, providing for a joint ownership between that country and the United States, to the exclusion of all others, in the proposed ship canal, will be a decided move on the line of the Monroe doctrine, and inaugurate, if carried out, an imposing addendum to the once much contested doctrine of internal improvements by the General Government. Yet, like the purchase of Louisiana by Mr. Jefferson, it will possibly be justified by the vast interests involved. The isthmus will, at no distant day, be on the line and constitute an important part of the great thoroughfare between the East and West, destined to scatter along its path a profusion of wealth unknown before in the world's history. Poured of old through those countries, this golden stream built Persepolis, "Tadmor of the wilderness," Constantinople, Rome, Venice, and their sisters, and will reach with the same fertilizing flood the Gulf cities of our own country. Let it come.

How far the proposed Nicaraguan treaty may contravene the provisions of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, we are not sufficiently informed as to the stipulations of that instrument to form an opinion. It is, however, understood that some act of the British government has morally relieved our government of the necessity of rigorously and literally observing the terms of that treaty as originally intended.

Dr. Tucker resumes his old connection with the *Christian Index*. We congratulate ourselves and all who are concerned, and there are many of them. The "little sister" over in Alabama has always wished her elder sister over in Georgia well.

"A happy new year to the ALABAMA BAPTIST and to you,"—J. C. Hiden, Lexington, Ky. Thank you. Bro. J. D. Cook's address hereafter will be Cuba Station instead of Pushmataha.

## GOV. BROWN'S RECEPTION.

We have in hand a number of communications on this subject, some in defense of Gov. Brown and those who attended his reception, and some in condemnation of them. We do not think it worth while to publish more on the subject than appears in this paper. Bro. Tichenor, who lives in Atlanta, gives us the true version of the affair. Others have assured us that the article from which we quoted was a misrepresentation. One of those present at the reception avers that he neither saw nor heard anything which could give a shadow of truth to the allegation that there was dancing or wine bibbing on the occasion. We are glad to be able to make this explanation, and we are sure that every Christian reader will rejoice with us. Bro. Tichenor will please pardon us for printing his letter instead of giving the facts in an article of our own, as he expected we would do.

Our Savior's illustrations of "the expulsive power of a new affection,"—of the finding of a hidden treasure to purchase, which everything else is sold, of the purchase of one great pearl at the expense of all the less valuable ones,—is familiar. The simple meaning is that the true convert to Christianity finds a value in his new profession that outweighs all other values, that satisfies as all else cannot satisfy. It is the supreme good, adapted precisely to gratify and satisfy the utmost cravings of the human soul.

If what we possess does not answer these ends we may gravely doubt whether we have not mistaken the shadow for the substance. If our religion is a mere relief in the prospect of death and judgment to come, and not daily manna on which the soul constantly feeds, a perennial source of comfort and joy, either it is not genuine or we have lost our first love, in the naturally bewitching influences of the things of sense—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

We are afraid the middle wall or partition between the church and the world, that, as a denomination, we have regarded ourselves especially set to defend, is, in many cases, being broken down; that our boast of a converted church membership is in danger of turning out a vain boast; that thousands of sincere persons, active and influential among us, are mistaken, having known nothing of spiritual religion; that this may account for the desperate inquiry we so often meet, "What harm is there in this, that or the other questionable practice?" We would answer all such inquiries in general terms by asking in turn, How is it that this inordinate craving can fill a soul already possessed and absorbed by nobler enjoyments than earthly things can give? Why hungering and thirsting while fed with the bread of eternal life?

These reflections have been suggested by the events of the holidays just past. We fear many Christians have been so far led away by the example and influence of those who assign a secondary place to their religion, as to seriously cripple them in the prospect for the work of the new date we are beginning to write. If we have been ensnared, let us disentangle ourselves, and forgetting the things which are behind, press forward to those before.

We are enjoying hugely the sprightly and discriminating article appearing in the *Religious Herald* over the signature, "A Woman." The brethren, fresh from the Seminary, who think their "circumstances" alter cases, had better look to their laurels and their Greek too. Holding as they do, some of them, that women can speak in public, they will presently learn, if this is a specimen, that they can write as well. We have often had occasion to admire the childlike faith of our sisters. It is refreshing to meet people who believe that God in his word says what he means and means what he says, and when we get at the real text of the Bible we have the veritable words of the Lord. Such simple faith contrasts refreshingly even with certain oracular divinations of great men whose cautious march reminds us of a "regiment of cavalry shod with felt."

"I say now what I should have said sooner. The Providence meeting was all that I wished for it, except the absence of some brethren. Fortune, Drew, and Curry, and the rainy Sabbath. I needed the meeting and my people needed it. We will never forget it. If such meetings could be often held it would greatly help our pastors. We would all be stimulated to preach better, and to be better, and study more, and labor harder. And what great good would come to our people! When such meetings are so keenly enjoyed I think of the final meeting in our Father's house, where congregations never break up and Sabbaths never end."—W. B. Crumpton, Jan. 1st, 1885.

"A cablegram to Dr. Board, of Liberty, Va., brings the news of the safe arrival of Mrs. John H. Eager at Rome. Letters from my sister, Mrs. J. M. Jones, tell of their arrival in Yokohama, safe, well, and happy. They are doubtless in Tung Choo before now."—Geo. B. Eager, Mobile.

## Board of Ministerial Education.

On the 31st of December last the Board held a meeting for the purpose of reviewing its work, and to prepare for the work awaiting it. The review was gratifying. Three of the young men accepted by the Board have found it impracticable to leave home this winter. We give below the names of the ministerial students in the State: J. W. Hamner, H. R. Schramm, A. J. Preston, R. L. Baker, R. M. Hunter, W. J. Elliott, L. M. Bradley, J. W. Dunaway, J. M. Thomas, J. H. Pope, J. M. Kailin, H. C. Sanders, J. W. McCollum, M. G. Campbell, W. O. Dawson, J. E. Herring, A. B. Spidle, W. S. Culp, J. G. McClerkin, W. H. Connel, —Herring, O. J. Waldrop, M. T. Branham, A. A. Hobson, J. G. Lowery, J. W. Moore, J. R. Tarrant, H. H. Horton, L. G. Skipper.

From various sources we have gratifying reports of these young men as to character, capacity and faithfulness.

The Mess Hall, under the management of Bro. and Sister Sanders, is meeting our expectations. We were fortunate in securing their services. We make the following extract from a private letter from Bro. Renfro: "The ministerial class without exception—as it seemed to me—is composed of fine looking and promising young men. I took breakfast with them at the Mess Hall, and found a real good breakfast in quality, quantity and preparation." This Hall, at an expense of \$200, has been comfortably furnished by a number of noble, godly women belonging to different churches in the State. The promptness and liberality with which the ladies responded to the appeal of the Board in this direction is most highly appreciated. Up to date the Board has met without delay, every claim that has been made upon it, we thank God, look forward, and take courage.

The work before us is to provide for our ministerial students until the close of the session. On the 1st of February it is estimated that we will need \$1,200. We would have it distinctly understood that this amount is not in addition to the amount we asked for in the beginning, but what remains to be collected of the amount stated in our first appeal to the denomination. Will not brethren send the amount needed to the Treasurer, T. L. Hudgins, at Birmingham, within a few weeks. We will need it as soon as it can be sent.

It is hoped that there will be no interruption in the series of lectures for which the Board is providing. The Board is most grateful to Bro. Davidson for the valuable service he is rendering to the ministerial students in Howard College.

We appeal most earnestly, and ask for a prompt and liberal response.

W. C. CLEVELAND.

1885.

## To the Baptists of Alabama:

By permission of Bro. West, I wish to address you briefly in regard to the work before us, in the present year, 1884, with its records of good and evil, is numbered with all the years that have come and gone. So far as it concerns our own State and denomination, in many ways it has been a fruitful year, freighted with many good results. For instance, a kind Father has blessed our cause by increasing our numbers and revivifying those who hitherto have been neither cold nor hot. He has sent into our State some earnest workmen, noble spirits, Frost, Wharton, Davidson, and perhaps others. The labors of these ambassadors in our important centers, Marion, Selma and Montgomery, will be sensibly felt, and no doubt crowded with abundant success.

Another encouraging thought, our denominational schools were never in a more flourishing condition. The Howard, Judson, Alabama Central, all are moving onward, keeping abreast with the times, and doing a grand work in developing minds that are soon to take our place. May Heaven's richest benedictions rest upon the labors of Murfee, Fraser, Yancey and their efficient corps of teachers.

Our ministerial education system is proving a success, and a number of excellent, pious young men are preparing for a life-work in the ministry. In nearly every part of the State the agricultural harvest has been good; corn is generally plentiful; cotton has brought a fair price—money is more abundant, and can be had on easier terms, on good paper, than at any time since the war. We are sustaining friendly relations with all the nations of the earth, and our people are, perhaps, more cheerful than they have been since 1860. Education is more generally advocated, and a greater interest is manifested in good schools in Alabama among all classes, than ever before. Have I drawn the picture correctly? Is not the status of the people and country as above stated? I think so. Then, if these things be true, and they will not be denied, is not the outlook encouraging? Is there any reason for gloom or for crying? If so, it certainly must be in exceptional cases.

If, then, the old year has closed

with so many encouragements, so many Divine blessings, ought we for one moment, to hesitate to enter upon the duties of the new year with redoubled energies, and hearts full of gratitude to our Heavenly Father, and with an undimmed zeal in his cause? Brethren, let us lay our vows afresh upon the altar of Labor, let us infuse new inspiration into our work and determine to do more than we have ever done. Let us unite our efforts and push forward all the enterprises of the denomination. I am justified in saying that there are two brethren in our State who are doing their whole duty. They may not succeed to the satisfaction of all—for some will complain, however perfect the work done. Those two men to whom I allude are T. M. Bailey and Jno. L. West. Within the past few months I have learned something of the work they do, and in some measure their labors are different, yet the obstacles with which they meet are similar. They have to deal with so many men differing in sentiment, in education, in training, in love, that sometimes exceptions are taken, when none are intended. To be the secretary of the State Mission Board and editor of a denominational paper, are two offices I would advise every man to avoid unless he is even tempered, good natured, full of charity, forgiveness, long-suffering—all these, and more.

I wish to say just here, and in conclusion, that the work of the ALABAMA BAPTIST is one of the most important and most necessary of all our enterprises, for it is a medium of communication through which the work of the State can be unified, and every other fostered enterprise encouraged and increased. Hence, the denomination should strive to double the subscription list, or more. A copy of it ought to be placed in the hands of every Baptist family in the State. Just in proportion as the circulation of the paper increases, in equal proportion will good results follow, and the denomination prosper. Let every subscriber determine he or she will get one other subscriber during the next 30 or 60 days. It can be done. I will pledge twenty new subscribers within that time. PERSEVERANCE.

## Gov. Brown's Reception.

Dear Bro. West: I was sorry to see in your paper of recent date, an editorial and a communication reflecting upon Brethren Hawthorne, McDonald, and Wharton. I am sure you had no intention of doing injustice to these honored brethren, and that nothing but a misapprehension of the facts could have induced you to admit the articles alluded to into your columns.

The simple facts are that Governor Brown after his recent re-election to the U. S. Senate by the Georgia Legislature, gave a "reception" to many of his friends throughout the State. As his home was not sufficiently large to accommodate the invited guests, commodious apartments in the city were secured for the occasion. To this "reception" the brethren named were invited and, in common with many other Christian ministers and members of all denominations, they attended, to do honor to a friend and brother so highly esteemed.

They assure me that if there was dancing they did not see it. They spent an hour or so in conversation with the Governor and the assembled guests, partook of the supper prepared for them, and returned home without dreaming that they had in any respect violated the proprieties becoming to Christian ministers, or given the slightest occasion of offence to Christian brethren.

They had no reason to suppose that anything improper would attend this reception given by a Christian man, a member of their own denomination, and as they would have been wanting in courtesy had they declined to accept the invitation. They saw nothing while present which was a violation of Christian propriety, and they are surprised and grieved that their own denominational papers should, without any other evidence than the statement of a partisan editor, in another State, whose purpose it manifestly was to sting Gov. Brown, hold them up to the censure of their brethren. They are noble men. Neither our own, nor any other Christian community, contains those more worthy of confidence and respect. Their friends and themselves are grieved that you did not make inquiry of somebody who could apprise you of all the facts before you proceeded to condemn them unheard.

I know both yourself and your honored correspondent hold these brethren in high esteem, and that you are both ready to make full reparation for the unintentional injury you have done them.

I ask, therefore, that you make such a statement of the facts contained in this letter as you may think is required by the existing circumstances.

Your brother,  
I. T. TICHENOR.

Atlanta, Ga.

The man who prides himself on always speaking his mind is the first always to kick when he finds anybody else exercising the same privilege.

## "Bigotry" and "Charity







