

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST.

HARE & POPE, Publishers.

VOLUME 18.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1891.

TERMS CASH: \$2.00 A YEAR.

NUMBER 9.

## Denominational Instruction in the Sunday-School.

[Paper read before the Baptist Congress in Evergreen by Rev. W. Wilkes, D. D.]

I understand denominational instruction to be, that instruction given by each religious sect which shall explain their faith and practice, as distinct from the faith and practice of other sects. And I assume that such instruction should be given in the Sunday-school.

1. It is admissible. Common consent makes it so, if we consult general opinion as entertained in other orders. All organizations seek to be understood as distinct from each other. This they do by their literature and oral instruction. Why should the church of Christ, exceeding them all in glory, be singular in this respect?

2. It is expected. Everybody naturally expects each denomination to teach what it believes. And every denomination reasonably expects the same of each other. The members of every Sunday-school, if left to their own spontaneous feelings, expect to be taught the things which their teachers believe. Such rightful expectation should not be disappointed by any consideration of comity, or policy, or popular favor.

3. It is a duty. Each religious sect is in duty bound to teach its distinctive faith. It is its duty to itself, its pupils, the public, to true charity, and to Christ.

(1) A duty to itself. As it is the duty of every man to himself to be candid and honest in his dealings and intercourse with the world, the same is true of every Christian denomination. As in worldly matters comity and policy may serve temporarily, so in religion. But nothing can be established for real and permanent good by false methods anywhere. "All is not gold that glitters." Appearances are not realities. What seems to be may not be. The best reputation and the highest degree of influence and success must depend in largest measure on candor and frankness of character. Self-respect and the respect of others go together. And both must be united to give a common Christian the confidence of the world.

(2) Duty to the Sabbath-school. It is the duty of every sect to teach in its Sunday-school what it distinctly believes. What is not to be taught is to be given up. Just as the young are taught, so by the law of nature, they will live and die. This is the rule. Divine grace may make the exceptions. "Duty is duty." Salvation belongs to God. How it was that a settled decree, announced to Paul, assured him of a safe arrival at Rome, and yet he himself interposed a condition, I leave to Christ and his inspired apostle. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God; revealed things to us and our children." To deny personal and special election, is to deny all the foundations of Bible doctrine. To deny the whole of Christianity, is to deny its whole superstructure. It is the duty, therefore, of every denomination to teach the Sunday-school the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. Always so teaching in love and pursuit of New Testament truth.

(3) Duty to the world. It is the duty of every denomination, to the world, to teach in the Sabbath-school, as elsewhere, its distinctive tenets. "Ye are the light of the world." "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, where with shall it be salted?" These words of the Master are solemn words. It is a solemn thing to profess to be a church of Christ. It is more solemn to profess without the light and saving influence which belong to his true church. It is no less a solemn thing to personally profess to be a Christian. The relation of the church to the accomplishment of the purposes of grace and salvation embraces a momentous subject. To declare the whole counsel of God in the Sunday-school and elsewhere, is the only way to preserve the light and power of the gospel. To the extent then to which every sect believes itself to hold the truth, it should so teach as a duty to the world of mankind at large.

(4) A duty to the claims of true charity. I hold it to be in accord with and not contrary to, the nature and claims of true charity, that each denomination teach the truth as understood by that denomination. "Charity rejoices not in falsehood, but rejoices in the truth." It is not a compromising grace. It is dogmatic for the truth. Like its Author and in incarnation, it hypothesizes everything on the divine will. Denominational instruction, therefore, is not violative of, but in full accord with, the nature and claims of true Christian charity. Such instruction, then, should be given in the Sunday-school, in pursuit of truth.

(5) Duty to Christ. Loyalty to Christ embraces everything taught in the Bible, and nothing more; practical and doctrinal, symbolic and didactic. The order and ordinances of God's house, if they do not lie at the bottom, do mark out the lines of denominational distinctions and differences. There are six conditional principles laid down in "The Pulpit," Buffalo, N. Y., looking to Christian unity, viz: "The inspiration of Holy Scriptures. The incarnation of God in Christ. Justification by faith in Christ. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Resurrection of the dead and future awards." Grand and glorious foundation principles are these. Add a seventh, "Loyalty to Christ in all

things at all times," and it appears to me the work of union would easily follow. Until such union shall come denominationalism and instruction will and ought to continue in Sunday-school and throughout the Christian world.

Special application in conclusion. This subject has a very special application to Baptists. Of all people on earth, Baptists are most solemnly bound to teach their distinctive faith and practice, not only in their Sunday-schools, but in their families, churches, and pulpits, and suitably, everywhere. Their position among other denominations is peculiar. They stand alone—being the only order of professed Christians which cannot go into organic union with all or any number of other denominations, with out abandoning their history, as the history of the most useless sectarianism. For if Baptists rigidly demand the self-denying action of immersion as the exclusive and only way of attaining church membership; and if they hold, invariably, that a professed regeneration, and a scriptural baptism—immersion—must precede a reception of the Lord's supper; if they contend for these things, with no higher or purer motive than denominational pride, to keep up denominational lines, then would they be the most and grossest sectarians. But if these lines are kept up as the necessary result of their most conscientious convictions of loyalty to Christ in all things at all times; and if their peculiar views are clearly taught in the New Testament as atonement or resurrection, in their judgments; and that a pure Christianity demands their maintenance, then is the case greatly changed and turned in the opposite direction. Baptists should make themselves understood. A good place to do this is the Sunday-school, and the best subjects for training are the young. A fearless and candid, but loving assertion and re-assertion, of Baptist faith and practice throughout the entire brotherhood, would work a great reformation for good among them. They cannot afford to allow their peculiarities to slumber nor fall into the background. Their peculiarities are themselves. Give up the ordinances as held by them, to say nothing of any other Baptist works, and they give up their denominational existence. Leave these out in all their bearing, and Baptists and Congregationalists are one and the same without another step; Baptists and Presbyterians one and the same, at one more step,—that is, a little difference in church government; Baptists and Methodists are one and the same at two more steps,—that is, on Arminianism and Episcopacy; and so on of all the leading denominations commonly called evangelical.

I have extended this special application, to show the folly—the suicidal folly—of Baptists being betrayed into the false and dangerous idea of the ordinances of God's house as of no importance, especially that baptism is "a mere form," "a mere badge of profession," and the like. Whatever else important may, or may not, attach to this ordinance in the Christian system, one thing is certain, and that is, it is very important as a factor in the distinctive existence of the Baptist denomination. No baptism, manner and subjects, as held by Baptists then, no Baptist church in the world! On the whole: Denominational instruction in the Sunday-school is admissible; is expected; is a duty;—a duty which each denomination owes to itself, to its pupils, to the people at large, to the nature and claims of true charity, and to Jesus Christ our Savior, and Master, and final Judge.

### The Divine Thought of Greatness.

We know what the world calls greatness. Caesar was great, because he laid all the world under tribute. Napoleon was great, because in his day he was the most powerful man living. Men are great who rise above others; great in proportion to the number of other men that they can make their servants. Who is the greatest politician in New York? The man who can influence the most men at the polls. Who is the greatest statesman in the United States? The man who wields the greatest power for any idea or political party. Who is the greatest man financially? The man who has the most dollars with which he can wield an influence almost irresistible. What the world calls greatness is getting above people, and making them tributary to us.

On the other hand the greatness that Jesus Christ sets before us is not rising above men, but getting under men and lifting them up. It is not making other men tributary to us, but it is our becoming tributary to other men. The greatness Jesus Christ taught is in proportion to the ministry that we render to others, and not to the ministers that we make to ourselves. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "If any man would be great among you, let him become the servant of all."

Now, brethren, I would like to strike a key note just here for our church work. What is the mission of a church? It is to help other people, and not to get other people to help it.—A. C. Dixon, in Baltimore Baptist.

Six things are requisite to create a home. Integrity must be the architect and tidiness the upholsterer. It must be warmed by love and lighted with cheerfulness, and an honest purpose must be the ventilator, renewing the atmosphere and bringing in fresh salubrity day by day; while over all, as a protecting glory, nothing will suffice except the blessing of God.—Hamilton.

## Aged and Infirm Ministers.

[Remarks of Thos. H. Watts, Sr., before the Baptist State Convention at Greenville, Ala., July 16th, 1880.]

Shall this denomination raise a permanent fund for the support of aged and infirm ministers, not able to support themselves?

Who are the men we thus propose to provide for? They are men who have given the best energies of their lives—their strength, bodily and mental—in proclaiming to others the truths of God's word; men who have led the armies of the Most High against the armies of the devil and his angels; men who, through storm and sunshine, have battled for victory in our Master's cause; men who have devoted the wealth of their youth, and manhood and age in bringing others from the standard of Satan to the standard of Christ, and now find themselves worn out in the service.

It seems to me that we need but ask the question, then, in order to receive an affirmative answer. The relation which these aged and infirm ministers bear to us is certainly that of brothers, if not that of fathers. We are but one family in Christ. Our marriage to the church of Christ makes us one family. There are fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brethren and sisters in this family—the household of Jesus.

To doubt these propositions is to doubt the relations we bear to the great Head of our church, and to dispute the truths of the gospel.

The duties, which our natural family relation devolves on us as individuals, are like unto our duties in the relation we bear to the church of Christ on earth.

When the father, from age, or from infirmity, or from misfortune, becomes unable to support himself, what son would refuse, or even hesitate to supply the wants or to help the weakness of his father?

When the tottering steps, or the trembling hands, or the faltering voice calls for aid, what heart can turn away from even the stranger's call? But, when the tottering step, the trembling hand and the faltering voice are those of a father, what son does turn away?

The natural love, which prompts us to cling to our blood relations, is even less than that love born of the Spirit, which ought to prompt us to cling to those who are our fathers and brothers in Israel. He that loveth not his brothers in the household of faith, hath no lot in the household of Christ.

Besides, the very devotion of one's mind to a single calling renders him less fit for the duties of another calling; whilst the devotion to the one makes him more expert in that. This devotion to the Master's service, in winning others by his holy work and conversation, to his soul's salvation, increases the obligation, even doubly increases the obligation on us to sustain and support him in the feebleness of age.

St. John said, "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

When Jesus was on the earth, and spake as never man spake, he was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" He answered in a parable: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed leaving him half dead. And by chance, there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise, a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him; and then he passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where the wounded man was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast and took him to an inn and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Who of these three was the neighbor? The priest, who came by chance, and saw the wounded man but did not stop to look at him, but passed by on the other side of the street, to avoid even the sight of the wounded man, the priest, whose heart ought to have responded to the first appearance of distress; or the Levite, the descendant of Jacob, set apart by Moses to the service of religion, who, when he was at the place, came up to the wounded man and looked on him—saw his bleeding wounds, but passed by on the other side of the street, following in the footsteps of the priest; or the Samaritan, who was on a journey—away from home—a stranger to the place and to the wounded man, when he came to where the wounded man was, stopped, got down from his beast, not only looked on him, but had compassion on him, bound up his wounds, put him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, spoke kind words to him, watched over him, gave him in charge of the innkeeper, and when he was about to depart on his journey paid the charges at the inn, and enjoined the innkeeper to take care of the wounded man, and promised to repay whatsoever the innkeeper might spend in caring for the wounded man?

The human heart, in every age and clime and country, when not hardened by cares of the world—universal man—heeds the cry of distress; hears the wounded; holds out the helping hand to the aged, the infirm and the feeble.

Just before our Savior was crucified, when the shadow of his great passion hovered over him like a funeral pall, Mary, the sinner, washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and anointed him with precious ointment. Her only rebuke came from Judas Iscariot, from him who was a thief from the beginning; from him, the hypocrite, who betrayed his God with a kiss. But the Savior of man said, "She hath done a good deed! She prepared for my burial."

Do you not see the application of these remarks? He, who hath compassion on the wounded, who careth for the sick—the feeble, who giveth the helping hand to him who is in the world; and, in the world to come, receives from the lips of the Savior the benediction, "Well done! good and faithful servant," and a crown of everlasting glory.

During our recent war between the states, when the passions engendered by the war had aroused, in the common mind, every feeling of hatred and revenge, an incident occurred which aptly illustrates this subject. At the bloody battle of Fredericksburg, General Kershaw's brigade (a gallant South Carolina brigade) was stationed behind a stone wall at Mayre's Hill, a strong position, which, if taken, had been the defeat of the South. Division after division of Northern troops were hurled, with relentless fury, and with dauntless courage against this strong hold. Each attack was repulsed by the heroes, who held the confederate stronghold. And thousands of the dead and the wounded strewed the ground in front of it. On the evening of the first day's fight, whilst the bullets of sharpshooters on both sides, and the ringing of cannons were singing a requiem over the dead and the dying, and whilst it was almost certain death to the living to be seen above the parapets of this stone wall; whilst the cries of the wounded for water filled the air, a big-hearted son of South Carolina, Richard Kirkland, by name, a sergeant of one of the companies of Kershaw's command, ran up to the General's headquarters, close to this stone wall, and bursting into his presence, without ceremony, said, "General, I can't stand it any longer! I can't stand what any longer!" "Can't stand what any longer?" "Can't stand the cry of the wounded for water, any longer. Let me go and help them. I have a bucket of water, and I have wash, nambly panmy, milk and cider kind of people among us. Such Christians! They are among us, but not of us. They are parasites on our societies and churches—barnacles on the ship of state, and on the ship of Zion—dead weights, hindering the progress of every good work."

I am glad our Baptist trumpet gives no uncertain sound; that it is a terror to evil doers, ferreting out the sources of sin in "high places," and letting on the blazing torch of the gospel light! When the wheat is sifted we shall know the chaff. Where there are dangers there are deserters. But be encouraged, my brother. There are true soldiers of the cross, both men and women, who will stand by you until the last great battle is fought for God and for the right.

While I live I am for the ALABAMA BAPTIST. And I do hope it will continue to cut with the sword of truth until head after head shall be decapitated from the hydra-headed serpent and he dare not raise his horrid crest again. Thunder on with your vulcan hammer of truth, until every barrel, keg and bottle shall be emptied into the rivers and lakes of the earth; until justice and mercy shall reign, and until every public office shall be filled with men who love and honor God.

R. M. HUNTER.

### The Monthly Concert of Prayer for Missions.

It was established in the year 1748 by the Northampton Association of English Baptists. More than one long century of noble history attests its usefulness. It has accomplished a gracious work.

The monthly concert of prayer for missions has been followed by concert of giving and concert of working for missions. Its mission is not completed. This is not a time to stop praying for missions. I make these suggestions:

First. In some of our churches the monthly concert of prayer for missions should be established. Some of our churches have never tried it at all. I am persuaded that this is true of the majority of our churches in the Southern Baptist convention. Let each church have one such meeting a month, when the members will unite to pray for missions, to hear about missions, to get missionary intelligence, to consider plans and preparations and give to the great work.

There are some churches now giving as much money at a single concert of prayer for missions as they used to give in a whole year, and they have an annual collection besides.

Second. Some of our churches need to revive the concert of prayer for missions. For some reason this custom has lapsed in some of our churches. Let this meeting be revived. It is a missionary age. Our people are just opening their eyes on the broad harvest field. They are more willing to learn about missions and to pray and give to missions than ever before. Perhaps this meeting lapsed at a time of general spiritual depression and discouragement. Let some good men and wo-

men in such churches make a move to revive the concert of prayer. The time has passed when such a meeting would be unpopular. Let such a meeting be revived in your church, and you will be surprised to see how well work like heaven through the whole membership and revive the spirit of missions and increase the gifts to missions.

Third. Let this concert of prayer be intensified. Get short, sharp, stirring articles about mission work and have them read at each meeting. Get before the church some pointed facts about China's millions or Africa's open doors or Japan's readiness for the Gospel or the vast destitution of our own home fields. Let the prayers be specific and direct.

This monthly concert of prayer can easily be made the most cheerful and rousing and helpful meeting of the whole month. Otherwise the prayer meetings become narrow and formal and aimless. No church can have a live monthly concert of prayer for missions and not feel all its work intensified and quickened and advanced.

It may be argued that this monthly concert of prayer reaches comparatively few of our members. That is very true; but those few members need it and through them the whole church may, in a measure, be reached and aroused. This monthly concert of prayer for missions is not everything; but it is certainly one great means of advancing the cause. In such an hour as this we need more than prayers for missions; but surely our churches can not give up praying, for then the supply of men and means and materials would cease.

Keep it before the people that the cause of missions demands the establishment, the revival and the intensifying of this monthly concert of prayer.

Let our pastors and churches keep themselves supplied with information for use in this concert of prayer by writing to the Maryland Baptist Mission Rooms, No. 10 E. Fayette St., Baltimore, Md. At very small cost you can thus secure information about missions in all lands.

WILLIAM HARRIS  
For the ALABAMA BAPTIST.

## Things I Don't Like.

I don't like to see a brother enter the back door of a bar room to get a drink. It looks like his thirst for whiskey is too strong for his religion. Neither do I like to see a brother enter the front door of a saloon and take a drink, and come out and say he doesn't care what men say,—he is not going to hide. The trouble is, he is just to shame and feels but little interest in church or religion, at heart.

I don't like to see a man enter a saloon and take with him his little son, who watches every movement of the parent. How eagerly the little fellow watches as his father takes the drink. My brother, in doing this, it may be, and is often the case, that you have sown seeds that will be reaped in your own child's ruin.

I don't like to see a brother buy a bottle or jug of whiskey and gather half a dozen of his friends or neighbors and go in some out-of-the-way place and all imbibe until most of them are drunk. My brother, you have lost your opportunity to lead the same men to Christ. Remember in doing this, that you are not following the Master.

I don't like to see at nearly every monthly conference some brother rise up and say, "I was over at the cross roads some days ago and took a little too much spirits," when the truth is, he was heavily drunk. I know a few churches that are sorely afflicted by such members and have a hard time trying to keep them within the fold, hoping in the end that they may be saved.

I don't like to see a member of the church dealing out whiskey by the drink, bottle or jug; he is certainly far away from the paths of the righteous. One of two things should be speedily done; he should either quit, or he should be turned out. No telling the harm he is doing the cause of Christ daily.

I don't like to see men, and sometimes members of the church, walking the streets with a quart bottle of whiskey in each pocket, often hunting some out-of-the-way place to take a drink.

I don't like the way some of our brethren have acted and voted, who were members of our recent conference, and who will face the brethren when they return home. The loaves and fishes of the whiskey men overbalanced their love of good for the mothers, wives and little children of the drunkards, to say nothing about the cause of our Redeemer. In some places they will fail to receive the warm grasp of the hand of good men. Neither do they deserve it. The words, "unfaithful servants," should ring in their ears. Better stay at home; you are too weak to go out among the sharks; they swallow up the small fish.

I don't like to see men calling on young ladies, or going to gatherings where people gather for the purpose of spending a day in pleasure, full of whiskey. Our sisters, if they would, could teach some valuable lessons along this line. In many places that I visit, they could do great good by a few well directed frowns, to say nothing about refusing to admit them in society.

Christ meant that his religion should endure; and therefore he would not write it with an iron pen in the rock forever; he chose rather to have it engraven on the only immortal thing in this world, and that is the heart of man.—Peabody.

The greatest sin is, never to forgive it.

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## What Baptists Need.

Cullings from a symposium in the Christian Enquirer.

Baptist churches are, or are supposed to be, made up of baptized believers in Christ. The "one thing" essential to their prosperous efficiency is comprised in a single word—Loyalty. Loyalty to the Divine Master who is "Head over all things to the church which is his body." This loyalty must needs include the keeping of the commandments and of the ordinance as first delivered.

JOHN W. OLMESTRAD.

Boston, Mass.

Organization. A. E. DICKINSON.

Richmond, Va.

I would have them more careful as to the reception of members—requiring better evidence of regeneration. The efficiency of Baptist churches must always depend upon the fact of regeneration in the membership. In proportion as this fact is not present they are weak.

G. W. LASHER.

Cincinnati, O.

An exact and thorough knowledge, intellectually, spiritually, experimentally, of the Word of God.

To know the truth, and by the truth to live, includes all things the Truth God can give.

LEMUEL MOSS.

Minneapolis, Minn.

From an experience of seventeen years in the pastorate, and fifteen years as editor, I would put a good Baptist paper into every family connected with the Baptist church.

C. T. BAILEY.

Raleigh, N. C.

Would impart to pastors and laity, to the church in its entirety, a holy passion for soul saving.

L. H. TROWBRIDGE.

Detroit, Mich.

I would make them more aggressive.

H. M. WHARTON.

Baltimore, Md.

To secure to each individual member a personal interest in and persistent labor for particular soul saving.

LANSHAW BURROWS.

In answer to your question, I would say that the one thing I would do to make Baptist churches more efficient would be to take away from them the love of money.

T. T. EATON.

Louisville, Ky.

The present and future efficiency of our Baptist churches imperatively demands greater spirituality and thorough doctrinal training of all the members, old and young.

B. GRIFFITH.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Inasmuch as only about one tenth of our church members are actively and regularly engaged in Christian service, I would have the other nine tenths put into the harness for work, according to their adaptations.

H. L. MOREHOUSE.

New York City.

Try to make them more thoroughly acquainted with the teachings of the Word of God.

HENRY F. COLBY.

Dayton, O.

In answer to your question, I think I would say I would gather the whole congregation together at some convenient hour on the Lord's day to study the Scriptures.

WARREN RANDOLPH.

Newport, R. I.

I would bring them back to New Testament simplicity in doctrine and methods.

D. C. EDDY.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Not all churches are inefficient for the same reason. Each one has its own deficiency. The supplying of that means efficiency. No one thing is specific for ecclesiastical ills. Perhaps the thing most needed is a re-conversion of unused, executive and financial forces and the more intense consecration of every member. The waste of power is as fearful as it is sinful. The proportion of workers to members is wretchedly small. The slothful servant is our burden.

W. C. BITTING.

New York City.

I should urge every member to make God's Word his daily guide and inspiration in heart and life.

A. J. ROWLAND.

Baltimore, Md.

The consecration with Biblical intelligence of Christian business laymen.

GEO. M. STONE.

Hartford, Conn.

I would have them—pastor and people—to "be filled with the Spirit." Then the Gospel would be faithfully preached, sinners converted, money given without doubtful expedients, and every work would prosper.

A. C. DIXON.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

I would, if I could, make the large element of formalists Christians, and Christians zealous. Were professors disciples, the churches could not be efficient, and the cause of Christ would be speedily triumphant.

S. GIFFARD NELSON.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

If I could but one thing to make the Baptist churches more efficient in the cause of Christ, I











