

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST.

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## ALABAMA PULPIT.

### Replying Against God.

A Sermon.

REV. BY J. A. FRENCH.

Text: Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: "Why didst thou make me thus?"—Rom. 9:20. (R. V.)

We live in a time which is characterized by a decided spirit of inquiry, especially in certain lines. One thinks at all and tries to keep abreast of the times, he must have observed this tendency.

Remark the great stir of late over the evolution hypothesis; observe (the facts and fancies of physical sciences, whether in theological works imported from Germany, or in the pulpits of a few of the churches in our own land, and you will coincide with me. In addition to these indications of inquiry, we find also a growing disposition to *caril* because God has not more fully disclosed himself to man, as if man could in the nature of things understand God in all his thoughts and perfections, and as if he were not sovereign of the universe. This disposition reflects itself in some of the literature of the day; it is found in the vaunts of the free-thinkers, who some times talk as if all who differ from them are so many idiots; and it is also found among young men who affect to read a good deal and who wish to appear intellectual. There were days, when seemed to be very fast finding toward God, and to whom the apostle spoke saying, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why didst thou make me thus?"

I. *Man replieth against God in respect to his creation.*  
Instead of understanding or believing that in his wisdom God adapted man to the ends which he was designed to serve, not a few are disposed to complain because they are not differently made. They ask such questions as this, "Why is it necessary that I should have to toil in order to live? But they do not go beyond the simple requirement of work. If they would look deeper into the question they would discover that it is a blessing, for the slightest reflection reveals the truth that idleness is one of the worst curses of the world. It is true that in the curse on the earth, God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Still "active exertion in itself is a blessing; its exhausting effects, which are associated in our ideas with the word 'labor' are part of the curse." Even in Eden, before man's fall, we know that he was required to work, for we read that "the Lord God took Adam and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it"—i. e., to cultivate it. Paradise was not a place of exemption from work, as some seem to think, and I don't believe heaven will be. There'll be something to do there, and those who think it is so hard to have to work here, would better get acquainted with the idea that it is not a place where we shall sit down and talk about old times, but a place of employment, as well as of enjoyment.

We hear men replying against God also in such questions as this, "Why is it that we have so much suffering and pain? In general, the answer may be given that all suffering and pain is doubtless the result of sin. Of course, God could have made man incapable of sin, and then, he would not have known suffering, but for reasons which he has not seen fit to disclose he did not do so. But when we consider that God's goodness is manifest in that he has made us capable of happiness, and adapted our circumstances to that end, we cannot doubt that physical suffering is perfectly consistent with his goodness, though above our finite comprehension. If we admit that all physical suffering is traceable to sin, then it would seem to follow that all the trials and pains of the world are either in the nature of discipline or punishment, and are intended to bring us back to God.

When we go to excess in our pleasures or gratifications we suffer personally for it, and it is right that we should, for it is a safeguard against further excesses. If we eat too much we become sick. If we go in mad pursuit of pleasure our tired bodies, nervous headaches, and heavy eyelids tell the tale. Or if, in our desire to accomplish much, we overwork our bodies or minds, the pale cheeks, the sunken eyes, the emaciated form tells the tale, and it is this—we have

sinned against ourselves and are paying the penalty. Under these circumstances we verify the immutable law announced by Paul, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," a law which we often forget, and which many violate with seeming indifference until its fruits appear in their lives, and then they turn to God, saying, "Why hast thou made me thus?" Suppose you saw a blind man going toward a precipice, and you should warn him, and yet he would not stop, and you should run before, and hold a sword before him to keep him from killing himself. He is hurt, and his life is saved. This is goodness which prevents his destruction. Thus God deals with us who need to be made to think about our relations to him and our destiny.

In the same connection arises the complaint, If man is made capable of sinning, and then yields to the weakness of his nature, why should he be so severely punished? This question is on the lips of not a few, and it seems to charge God with undue severity. But how can a finite being estimate the heinousness of sin, or its sadful consequences before God? In proportion as one is pure and holy, and only in that proportion, can he begin to form a just estimate of it. Consider a man in the slums of the great city of New York. Has he any idea of sin? Has he any idea of all the worth of the name? There isn't a sin in the catalogue that he doesn't continually commit with impunity. What does he care about the Bible, or the churches, or responsibility to God? Not one thing, for he is allied to the brutes around him. Consider a gentle, refined, and pure Christian girl who has been so carefully reared that the blasphemy often heard on the streets has never broken on her ears. She has been shielded from every doubtful pleasure. She has associated only with those who, like herself, revere God's name, love his church and services, and would gladly do anything in her power to prove it. What a contrast there is between these two! They are as far apart as the poles! Yet this Christian girl has but imperfect conceptions of sin, and by as much as she is far above the man in the slums, by as much as she is infinitely more, is God above her in seeing sin as it really is in all its debasing power.

We must not forget that man was made a free agent, capable of choosing between good and evil. From the way in which some persons talk about God's punishment of sin they seem to view man as a machine which has no choice, but must go in a particular direction, whether it wills or not. Nothing is farther from the facts. God gives man the option. He sets before him good and evil. His word says so, and he is bidden to choose good and live. If with this light before him, and another light within him, his "thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing," he chooses to plunge into sin, how can he possibly evade the responsibility? Moreover, if man is not responsible before God's law, why should he be held responsible to human law? They are founded on exactly the same great underlying principles—and no human law is worthy of the name which is not founded on God's law.

Some men talk as if it is not only severe but arbitrary on the part of God to punish man for sin. But as a matter of fact, punishment for violating God's law is in the line of of justice. And as in earthly things, so it is also in spiritual things,—men reap what they sow. Let us take, for illustration, the punishment of licentiousness and intemperance. Every observing person knows that those addicted to these sins, if they continue in them, reap loss and home and offensive disease, and when long indulged the sensualist becomes haggard and bloated, and corrupted, and sinks into the grave prematurely. Such, also, is often the punishment of luxurious living, of a pampered appetite, of gluttony, as well as of intemperate drinking. "But whether the punishment manifests itself here or not, it will be reaped in its fullness hereafter—in the place of woe, where man's understanding, will, fancy—his whole soul will be debased and corrupt." Paul is not speaking at haphazard when he says, "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." He means just what he says, namely, that the natural fruit of fleshly mindedness is corruption. The corrupt flesh produces corruption. It is no mere arbitrary punishment—corruption is the fault, and corruption is the punishment. "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Don't you see that man himself is at fault, and that the future life only expands the seeds sown here? Seeing that we can have no just conception of sin, and that man is a free agent, and that sin brings its own punishment, it becomes us to cease saying, "Why hast thou made me thus?" God, who made man, knows exactly what to do with him without our suggestions, and we may be sure he will do what is right, for he cannot do otherwise.

II. *Man replieth against God as to his providence.*  
It is nothing in common to find persons, some of them in "and some of them out of the churches, taking God to account for the care and superintendence he exercises over them. They have "their own sweet wills," or perhaps I would better say, "their own sour wills," and their preconceptions of the way in which God should govern the world, and because he doesn't do it their way they seem to think it isn't done right. And it is noticeable that they would have God very busy about them and theirs, and that if this could be accomplished all else would be very well. I know I speak a little out of the usual line,

but it is not true that many persons seem to think that the sphere of God's thoughts is somewhat measurable by their own.

If their views were carried out, their desires granted, God would be constantly working miracles, for the reason that they would have him give what is desired at the expense of established laws. For instance, some years ago, in a company of friends, the conversation turned on the providence of God. A lady present, who was a member of the church, said, "I know one thing, I never shall forgive God for taking my mother away!" I was astounded. It seems that her mother had been sick and had died a natural death; that prayer had been made for her and she did not recover, because it was God's will she should not. But why this professing Christian woman felt so hardly against God I could not see. God's providential care may have been none the less real, nay, may have been more real in taking her mother than in leaving her here to suffer. What sayeth Paul? "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours,"—that is they are controlled and administered for the best interest of Christians, whether we have the one or the other.

Let those who make no profession of faith in Christ cavil at God's providences, if they will, but let us never doubt that he who "rules in the armies of the heavens," is too wise to err. Let us remember that he sees all things from the beginning to the end—every providential dispensation in its relation to every other providential dispensation, and that he is sure to make them work together for our good. Those were timely words of Jay, when he says, "If we know not the peculiarities of the disease, how can we judge properly of the remedy which the physician prescribes? If we know not the station which the son is destined to occupy, how can we judge of the wisdom of the father in the education he is giving him? And how can we decide on the means the Supreme Being employs, while we are ignorant of the reasons which move him, and the plans which he holds in view?"

Here we are often enveloped in the mists and fogs, but shall we say there fore that the sun does not shine? It does shine, and we know it; and as it would be the sheerest folly to say that the sun is not shining because we do not see it, so it is the height of folly to say that God's providences are not wise or right because we do not understand them. If we could understand all God's doings immediately, we should be compelled to question his greatness, for who by searching can find out God? "Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Nay, by as much as the infinite surpasses the finite, by that much are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts. But while some of God's providences seem inscrutable, many properly viewed, are really scrutable. If a boy goes hunting and carries a loaded gun, and in getting over a fence loses the muzzle toward himself, and the hammer strikes the fence and the gun goes off and kills him, this is a perfectly scrutable providence. It is so, because God has ordained, according to his natural laws, that in just this concurrence of circumstances death must ensue. It is a providence, because God foresees that it would occur, but even he could not prevent it, (I speak reverently,) without working a miracle.

For some time past a few thoughtful persons have been impressed that the destruction of our forests is not wise, that it is a great measure expending the floods from which Cincinnati, Louisville and other cities have of late years suffered; the explanation being that formerly, after great rain falls the roots of the trees and of all the innumerable shrubs, bushes and vines and ferns that thrive in the shadow of the trees, held the water until it percolated into the earth, or by degrees, into the smaller or larger streams, whereas now they flow into the streams far sooner, thus also making droughts more probable.

It is argued that to the same cause, in part at least, we may attribute the severe blizzards which have become so much more frequent of late years, and some think the cyclones. Now, suppose these cutting down of trees, and our forests, cutting them down continuously and, planning no trees, and towns and cities shall be swept away by wind and water, and hundreds of souls perish, can we honestly say these are inscrutable providences? Will it not be "the discipline of relentless law," testifying to our stupidity?

Some one has aptly said, "Modern science has brought the world a fifth gospel. In it we read that God commands us to give him our whole hearts, as well as our whole minds, for we cannot know him till we discern him in every minutest fact, and every immutable law of the physical universe, as in every fact and law of the moral." "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Let us not hold God responsible for our ignorance and shortsightedness, and then insult him by saying, "Why hast thou made me thus?"

III. *Man replieth against God in relation to redemption.*  
It was on a question connected with the salvation of men that the apostle first used the text, which, by the way, contained allusions to similar teachings in Isaiah and Jeremiah. The reference is to God's electing and predestinating men to salvation, and leaving others in their sins. We have Pharaoh specially mentioned as having been raised up that God might show in him his power, and that his

name should be published abroad in all the earth. The purpose of Paul is to show that God placed Pharaoh in just such circumstances as were fitted to develop his character—to bring out what was in him already, and thus to show that he would not do God's will, and that when he had come to this point, then God gave him up to hardness of heart. Paul seems to see that this would provoke the question, "Why doth God still find fault?" If men act in accordance with his purpose, and if he exercises his sovereign will in the bestowment of mercy, how can he blame them? This looks like a good objection, but it is based on our inability to reconcile man's free agency with God's purposes, and assumes their incompatibility, whereas they are simply beyond our ability to harmonize. In God's thoughts they must necessarily harmonize, because they are both taught by his word, and he cannot deny himself. Anticipating this objection, Paul affirms God's right to do as he pleases, whether we understand him or not. He seems to say, the idea of a miserable mortal, the creature of a day, sitting in judgment on the doings of the Great I Am! When God declares his will man should be silent, trusting where he cannot trace, and adoring where he cannot penetrate!

From the time when these words were penned until now, there have always been some ready to arraign God as to his plan of redemption; but as long as the spirit of irreverence, whence came, its always arise, shall claim that this view involves injustice, just so long we can say with Paul, Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Let us understand that so far from God's being unjust in not extending his grace to all alike, he is under obligation to extend it to none. We are all under the condemnation of his righteous law, and it is of his great mercy alone that any of us are saved.

I have read of a petty sovereign of an insignificant Indian tribe in our country, who every morning stalked out of his house, bade the sun good morning, and pointed out to him with his finger the curse he was to take for the day. In this arrogance any man is contemptible, but ours, while we would dictate to God as to his plan of salvation? Not a particle; it is all in a piece.

I wish to conclude with some words from Charles Kingsley's "Out of the Deep." Says he, "Whatever may be the mysteries of life and death, there is one mystery which the cross of Christ reveals to us, and that is the infinite and absolute goodness of God. Let all the rest remain a mystery so long as the mystery of the cross of Christ gives us faith for all the rest. Faith, I say. The mystery of evil, of terror, of death, the gospel does not pretend to solve, but it tells us that the mystery is proved to be soluble, for God himself has taken upon him the task of solving it, and Christ has proved by his own act, that if there be evil in the world, it is none of his, for he hates it, fights against it, and he fought against it to the death. For however ill the world may go, or seem to go, the cross is the everlasting token that God so loved the world that he spared not his only begotten Son, but freely gave him for it."

Oa, have you tasted of his grace—have you sheltered in his fold? If not, I invite you, in my Master's name, to come to him to day.

### Origin of "Pontiff."

The Rambler of the *National Baptist*, produces the following:

The study of words is an interesting pursuit. In the olden time in the Roman Empire, men wished to be known by their great works, viaducts, bridges, roads. In the course of time the title *pontifex maximus*, or "the great bridge builder," came to be regarded as the highest title that could be given to a ruler. This title descended to the successor of the Roman Emperors (not by any means the successor of the Apostles and their Master), and he is called Pontiff.

But here comes a remarkable circumstance; the men who have built bridges and court houses and Panama canals and Pacific railroads, have usually made a pretty good thing out of it; and their names have not been synonymous with honesty. Now, days to say that a man was the greatest of bridge builders would certify to his wealth. Under the Tweed dynasty, when everything was charged up to the public at from ten to twenty times its cost, some one in the court house was moving a plain chair a little carelessly, when some one in an authority said to him, "You must be careful of that chair; it cost the country \$4000." *Pontifex maximus* now days might be thought to be the Latin for "swindler."

Can there be anything in the connection between the several facts? Is there a deeper meaning than might appear on the surface in the Pope being called *Pontifex Maximus*, or Pontiff, for short?

Nothing is cheaper than orthodoxy in a loose meaning of that word. It is nothing but conformity to the prevailing belief. The orthodox Russian, the orthodox Italian, the orthodox Turk, the orthodox Englishman, each chooses the easiest way. It requires neither thought, nor effort, nor sacrifice to drift. But it does require all these, and all of them to the degree of painful stress, to be a Christian. There is only one orthodoxy that is truly such, and that is to know the will of Christ and do it. And what ever preacher or teacher holds himself down to the doing and teaching of the truth as it is in Jesus—he is orthodox; he is in harmony with the eternal truth.—Chicago Interior.

### The Dedication of Baptism of Infants and Children.

BY R. I. DRAUGHON.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 19:14.

Perhaps no passage in the entire Bible has been more misapplied than the one now under consideration. As summed to be one of the prime texts of Peditism, it has been wrested from its true and simple meaning, and converted into a pillar of support for an idea in nowise suggested or justified by its verbiage. Our blessed Savior simply embraced the occasion, as he very often, at other times did, to teach a lesson of truth as involved in his proposed Spiritual Kingdom, and that was, that its subjects were innocent and guileless, and pure and unadorned, and there is no intimation whatever in the passage, as acknowledged by the most strenuous advocates of infant baptism. Words are significant of ideas, and ideas can only be conveyed by the use of words and phrases; and, if we have words incapable of expressing the idea, we attach to them, it is proof, beyond all question, that we are straining the interpretation; and this no scholar or critic will dispute. If the passage teaches baptism in any wise, it does so in a manner as yet unknown to expositors and translators; for no term is used to suggest water, or any of its baptismal applications, as washing, bathing, sprinkling, and so on. How, then, has it come to be so construed? The answer seems to be too clear for the credit of Peditism—because it was hard pressed, and had to find some authority for its proceeding; and this was the best it could do in the New Testament Scriptures; and on this incident, with the aid of a little sophistical plausibility, it might build up the idea of "a dedication of our children to God in holy baptism"—isn't it so? What other reason can be assigned for such an use of the text? Every one admits that there is not a syllable about baptism in it—why then so apply it? Can a deed convey money, rights, or property, without any specifications of such things? The proposal is preposterous!

But the advocates of Peditism have adopted the passage as a proof text, we will meet the issue with them, and show that, according to their way of baptizing, they have no right to it; even admitting, for argument's sake, that it does have something to do with baptism, and so, now, let us see! They bring the children to Christ, as in a state of helplessness—too immature to understand to be baptized—too unconscious to know that they are so brought; and our Lord said, "Suffer them to come!" Now how is this?—what does the text say?—"Bring your children to Christ" (you do the conveying), or "suffer them to come" (of themselves, they doing the conveying)—what does the grammar say? Ah, the learned priest of Rome and father in the church, when he took this passage to build with it the fabric of child-baptism didn't know, or consider, that the verb "to come" was active; and that it over-whelmingly taught the great doctrine of the ignorant Baptists—that they (the children) must come themselves, and give themselves to Christ, in baptism, by an obedience to his command; but it is so; and all the theologians and learned Doctors of the law cannot change it. Jesus said, let them "Come!" "Suffer them to come!" The action must be performed and done by the child; and now, will any one have the temerity to say that an infant has this power, or capability, leaving out of question the will? And now verily were the walls of this Jericho under the sound of this ram's horn—are they not prostrate? are they not fallen? The plain grammar says so; and that the grammar in all cases settles the interpretation, all must admit—what then? Why, simply and only this, that the advocates of Peditism must give up this text as an impossibility to their interpretation; for if the verb indicates self action on the part of the child as necessitated, they can not supply it; unless indeed they wait until its developments of body and mind are adequate; and even then, it must come of its own free will, for the text says, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not," which last is all that the parents, guardians, and bystanders are to do.

We regret that duty requires us to tear away this veil of happy delusion from the pious and considerate minds of fond parents, who are concerned about the spiritual welfare of their offspring; but God's Word must be vindicated; and all antagonistic errors and observances be condemned. Truth is truth; and no one should be willing to abide in the comfort of false doctrine and practice, be they never so great. "See that thou dost make it according to the pattern which I gave thee in the mount," said God to Moses about the tabernacle; and as our Lord Jesus Christ directs us in reference to his institutes, so only must we do; neither more, neither less; but, indeed, we bring ourselves into the condemnation of adding to or taking from his Word; and have visited upon us the judgments denounced against such a course therein.

It is always a safe and comfortable way to take the Bible, as we do with other books, according to its plain literal statements, and let far fetched and equivocal constructions alone; and, doing so, we will never, or seldom, be amiss in what we do. We know that our Redeemer said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me;" as fitted, while thus pure and innocent, for my kingdom; and that

is enough. Let us not go beyond this and predicate a speculation that may at last turn out to be a mere vagary of the too zealous mind—

Attuned but to the music of a creed: And ready to adopt all methods in its need!

### Baptism Important.

We Baptists frequently say that little importance is attached to baptism; but when we open our eyes and take a plain view of the matter, we see that the Christ began and closed his ministry with baptism.

We judge of a man by the company he keeps. Hence, to know a man's associates is in a certain sense to know him. Baptism keeps company with belief, faith, salvation and damnation. Hence we judge of baptism by the company it keeps in the Word of God, and decide whether it is a thing of small moment. Another fact worthy of our most devout attention is, that baptism is the only duty of all the duties enjoined upon us which we are required to perform but once.

This fact gives it a distinction which it enjoys all alone. Once, only in the history of the world was the true character of God revealed from heaven, and that was in the act of baptism.

Let us further remember that in the performance of this duty the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are named. Not so in other duties; therefore we can conclude that baptism is a duty that should engage our most devout attention.

L. H. HUFF.

Cottondale, Ala.

### Letter from Bro. Cova.

Of Interest About Cuba.

Editor of the *Alabama Baptist*—  
DEAR BRO: The particular condition of this island makes of this mission a very special one. We are not working among uncivilized people. In fact, it has almost every improvement of modern time, in union with the French refinement and the old Spanish aristocracy. It has had slavery until recently; and all rude labor has been in the hands of negroes; and the white population has been reared in the highest despise of the other race, and every hard work has been considered as indign of the nobility and privileges of the whites. Hence, a great passion for high offices and professions, such as medical, law, pharmacy, notary, musical, theatrical, &c. The great majority of rich young men are sent annually to France, Germany, England, Spain, Italy and the United States to acquire a thorough education, though they have here some good universities and other institutions of learning. They have introduced railroads, telegraphs, telephones, electric light, and, in short, every novelty of present civilization, either scientific or artistic. They are particular on their dressing; and the French fashion bears the crown among them. Their sugar estates and tobacco plantations are their pride, and the most important source of all their revenues. In politics, they aspire to be come an independent people, and have been fighting ten years to throw off the yoke of Spain; though the peace was signed on the treaty, it remains in the hearts, and no good Cuban accepts as his friend any Spaniard, and not a distinguished Cuban lady would marry one of them. Native Cubans, though descended from Spanish parents, hate the old Nation's covetousness and haughtiness towards them, as Spain has always considered this island as a mere colony, only good for extracting from it as much money as she can by exorbitant taxes and other onerous exactions. Besides, no Cuban is selected by the Spanish Government to occupy any official appointment in the island, and governors, as well as financial and military employments are covered by Spaniards exclusively. For all these causes not a small part of the general population would desire the country to become an American territory or state; while others will never agree on that point.

But now, considering this people religiously, the prospect is awful. Roman Catholicism, supported in everything by the Spanish Government, is the only legal established religion; Protestants being merely tolerated. The Clergy comes all from Spain, as the Government does not like to have Cuban priests, and our courts that license the sale of strong drink, license gambling houses, libertinism, disease, death, and all suffering, all crimes, all disasters, all murders, all woe! It is the courts and the legislature that are opening this wide gate into which so many thousands of our people, male and female, are passing, and which leads to Hell at last. And, brother editor, how much better is a Baptist who puts his name to a paper to authorize the sale of the stuff in his own town? There is a feeling, and to no small degree, that the man who is an abettor to the crime of selling whiskey, is also criminal for murder and all the dark role of sins that follow the saloon. Down with every drinking shop! But save the dealer, for he is as good, in my opinion, as those who give him license, though he helps to damn two thousand souls per annum.

Oh, God! what are we to do with this beast of iniquity that is at large in all our land? I do believe that Christianity can oust this beast from D. to Beersheba, from mountain to seaboard, if we will. Oh, for a unanimous cry unto God to deliver us from this mistress of iniquity! Think of it! one hundred and sixty thousand persons cared for by the charitable and reformatory institutions, the prisons, hospitals &c., each year in the cities of New York and Brooklyn alone. All caused by strong drink; besides ten to fifteen thousand

Church of Rome as an official body which enters in the plan of the Government, and only good for them three times in life, first when they had a child to baptize, second for marrying a daughter, and third, for making the funeral to their dead.

So, there remains only the lowest classes for attending their mass, humbly put in the background, far enough from the rich and powerful, and only good for giving a show of religious attendance, quite disregarded and despised either by the priests or the privileged ones.

Such is the field the church of Christ is working here, and trying to find her way among the deep ranks of fanaticism, ignorance, pride and ungodliness. But the Master did promise this field, as well as any other, "unto the harvest," and his work is to be done in mind with the simple injunction: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." So we preach; He will care of the rest.

Until now the Lord we serve has blessed our poor efforts; we make his converts among every one of the different kinds of society in this island, and they love our Lord, and read joyfully his Bible, and sing our hymns of praise and bless him whom they had not known before. All glory to his name, and to his name alone, not to human power or skill.

The Cuban mission merits a deep interest; it is the Master's will that it be so. The American brethren who recently visited us in an excursion were moved to tears by the consecration and warm-hearted love of our Baptist people.

May the Lord impress your mind in that direction, and your prayers never fail us.

Till my next letter I remain,  
Yours affec'tly,  
J. V. COVA.  
Havana, Cuba, Feb'y 15, 1893.

### Bro. Carter's Trip.

Dear Baptist: A few days ago I had the pleasure of visiting my former home and friends in Morgan county, Ala. It was a flying trip. My only business being to say some words that made two of my former young friends man and wife—i. e., Mr. Scott Reeves and Miss Minnie Sharpe. Bro. Reeves is one of Morgan county's noblest sons, and Miss Minnie has no superior in womanly virtues, beauty and intellect.

I ran up to Decatur, which was the postoffice of my father and mother for fifty years. I did not see any of the good pastors of the Baptist churches there—was in the city only four hours—but Judge Simpson told me that our cause is pretty well represented in all parts of Decatur. Thank God for that.

I spent two nights at Flint, a suburb of Decatur. Here lives my only sister who is on this side of the great river; and also five children of another sister who rests with our father and mother in the spirit land. I preached for the saints at Mt. Pisgah church at Flint, in their new house of worship, which is a beauty and a credit to the church and community in which it so proudly stands, pointing back to the victories won, and forward to the possibilities before her. I was for ten years the pastor of this noble church, and was baptized into its membership, and ordained to the gospel ministry there; and the same man who baptiz'd and ordained me is the honored pastor to-day—I mean that good and useful man, J. Gunn. The church is doing well, and will be likely to do so with Gunn in the lead.

At Hartsell, which was the base of operations, I did not preach; was in the town only two nights, on both of which it rained incessantly. But the people of all the denominations seemed to be religious. I did not see the pastor of our church here, Rev. H. J. Halbrooks, who lives at Cullman. I was delighted at one thing, and that is, I never once smelt the breath of whiskey while I was in Hartsell. I met and conversed with men upon whose breath I inhaled, in other days, to smell whiskey, tobacco, onions &c., but who now are clothed and in their right minds. I am sure it all came about by the closing up of those abominable dram shops that once flourished there.

Brother Elder, I am more and more convinced, by observation, that our courts that license the sale of strong drink, license gambling houses, libertinism, disease, death, and all suffering, all crimes, all disasters, all murders, all woe! It is the courts and the legislature that are opening this wide gate into which so many thousands of our people, male and female, are passing, and which leads to Hell at last. And, brother editor, how much better is a Baptist who puts his name to a paper to authorize the sale of the stuff in his own town? There is a feeling, and to no small degree, that the man who is an abettor to the crime of selling whiskey, is also criminal for murder and all the dark role of sins that follow the saloon. Down with every drinking shop! But save the dealer, for he is as good, in my opinion, as those who give him license, though he helps to damn two thousand souls per annum.

Oh, God! what are we to do with this beast of iniquity that is at large in all our land? I do believe that Christianity can oust this beast from D. to Beersheba, from mountain to seaboard, if we will. Oh, for a unanimous cry unto God to deliver us from this mistress of iniquity! Think of it! one hundred and sixty thousand persons cared for by the charitable and reformatory institutions, the prisons, hospitals &c., each year in the cities of New York and Brooklyn alone. All caused by strong drink; besides ten to fifteen thousand

children barefoot and bareheaded, and no one to care for them—all on account of drinking saloons. How long will this stream of woe and misery flow? Echo answers, how long? Lord save us, for Jesus' sake.

W. B. CARTER.

Girard, Ala.

### Salem and Vicinity.

Alabama Baptist: Inclosed please find \$1.50. Send paper to Rev. D. Littleton, Salem, Ala. Bro. L. is the pastor of Pleasant Grove church, eight miles south of Salem. I attended said church on Saturday before the second Sunday in February, which is their meeting day, and intended presenting the claims and urging the almost necessity of our paper being a savior unto every Baptist family (visitor is not the proper word, I should have said inmate); but it being a very inclement day, there were only three members present. Sometimes I am almost persuaded to think that some of our brethren are a little too much afraid of a little sprinkling especially on meeting days. I did not make my speech—empty benches could not appreciate it. THE ALABAMA BAPTIST is not taken by any member of the church at Pleasant Grove. I will visit them again soon, and make an effort to get up a club.

The Salem Baptist church, since our last association (the Buskeger) has lost about twelve members, and the Sunday school about twenty-five scholars; nearly all moved to Texas. This is a heavy loss for our church, and in some respects sad, but we trust it may prove good seed scattered abroad, which in the future may yield an abundant harvest for the Master. The reduction of our membership will require of our diminished numbers more liberal contributions to pastor, missions, and other denominational enterprises, but we have a noble little band of men and women, and by the grace of God Salem church is not going to all be dead. We will continue to fire "our gun."

I am very much pleased with Dr. Teague's sermon, and wish that every down in the mouth Baptist in Alabama could read it. The idea of publishing a sermon every week from some one of our preachers will double the value of the ALABAMA BAPTIST. So many of our churches have preaching only once a month, this plan will give four extra sermons, which should be read loud on Sunday in every family, besides reaching a number of people who from cause, or intent rarely attend church. Very truly,  
J. M. LOVE.

Mr. Burdette's Ounts with all Students.

The Bible is to make us know our ignorance as well as to give us light. Faith only can read the first chapter of Genesis aright. We were not at the beginning, and we have not had the experience of world making. Beauty and order will not satisfy God without righteousness.

We must have the revelation in the heart and the revelation in the book. Don't give headaches instead of earaches. To be a shining light we must have a heart burning.

There is no higher title than "sent from God."

If we leave the wolves alone we cease to be shepherds. We are to burn, not amuse. Baptist ministers don't like dancing, or the very fact that one of their number lost his head through it.

Our hearers must see that we firmly believe in what we preach. The most damning thing is for a preacher to preach the gospel as an actor.

If you can be silent keep silent. Some sermons seemed to be no good until the provision merchant wrapped them round his butter.

Make your sermons red hot; never mind what the people say; we are not to go in for snowballing on Sundays. Initiate the Salvation Army and go in with a smash—let us take some of their earnestness.



strengthened, while the editor is knocked down and shattered. Be a preacher, young man."







