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Annual Report of the Bible Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The first Annual Report of benevolent organizations, do not, and cannot, generally, present more than an account of the labors in the process of organization, the progress made in organizing, and the present condition and prospects of the body.

Although the Board are not able to report the accomplishment of all that has been ordered and aimed at by them during the past year, still they flatter themselves that they will be able to make such an exhibit of their labors, and of the past and prospective condition of the Bible cause in the South, as will cheer and encourage their friends to prosecute its parameters by greatly increasing their labors in its behalf.

Immediately upon the adjournment of the Convention, the members-elect of the Board met in the session-room of the First Baptist Church, the place of worship and organized themselves into a system of laws for their government. A correspondence was immediately opened with the American and the Foreign Bible Societies, and other benevolent bodies, with a view to arrange for the procurement of Bibles and Testaments, upon the best terms for home distribution, and with the American and Foreign Bible Societies in order to a vigorous and harmonious co-operation in the domestic and foreign distribution of the Word of Life.

A correspondence was also opened, by the Board, with the corresponding secretary of the Board, who, doubting as to what was his duty, in view of his family afflictions, and other opposing circumstances, desired time to enquire, by prayer and a consultation with prudent brethren, what the Divine will was, concerning him, in this matter. It was near the last of May before he became satisfied that it was his duty to accept the appointment. He then immediately applied the Board of his conclusions, and of his effects and set out for this place, but one of his children was so suddenly and dangerously attacked with convulsions, so to compel him to remain at Louisville so long that it was not until the 4th day of July that he arrived at his post. Exteriorly immediately upon his labors, he has prosecuted them to the full extent of his ability, except so far as his labors may have been embarrassed by the long and painful affliction of his self-decaying and godly wife; whose earthly pilgrimage terminated on the 18th of March last.

The members of the Board have evinced a becoming zeal in the work assigned them, and the measure of their success may be learned from the following details.

INCIDENTAL MEASURES.

In view of the peculiar condition of the Bible cause in the South, the Board found it indispensable, in order to an intelligent effort to organize all its constituency into a great and systematized agency for the circulation of the Scriptures among all nations, that that constituency should be immediately informed of the Board's plan of operations, and that the Board should be put in possession of the exact condition of the Bible cause in each State and Territory in the South. To effect this, a large number of circulars were prepared and sent out by the Corresponding Secretary, post-paid, addressed to leading ministers and members in each State and Territory in the South, setting forth the plan of operations proposed by the Board, and soliciting immediate information upon all the points of interest connected with the Bible cause in each State and Territory. In addition to these circulars, special letters were written by the Corresponding Secretary to leading ministers in many parts of the South, to the information of them and to enlist their aid in the work.

Comparatively few have responded to these circulars or letters, but still by the means the Board have been put in possession of information sufficient to afford a tolerably distinct view of the condition of the Bible cause in each section of the South; and they feel persuaded, that the means of operations are generally understood and approved of by intelligent brethren in every State.

THE BIBLE CAUSE IN THE SOUTH.

Virginia, Kentucky and Alabama are the States in the South, upon the organization of this Board, had any Bible organization even for home purposes. In some of the South and South Carolina, and Tennessee were local Societies doing but little for this cause; and even in the three States mentioned, comparatively little had been done because of their isolation from each other and the other Southern

States; so that every where the Bible cause languished in the South.

Our brethren in many of the Southern States have been doing nothing in the Bible department, and in those States where they have aimed at any thing, the cause was so eclipsed by other interests, that little attention could be secured to this great and best of causes.

All this apathy, upon the Bible cause, in the South, does not proceed from a lack of interest, on the part of our brethren of the South, in behalf of the Bible. No! the Bible cause is specially and peculiarly theirs. But it is the inevitable result of a state of disorganization. Since 1822, they have felt themselves thrust out from those organizations whose Boards are located at the North; and having no Bible organization in the South, with which they could identify themselves, or co-operate, each State and Territory felt itself thrown back upon its individuality. Thus forced into a state of dis-association from their brethren in the other States, they have been virtually cut off from those avenues for the circulation of the Bible which opens so amply to organizations adequate to this great work. Cut off, therefore, from the means of laboring in this good work, they naturally turned their attention to other departments of benevolence; but everywhere, where the Board's Agents have gone, they have found that the Bible cause is pre-eminently the cause of Southern Baptists, and they cheerfully answer to the calls of the Board.

PRESENT CONDITION AND PROSPECTS.

All the States here! from have expressed their hearty concurrence in the establishment of this Board, and have either become auxiliary to it, or propose to become auxiliary, so soon as a plan of Bible operations for those States, can be arranged. An interest in the Bible cause is every where reviving, and although it will take time and much labor to organize the whole South systematically to operate in this great department of Christian benevolence. Still the work is advancing, and in every State visited by the Corresponding Secretary, he has received the most cordial welcome and hearty co-operation.

It was the wish of the Board that the Corresponding Secretary should attend each State Anniversary, as they successively occurred; but as they were remote from each other and some of them occurring so near in time to each other, it has only been in his power to attend the following:

Edisto Association.—This is a large body, partly in Kentucky and partly in Tennessee, and prosecutes its benevolent labors, independent of the two State organizations, of which it covers a part. This body dissolved its auxiliary relation with the American and Foreign Bible Society at its previous meeting, and at its last session became auxiliary to this Board. As the funds then on hand had been mainly collected under its auxiliary arrangements to the American and Foreign Bible Society and a part was for subscriptions on life memberships; with a view to satisfy all doubts, and to meet the wishes of the body, it was resolved to send the whole amount on hand to the Board of the American and Foreign Bible Society to be specially appropriated to the use of this Board. The sum sent was \$104 75. That Board, however, did not recognize the right of the Edisto Association to direct the appropriation of the amounts paid on life memberships, and withheld the sum of \$193 36 on that account, allowing as to receive in books to the value of \$511 39; which have been daily forwarded.

General Association of Tennessee and North Alabama.—This body held its meeting at Franklin the last week in October. It was well attended; and responded to an appeal in behalf of the Bible by donations and subscriptions to the amount of \$363 10, and cordially assumed an auxiliary relation to this Board.

Bible Society of Alabama.—This body held its anniversary simultaneously with the State Convention, at Tuskegee, the first week in Nov. This Society and the Virginia Society, are the only two which have continued to labor in connection with the American and Foreign Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention. A collection was taken in cash and subscriptions to a large amount; and the society promptly appropriated \$400 to the foreign fund of this Board. It has subsequently sent on an order, through this Board, and obtained upwards of \$700 worth of Bibles and Testaments which are now in a course of distribution, by eight Colporteurs, under the auspicious direction of Rev. Platt Boat, acting as the joint Agent of the Southern Baptist Publication Society, and of this State Bible Society.

they will be able to dispose of a much larger amount of books than they have on hand, during the ensuing year; and he expects a much larger sum of money will be furnished by the society at its next meeting, and a larger amount of books be required.

South Carolina Convention.—This body met at Society Hill, the third week in November, and, having a week to spare, the Corresponding Secretary attended the meeting of the Welsh-Neck Association, at Darlington, on the second week in November. This is a large and active body of intelligent brethren, and here the Bible cause found many hearty friends, who proved their zeal by donations and subscriptions to the amount of \$372 93, all except \$82, in cash.

The Conventional meeting at Society Hill was small, and greatly absorbed with the claims of the Baptist State University; still they entered most heartily into the Bible interest, and so amended their constitution as to become auxiliary to this Board. Small as the meeting was, the sum of \$103 47 was furnished there for Bible purposes, \$74 97 of which was from the Convention, and \$28 50 from the Charleston Association.

Returning homewards, on the next Saturday and Sabbath, the Secretary had the pleasure of meeting with the Savannah River Association. It is a large, intelligent and wealthy body, and entered heartily into the objects of this Board. Here an additional sum of \$116 80 cash, and \$224 50 in subscriptions was obtained for Bible purposes; (fifty dollars of which has been since paid) \$150 of the above subscription is by a noble hearted minister, and is equal to cash.

Returning home from this tour, our Corresponding Secretary found his amiable wife so low as that her physicians apprehended daily that she could hardly survive to the next; and in his painful condition she lingered on until the day of her death, as noted above, so that it was impossible for him to leave her for many hours at a time, during the period of her severe illness.

Georgia State Convention.—This body of pious and intelligent brethren, met at Columbus on the second week in April. Being quiet on the State side, it was said to be less fully a representation of the State than usual. It, however, consisted of a body of able devoted men. They have had no State organization for Bible purposes, for years past; but they hailed the revival of the Bible cause in the South with prompt and cordial zeal. An efficient Bible Board, (under the supervision of the Convention,) was appointed and located at LaGrange, and a collection of \$63 05 taken up for its use on Lord's day, and \$12 subsequently paid for the same purpose; also a subscription of \$110, to be paid to that Board.

The sum of \$67 95 being sent up to the Convention for Bible purposes, the Board refused to take, as it had been sent up previous to their appointment; it was therefore promptly handed over to our Corresponding Secretary for the use of this Board. The Board also appropriated \$60 of the money collected at the Convention, for the use of this Board.

An occurrence, particularly ominous of the spirit with which our Georgia brethren are entering upon the Bible cause, is worthy of a special notice here. Upon the return of the Rev. Professor Brantly, from the Convention, he addressed a letter to our excellent brother, W. H. Turpin, of Augusta, in which he gave such an account of the spirit which pervaded the Convention, upon the Bible question as induced that liberal brother, to transmit a check on New York, for \$100, for the use of this Board.

Bible Society of Virginia.—The Board of this Society is located in Norfolk. It has been doing what it could, under the circumstances. It was the first to respond to our Circular, and promptly to declare itself auxiliary to this Board. It has appropriated through this Board \$1000 for Foreign Missions, \$500 for Domestic Missions, and \$25 for the Indian Mission Association.

We learn by a letter from the Secretary that they have two depositories for Bibles and Testaments; one at Norfolk and the other at Charlottesville, but they have no agents or colporteurs in the field, and our good brother gives no statement as to the amount of books distributed by them.

Mississippi.—This State has been partially visited by Rev. P. S. Gayle, as Agent of the Board, and is favorably disposed to the objects of this Board as is also the Western District of Tennessee. Subscriptions to a considerable amount, extending through a period of five or six years, have been obtained by brother Gayle, both in Mississippi and West Tennessee, on which upwards of \$300 has been collected.

North Carolina.—This State has a Society, but seems to be doing nothing except by the pious students of Wake Forest College, during vacations; but the President of the Board, Rev. J. J. James, assured our Corresponding Secretary that they were ready to enter heartily into co-operation with us, and urged him to visit the State.

Missouri.—This State has no organization for Bible purposes, but its State Association, at its last session, passed resolutions favorable to our organization, and declared themselves auxiliary to it; but they have no agent for the Bible, and adhere neither they nor this Board have been able to procure an Agent for that State. The American and Foreign Bible Society's agent is allowed to occupy the State until we can get an agent to enter it.

Maryland.—We understand that this State has no organization for Bible purposes, nor are we informed as to what they are doing or propose to do; we hope, however, to be better informed.

Florida.—This State has no organization for Bible purposes, but we have a pious and devoted Colporteur in the State, and he has been supplied by us with a hundred and twenty dollars worth of Bibles and Testaments, and we learn from him that he is progressing in his work.

We have recently received a letter from Rev. W. B. Cooper, in behalf of the Florida Association, informing us, in answer to our Circular, that they have no agency for the Bible in that State, and pressing us to send one out, assuring us of his being cordially received.

Arkansas.—A local Bible Society in this State, sets forth, by her Secretary, the destitution of the State, the inability of the churches to supply the wants of the State, and urges us to send an agent to that State; but, as yet, it has been impossible to procure one.

Texas.—Many Circulars, and several private letters, have been sent to Texas, but as yet we have had no response.

Louisiana.—We have had no response from this State, and are unable to say any thing about its dispositions or prospects, in relation to the Bible cause. We hope to find out more during the ensuing winter.

Kentucky.—There has been an efficient Bible organization in this State for years. It remained auxiliary to the American and Foreign Bible Society, (with the exception of a partial divergence of its funds one year to the Southern Foreign Mission Board,) from its organization until its annual meeting in October, 1850. At that meeting it dissolved its auxiliary relation with that Board, claimed the control of all the funds on hand and amounts pledged, and assumed an independent position.

The President of this Board, attended their last anniversary and presented its claims to that body; but it preferred still to occupy its independent position; and although its Board has been addressed by letter, since the anniversary; we are not in possession of any fact or information calculated to encourage the expectation that they intend a co-operation with us; nor are we able to say what they are doing to supply the destitute, either at home or abroad.

AGENTS.

The great impediment to the prosecution of the Board's plans and purposes is, the difficulty of securing suitable Agents to occupy the various portions of the field. So great is the demand in all parts of our country for pastors, especially the more gifted, that ministers feel constrained to confine themselves to the supply of the churches. The current of our interests is widening and deepening in every direction; but alas, it seems impossible to find suitable agents to engage in the work that demands them.

DESTITUTION AND MEANS OF SUPPLY.

Though we have been able to survey very partially, as yet, the condition of the field, which we have been called to occupy, still we have learned that, independent of the Foreign demand, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of the Colporteurs of the American Bible Society, and other benevolent Societies in the South, there are still thousands without the Bible.

The plan of the Board is that, each State, able to do so, shall supply its own destitution by agencies of its own appointment, and under the supervision of its own State Society. And that those States who are not able to supply their destitute, shall be aided in doing so, by their more wealthy sisters. Hence it is desirable that every State should have its Bible organization, and its agent in the field.

As the destitution in the fields occupied by our Foreign missionaries cannot be materially increased, we can only speak of the facilities, in those several fields, for the circulation of the Word of Life, and the enlargement of the field of our Foreign Mission Board.

Some freedom of the Scriptures in China, are now being circulated, but as the evangelical missionaries there, deem those versions imperfect, they have entered into an arrangement to bring out an amended version. It will be some time, however, before this amended version will be ready for the press; and in the meantime, thousands may perish for lack of knowledge. Hence the importance, in view of the increasingly enlarged door for Bible distribution in that country, that the Southern churches should supply the means, by which their missionaries may be enabled to give the widest possible circulation to the Bible in China. At this very time hundreds and thousands of Bibles might be distributed among the natives, had our missionaries the means of doing so.

In Africa also, the field is becoming greatly extended; and it is to be expected that in a short time, the Scriptures will be in great demand among the dark tribes of that land.

Our Foreign Board, also, contemplates missions in South America and in France. Should these missions be established, thousands of Bibles in French and Spanish will be immediately required.

For the supply of all these fields the Foreign Mission Board relies on the Bible Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; and for ability to meet this expectation, this Board must look to the churches in the Southern States. Hence the necessity, not only that each State should have its Bible organization for home supply, but that the churches in each State should supply, to other several State Societies an annual amount sufficient for Home and Foreign demands; so that these State Societies may be able to furnish this general Board with adequate means to supply the wants of the foreign fields, and such portions of the Home-lands as are unable to supply their own destitution.

BOARD'S DEPOSITORY.

Messrs. Toon & Rutland, Book Merchants, on Union street in this city, are engaged as the Depository Agents of the Board. They have been furnished with a supply of Bibles and Testaments, of every variety of style, adequate to the wants of this and adjacent States. So that auxiliaries convenient to this point, can obtain books from this depository upon the same terms that they can obtain them in New York. When books are ordered for auxiliaries more remote, they are shipped from Philadelphia or New York, to any port designated by the auxiliary giving the order; thereby saving the risk and expense of double transportation.

CONCLUSION.

As the Treasurer's Report will exhibit the collections and disbursements of the Board, up to the 1st of May, the period to which this Report refers, it only remains for us, in conclusion, to press upon the attention of the churches, and the pious and benevolent, throughout the South, the paramount claims of the Bible cause upon their prayerful liberality. This great truth must be understood and appreciated, that the Bible is at the foundation of all successful efforts to enlighten and evangelize the world. That we cannot hope for any permanently beneficial result from the self-denying labors of our missionaries, either at home or abroad, unless the Bible is made to shed its light upon the fields they occupy. That all civil, as well as religious improvement among the nations of the earth must be sought for through the instrumentality of the Bible, and founded upon the holy principles it reveals and inculcates; or sought for in vain. It is, in the hands of the church, since the ascension of the Saviour, pre-eminently the light of the world. On it he has specially shed the radiance of his own Divinity and presence, with special reference to the enlightenment of the world. Without it even the church is in darkness; and can only be said to be "the Light of the World," when she bears aloft, upon her frontlets and her banners, the Word of Life—the *shine* by which, as the sanctuary of God, she is illuminated. If ever, therefore, the darkness of Earth is driven back, and the Throne of Messiah is established above the despotism of the world; that darkness must be dissipated by the light of the Bible, and that Throne must be founded upon it.

We call upon every one, therefore, who loves his species or hopes for heaven, to pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And we call upon all who thus pray to put forth their entire instrumentality, to aid in placing a copy of the Bible in the reach of every intelligent being on earth, who can read, that with his own eyes he may drink in the light of the Divine Word, learn his true relations to the Divine Government, and find the way that leads to heaven.

Communications.

For the Tennessee Baptist.
A new Argument against Immersion.

BROTHER GRAVES:

A Methodist minister of some note, who attended the Memphis Convention, on return to his station in North Mississippi, called his flock, (over whom he presides with all the authority of the Discipline,) together and gave them a sermon against immersion, in which sermon he took special notice of the Memphis Convention. Called it a Baptist Convention, saying the Baptists wanted to make a Bible with their creed published in it, especially on baptism. Taking his position against immersion, his strong argument was that he had administered baptism by immersion himself, stating to the congregation that while in the water, (drawing his hand across to show how deep,) and in a chilled state he felt convinced that God never ordained such a foolish inconvenient mode. Thus presenting his feelings as conclusive proof that it was not of God; and strange to say, before he concluded his discourse, picked up the Discipline from the hand-board, saying that he would baptize by immersion, because the Discipline allowed it; he would administer baptism in that way to satisfy the consciences of his members.

This is doing a thing professedly in obedience to God, that he never commanded or ordained, because the Discipline allows it, and to satisfy the conscience of members. It is an acknowledgment on the part of this Methodist minister that he would do a thing that God never commanded in his holy name, because the Methodist Discipline allowed it.

This shows the influence of the "Great Wheel" upon the Methodist ministry.

Holly Springs, June, 1852.

For the Tennessee Baptist.
Edification and False.

BROTHER GRAVES:

The Tennessee Baptist of the 29th May, contains an account of a baptismal scene at Huntsville, Ala., which the writer of the article calls a high move, &c., but it seems to my mind, to be a rather low move, and I suppose the writer spoke ironically, and had the same view of the subject.

The man, claiming to be a minister of the gospel of Christ, who can thus tamper with the gospel ordinance, must appear very ridiculous in the eyes of all sensible, reflecting people. In the first place, if he did not believe that immersion was enjoined in the gospel commission, it was ridiculous for him to administer it, (even by proxy,) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And if he believed it was enjoined in the commission, it was ridiculous for him to act as he did in the case referred to, by your correspondent from Huntsville.

In the second place, there was a very palpable falsehood involved in the affair, and that falsehood perpetrated in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for when the minister used the baptismal formula he said "I baptize you," that declaration was false—for it was the negre that baptized the subjects, and not the minister standing upon dry ground. Trifling in any matter is forbidden by the principles of christianity, and stating that which is false, is incompatible with the christian character, whether it relates to our intercourse with our fellow beings, either in the social relations of life or otherwise, but to state that which is false, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost betrays an amount of recklessness that ill comports with christianity.

And sensible people must look upon such scenes as described by the writer of the article alluded to, with the most profound disgust.

"I wonder if men who can thus write with the christian ministry, have no apprehensions of rendering themselves contemptible in the estimation of an intelligent community."

TENNESSEE.
June 8, 1852.

For the Tennessee Baptist.
Turning the Artillery.

BROTHER GRAVES:

I notice an article in your paper of May 22d, headed, "Our position defined in reference to the moody little man of the Tennessee Baptist," taken from the Christian Advocate. I assure you I was much amused when I read the conclusion of the editor of that sheet, which was to let the spotted little fellow of the Tennessee Baptist pass on, and cheerfully turn aside and give him the road. I heartily concur with him in opinion, that is the most wise course that could have adopted for himself and his brethren.

brethren to give the Bible to the world, rather than attempt to lick him aside, for I perceive them would be great danger arising from the contact, for his weapons are sharper than a two edged sword, and many have been wounded deeply thereby, for while he has been contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we have no doubt but he has crossed the path of many, and while some in their folly have attempted to kick him out of their path, they have been pierced through with many sorrows and perplexities, which they will find it even harder to get rid of than the offensive smell of the quagmire itself. So this figure, (as striking as the doctor thought it was,) like the most of figures has failed to fully represent the substance.

In conclusion I would say, go on, brother Graves, there is not the least danger of being overcome while you continue to use the old Jerusalem blade, for it is long, and strong, and is mighty through God, in pulling down the strong holds of Satan, and may the sword of the spirit be wielded by God's chosen warriors, until the traditions of men, and all religious errors, shall be put down, and God's truth established in every heart.

Your brother in Christ,
N. H. McFADDEN.

[Florida Correspondence.]

Madison C. H., May 1852.

BROTHER GRAVES:

It is encouraging to a public servant to know that his course is appreciated by those whom he serves. We wish to add our mite to the maintenance of your correspondence, of entire satisfaction to the course pursued by you as a religious editor. The spirit of your paper is heartily endorsed by the great majority of our Associates, as far as our information extends.

The exciting question of revision of the Scriptures hath among us many advocates. We were assured, after the shock passed off, that there will be but a feeble minority to advocate King *Jesse* James' version, with its many defects and aids to heresy, up to perdition.

It strikes us as being paradoxical for a Baptist to wish the word of God obscured and covered from the popular mind. Such a course savors of a lawning scepticism—an over-weening desire to wander to the capture of the people world—a man of love for the truth—a sacrifice of truth, of principle for the smiles of errorists. Such a spirit we deprecate. If we must censure the advocates of false principles, at the expense of the unchanging truth of God, we charge even the pleasure of social intercourse as a price so dear. Many there are who regard the present effort of revision as monstrous; as a subversive of the best interests of the Baptists. If it be an advancement of truth, to the extinction of the Baptist name, let it come—yes, let it come.

For ourselves, we have no such fears—only let Baptists be true to their Master—true to their principles—yes, true to each other, and a brighter day will yet shine upon this sin-strewn world than it has ever hitherto witnessed.

The Son of Righteousness will then in truth rise with healing in his wings. How many the celestial visitants cover their faces when witnessing the only people on earth who hold the truth, refusing that truth to the multitudes. It is withheld. Men are among us who have never heard an argument on the baptismal question from the pulpit of Baptist ministers. The light is concealed, and concealed vice often from the base passion of fear, or base soil of popular applause.

Not unfrequently, people calling themselves Baptists, join with the advocates of our faith in decrying those who contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. It is the policy of the neo world to censure those closed-lip Baptists on this question, and endeavor to make an unfavorable impression of those who maintain and defend the truth. This strategy from the many diabolical men of the moral serve to meet boldly this scriptural question. It is said of Arminians that they pray Calvinistic prayers. It is true of Baptist ministers usually, they talk good Baptist doctrine, but fail to preach it.

H. Z. A.

PROCESSES OF THE LEGISLATURE.—The Legislature that have adopted laws prohibiting the sale of intoxicating drinks, make out the following list—Maine, Minnesota, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. This is a good beginning. But it is only a beginning. Many other States must come into the ranks. The last Legislature of Rhode Island, after much deliberation, refused to pass the law; and one of the first acts of the new Legislature was to put it through without restriction.

from their minister, Mr. Caskey, and which I also accepted. I now send you a copy of the proposition...

[Main Correspondence.] POSTLAND, Mo., June 22, 1852. Dear Brother: There is an interesting revival of religion now going on in this city...

Selections. THE NEWSPAPER.—The Rev. H. W. Beecher thus speaks of the newspaper, the common people's Encyclopedia...

Letters Received. A. R. Anderson and remittance. J. P. Arnold and remittance. T. L. Brock and remittance...

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