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VIEW FROM THE TOWER

The *National Baptist*, commenting upon the report of the Baptist churches of Philadelphia says:

“We have a total membership of 19,676. Of the additions by baptism, 300 came from three churches: Grace, 125; Shiloh, 111; Mantua, 64. *Nine churches reported* no baptisms. We have also nineteen missions, some of whose members are not members of city churches. Let us place our Baptist army at 20,000. Think of the vast expenditures for pastors, church buildings, Sunday school rooms, etc., *and only a net gain of 450*. It took over forty members to gather in one convert. And the figures over our State are equally startling, when 235 churches during the past year do not report a single baptism.”

Our Baptist friends are perhaps as near the truth, or more so, than any other sect of Babylon, which is not flattering them, we hope. The above statement affords an opportunity to suggest a criticism applicable to all the Babylonish sects. The rivalry among them is for *numbers*; for quantity rather than quality; for the praise of men rather than that which cometh from above only.

Two or three centuries ago, when Baptists were only called such by their enemies, and when they called themselves simply Christians, their numbers were far less, but they occupied more nearly by far, a position in harmony with the days of the Apostles, both toward themselves and the world.

With the creation of new sects and the general race for pre-eminence among them, which has been in progress for the past three centuries, the people *now* calling themselves Baptists were gradually drawn away from the primitive piety and simplicity for which in early times they were noted. Now, with all the rest, the chief aim is, not to build one another up in the most holy *faith* as members of the body of Christ; not to edify *one another*; not to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God; but to build themselves up as a *sect*; and to flatter the worldly to “get them into the church” *that the pews and treasuries may be full*; that they may have a great name, and that the name of Baptist should be a synonym for respectability and honor *among men*.

The *popularity* with the world for which the sects so much seek, and in large measure have gained, is a bad and not a good omen to them, as well as to their prototype the nominal Jewish Church at our Lord’s first advent. He still declares, “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.” Luke 6:26.

In order to gain in *numbers*, honor and influence, every other thing has been sacrificed in great measure—not only by Baptists but by every sect. In order to attract the world, the DOCTRINES of the Bible have been more and more neglected. The repulsions of Christianity—the self-denials, besetments, reproaches, sacrifices, and the sneer and “hate” of the world always attendant upon the true Christianity, have all been put out of sight, because these would repel the worldly, and the sect would not be so rapidly built up. Hence, not only the preaching of taking up the cross and following Christ’s example, passed away, but the *lower plane* assumed, brought the world’s honor and respect instead of its “hate.” The Lord was not mistaken when he said, Whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, but godliness has passed away, and therefore there is no persecution.

Now, as a matter of fact, the various sects have degenerated into merely social clubs. The condition of membership in them is not FAITH in God’s Word. Though an endorsement of their respective creeds is required, they are *not* generally understood; and even the moral standard is so low, that it implies no change on the part of the average worldling who joins.

The result of this course, which has been in progress specially for the past fifty years, is that these sects are full of worldly moralists, who enjoy these systems because they are fashionable; because they are the best and quickest passport into “society”; because it is advantageous to them from a business standpoint; and finally because man is a religiously inclined being anyway, and traces of that inclination still linger despite the “fall.” Even true children of God still fettered in the sects, so far as the doctrines of the Bible are concerned, are the merest “babes,” always fed on skimmed “milk” and never on “strong meat.” (Heb. 5:12-14.) They are both unskillful in the use of God’s Word and ignorant of his doctrines. There are no more, nor as many *saints* as if the true Christian standard had been lifted; and those saints in the sects are starved and sickly, not strong and valiant soldiers of the cross having on the whole armor of God.

Now we are reaching an epoch in which *thought* is being awakened and these starved and sickly saints in Babylon, together with the children of the world *labeled* Christians, are being forced to *think* by the startling utterances of popular preachers, infidels, and scientists. What the result must be no reasonable mind can doubt. Unskilled in the Word of God, ignorant of everything called religion except the raising of funds for and increasing the numbers of their sect, the vast majority must fall a prey to the specious errors termed liberal Christianity, now like a dense miasma spreading gradually over the world. Beginning with the cities, and among the “influential,” it will spread over all the so-called “Christian world.”

The membership of the sects, composed mainly of the worldly, the carnally-minded, are already *demanding* “progress and liberality.” Not, however, a progress toward clearer and fuller study of

and obedience to the Bible; this would not be progress to the carnally minded; but by progress they mean the endorsement of the assertions of scientists regardless of the Bible. The minister who does not satisfy this craving is becoming unpopular, and those who will “preach to please the pews” (i.e. to suit the majority—the carnally-minded) are getting all the “*best*” pulpits and largest salaries. What the Apostle wrote prophetically, is being rapidly fulfilled before our eyes: The time will come when they will not endure *sound doctrine*, but after their own lusts [desires or liking] shall they heap [accumulate] to themselves teachers having itching ears” [“tickling the ear”—*Diaglott*] And they [the ear-pleasing teachers] shall turn away their ears from the truth, and [they] shall be turned unto fables.” How forcible then are the Apostle’s words to every true saint and preacher in view of this: “I charge thee *therefore* before God ... preach the WORD; be instant in season and out of season [whether convenient to you or

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not]; REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT, with all longsuffering and DOCTRINE.” See 2 Tim. 4:1-4.

The honest and earnest saints who will follow this “*charge*,” will soon find themselves as well as their names out of Babylon—cast out as evil. But by that time the increase of grace, knowledge and love which shall come as a result of faithfulness, will lead them to rejoice and be exceeding glad—to rejoice that they were counted *worthy* to suffer reproach for the name of Christ—for his doctrines.

The result will ultimately be: Moralists will be *called* Christians; they will be too wise and scientific to use the Bible as their text-book. Every one will be called a Christian who abstains from a *flagrant* violation of the laws of civilization. Then the saints will again be called “fools,” and the Bible will be termed “a relic of barbarism,” “a bundle of old wives’ fables,” “a fetich.” Is it not becoming so even now?

It is too late to reform the sects—the vast majority is against you. The only thing to do now is what God commands, “Come out of her, my people; that ye partake not of her sins and receive not of her plagues.” She might have been healed once, (Jer. 8:18-22,) but now, like her prototype Israel, she is given up—left desolate. The ax is now at work at the very root of the tree and its complete fall is at hand. It is not now a pruning but a destroying process as with the first house of Israel when it was rejected, only it stumbled to rise again, while Babylon’s destruction is to be complete and forever. (Matt. 3:7-10, and Rev. 18:21.)

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— March, 1885 —



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