

Rev. W. H. S. Sweet:

My dear Sir:

Your favor of the 19th. inst. is received, enclosing an extract from the Sentinel <sup>(and)</sup> asking how much of the statement <sup>there</sup> attributed to me, if any, is true. I have also just received a letter from Mr. Durringer intimating that his name has, in some manner, been mixed up in the ~~matter~~ <sup>affair</sup>. As I am religiously opposed to reading the Sentinel, I know nothing of the present phase of the matter beyond what I gather from these sources, and your remarks in the Senate on Friday <sup>last</sup> as reported in the Standard. If I had seen the article in the Wenston paper, or in its Raleigh namesake, I should have addressed you in regard to it <sup>without</sup> ~~before~~ <sup>awaiting for your inquiry</sup> ~~having been asked for explanation.~~

- I am unwilling that any one should suffer undeserved reproach on my account of my acts. If they are in any manner wrong I wish to bear the blame and "mark <sup>from</sup> mine own fault." I wish therefore <sup>first of all</sup> to do justice here to one who is probably a political opponent. I was on the train on the night of Nov. 25th and had a conversation with some one, (I think a member of the Senate)

which others may have overheard, or taken part in, upon this subject. In that conversation I made the statement substantially which I shall give hereafter in this letter, which with several errors, (as that which represents me instead of yourself as Chairman of the Committee on ~~this~~ the ~~Legislative~~ article) may have been reported without intentional misrepresentation.

As to what any eavesdropping political scavenger may have picked up of a strictly private conversation between Mr. Burringer and myself a month before that time, he is as welcome to it as a cur dog to a crumb or a tick —

Before proceeding further however, let me in justice to myself say this. I have never, for an instant, supposed that you ~~were~~ <sup>could be</sup> guilty of any intentional misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or other wrongful act of any character, in the premises. There seems, from what I can gather, to be a difference in recollection as to events simultaneous with the adoption of the <sup>Legislative</sup> ~~article~~ <sup>Constitution</sup> of <sup>1850</sup> and if in stating my remembrance of these <sup>circumstances</sup> I have seemed to impugne your motives in any manner, it has been entirely unintentional on my part. I am aware that you are entirely incapable of anything of that character, ~~and~~ however much we might differ in our recollection of any

given event, ~~or~~ in opinion or in fact, I could never believe you guilty of intentional falsehood or believe you actuated by unworthy and personal motives in the discharge of a public <sup>duty</sup>. I might ~~doubt~~ <sup>deny</sup> the accuracy of your memory, doubt the soundness of your views, or question the ~~propriety~~ <sup>policy</sup> of your course, but not the uprightness of your intention. If therefore my words in the ~~statement~~ <sup>warmth</sup> of this <sup>reported</sup> conversation or at any other time shall have seemed to extend so far I ~~do~~ am ready, willing and anxious to make the fullest, broadest, and completest retraction, <sup>and reparation</sup> thus far, which <sup>it</sup> lies in my power to furnish.

At the same time you will understand that I do not admit the accuracy of the views which I understand you entertain in regard to <sup>circumstances attending</sup> the adoption of the second article of the Constitution. I think that in this respect your recollection is decidedly at fault.

In order that you may fully apprehend my position in this respect, I will give you the substance of my ~~statement~~ <sup>statement</sup> on the night referred to by the Winston Sentinel. I may premise, <sup>however</sup> that this statement was reduced to writing, several months ago, before any

dispute in regard to the matter had arisen, and long before the Legislature had met. ~~Not~~ Some weeks before the ~~meeting~~ opening of the present session I had occasion to forward a transcript of this to Raleigh, which I will hereafter direct to be placed in your hands. Not only so, but during the campaign for the Constitution, I was interrogated by letters upon this subject, and my answer was substantially the same as ~~this statement~~ <sup>your</sup> which I ~~made~~ in the conversation referred to. I make this statement to show you that I did not originally go out of my way to place myself in antagonism with you. Had I known that your recollection differed from any now, I should, before mine had become in a manner public, I should have said nothing in regard to it until the question had been decided, for I certainly would not seek an issue of publicity with one whose friendship I have learned to prize as I do yours.

Briefly then, my recollection of the matter is as follows:

and whatever I may have said  
or implied in regard to your motion  
at this or any other time, on the train  
or off it, was simply founded upon  
this fact. I did not understand you  
to be opposed to the substance but to  
the form of my amendment. I may  
however have misunderstood your  
intention and attributed to you the design  
which was so engrossing to my own  
mind. The desirability of enlarging the time  
was so patent to me that I may have

jumped to the conclusion that you also  
recognized it, I do not now recollect  
that you directly expressed assent or  
non-assent to the principle of my  
amendment. I only judged of your  
motive by the substitute you offered.