

## LOCATED.

Rev. Birmingham Pays the Penalty of His Love for His People.

He is Cast Out of the Synagogue for His Fidelity to Truth and the Word of God.

As announced in THE STAR yesterday morning, Rev. T. M. C. Birmingham was given a hearing on the charges preferred against him, at the opening of the Conference yesterday.

During the recent state canvass the Democratic press unearthed, as they claimed, a diabolical land transaction in which Mr. Birmingham was the principal actor. This matter was brought into the conference, but all efforts to besmirch his character failed. In the land transaction, Mr. Birmingham acted only as agent, and had nothing to do with the transferring of deeds, etc. This was proven, and the conference ordered that their approval of his moral character be published in the Arkansas Methodist, to repair, so far as possible, the damage done him by the wide circulation of the false charges in the partisan press. It was also alleged that he had left his ministerial work to accept the nomination but this charge was also abandoned.

The head and front of his offending seems to be that he accepted a nomination outside of the Democratic party and that kind of politics in the opinion of the Conference is only considered orthodox. A motion was made the day before to locate him for having allied himself with "partisan politics." When all the other charges were disposed of this was withdrawn as revealing too plainly the motives of the prosecution and one merely alleging that he was "unacceptable" but without assigning any cause, was then adopted. We give his speech before the Conference as it reveals his position and throws light on the subject:

I admit that I am unacceptable to many of the prominent men in the Democratic party, but if it appears to be for righteousness sake, I think that ought to be a sufficient defence. In the summer when speaking I have not spared the theft of votes and the larceny of ballot boxes, but I did this not because the platform of the Labor party called for a free ballot and a fair count, but because the commandments of God said "Thou shalt not steal," and I understood that statute to protect a man's vote as well as his horse. I have not spared myself to show the evil of the political murders that have stained the land with blood, and the failure to punish this class of criminals by the courts even when well known like the slayers of Neely and Wilson and Parham, but I did not do so because it was alleged by the Labor and Republican platforms but because these things are plainly condemned by the word of God.

We all accept Wesley as a guide and think he had nothing to do with politics. It is a mistake. England, in his time, was given up to the doctrine of a protective tariff, and smuggling was not uncommon. He carried his views of righteousness to such an extent that although a man was not a smuggler, even if he bought or sold goods that had not paid the duty he could not remain in any of his societies. Station such a man at Morrilton and Plummerville as Presiding Elder, and does anybody doubt but he would have extended the principle so that no man could remain in the church who was at all connected with the stuffing of ballot boxes or received a commission and the benefits of an office through an election fraud. Put him at Little Rock and would he not likely have made it hot for men serving out full terms (and I think some of them in the church) who hold their office not through an election but by virtue of the crow bar, and again in for a second term not through the choice of the people but through the tricks of political chicanery.

St. Paul at Corinth is not in all things an example for us. He preached to a people who had no political rights and were not enfranchised. We preach to men who are the voting sovereigns of the Nation. To-day the true rule and supreme authority is not in Washington or the different state capitals, but in every voter's ballot throughout the whole Nation. Therefore, our work is not only to guide men to the experience of the new birth, but also to lead this great Nation onward and upward, in the march of civilization. The lesson of all history is clear, as the noon-day sun that only as nations learn the law and justice and righteousness of Sinai and persevere therein are they able to find the fords of the Jordan into the modern promised land of peace, prosperity and enlightenment. But how can they know these things if the ministry will not assert them, and not only preach the gospel to every living creature but also teach nations the governmental principles of God's word so essential to the public welfare. Redemption and the truth the Lord Jesus left to the world is not a weak, timid, trembling thing, fearful that it might offend Herod or the Democratic party. It is something that is bold, manly and courageous, and before governors or the people as king, it will declare what is right even at peril of life.

And there is no lesson to-day more imperative for the church to teach the people of the United States than that men can adorn the doctrines of God, our Savior, not only in their theology, but also in their politics. Joseph did it in Egypt, so did Moses in the wilderness, David in Jerusalem and Daniel in Babylon. We claim that the Holy Spirit is given to us in greater measure than it is like those heroes of the faith. One of the great needs of the hour is men in the government at

Little Rock and Washington who will stand by, not only the theology, but also by the politics of the word of God. For want of understanding this very lesson which, by your request, I visited the legislature two years ago to obtain a more effective Sabbath law, nothing could be accomplished although the Methodist and Baptist had a majority in each House.

Entirely on their own motion and without any knowledge on my part I was selected by the Labor Executive committee for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In answering them I said that if it was the unanimous wish of the convention I would accept a nomination for that position. It is a fact that ministers have often filled this office and with the approval of the church. One did so in Oregon who was formerly a member of this body, and I read about another in California named Fitzgerald. (The Bishop smiled at this point well taken.) When you go away from here you may find some difficulty in explaining to some of the ninety thousand voters who cast their ballots for me, why, if we are a non-partisan church, courtesies of this sort are only to be extended to the Democratic party.

In conclusion I will say that I accept the governmental ideas of the Bible as being inspired the same as what it teaches in theology. And I think it would be well for all men to accept them but that every redeemed man washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus and baptized by the Holy Ghost in bonds to stand for both principles. I would like exceedingly to have the help and countenance of the church in declaring both, but if otherwise and you think it would be injurious to the church, then let the motion prevail. As for myself being fully persuaded that there are governmental principles in the Bible, and that they are vital to the welfare of the Nation. I have nothing on that line to retract, and God being my helper, I will endeavor to stand for them even alone.

A representative of THE STAR sought an interview with Mr. Birmingham last night, and inquired the cause of the trouble.

"The campaign roused the ire of the Democratic party and many of its leaders are prominent and influential laymen in the church. Although their nominee for governor was a Baptist preacher, this class continually asserted that Methodist ministers should have nothing whatever to do with politics. The devil and the Democratic party were supposed to own them in Arkansas and disputed the claim. This influence brought a pressure to bear on the members of the conference and they came together intending to declare some sort of a censure. When every charge against me was examined and with microscopic scrutiny, nothing was sustained and as I had not abandoned the work assigned me last year, I was not liable under that head, like Dr. Kelly or Mr. Fizer. They were then confronted with the alternative of proceeding against me under the rule for unacceptability or of allowing me to escape censure altogether, and knowing what was demanded by the Democratic press and leaders they chose the former course."

What effect will this action have?

"I think it unfortunate for the Conference. It never can remove the impression from the minds of, I believe, two thirds of the people of Arkansas, but that it was done through political prejudice. And it will have a powerful tendency to weaken the confidence, already not strong, of the laboring classes in the church. I believe the solution of the labor question is in the gospel, but very few are looking to the church for light on the subject, and acts of this sort will not increase their number."

Will it have any other effect?

"Yes. If persisted in it is likely to have an influence in stunting the intellectual growth of the young men of the Con. Some think that all ministers are men of breadth and intelligence, and they ought to be. However many—probably the majority are not, but quite satisfied to remain in the theological groove of the denomination. And although agreeing with the standards of the church as far as they declare an opinion, if every one who ventures beyond, is censured like Dr. Kelly or myself and perhaps Mr. Fizer it will have a strong tendency to repress original research and independent thinking. The result of such a course will inevitably incline many to cease to be students and become narrow minded and merely followers when they ought to be leaders of not only the spiritual but also intellectual, political and reformatory thought of the age. And it is a most grievous thing that there is light in the Bible on political questions and through fear of offending some Democratic politicians the ministry are not willing to let that light shine for the people to walk in it."

What will be your future?

"I do not know. I have stood for what I consider to be the truth of God, and my hope is that He who made a way through the seas for Israel and brought our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, will also open my way. I wait upon the Lord."

The trial has been so far the event of the conference.

As will be seen in another column an "Indignation Meeting" is called for to-morrow night. — Morning Star, Nov. 23, Eureka Springs, Ark.