

Retiring Address of Pres. H. C. Creed at the Recent Baptist Convention.

The last meeting of this Convention, which will long be remembered as the Jubilee year of our beloved institutions at Wolfville, was the forty-third annual meeting of the body having been organized in the city of St. John, in 1846.

The third meeting, in 1848, was held in this little city of Fredericton, where the Convention has assembled on two later occasions, in 1870 and in 1878. The president at that third meeting was S. Harding, and the secretaries were the Rev. L. E. Bill and Samuel Elder.

The total membership of the denomination in these Maritime Provinces in that year was reported as 14,152, included in 175 churches—a number which indicates a wonderfully rapid growth in the half-century which had elapsed since the formation of the first Baptist Association of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, composed as it was of only six churches—a feeble folk indeed.

There is no one who would wish to go back to the old practice. It had no doubt the sanction of the Apostles and of their Master. It had the sanction of the venerable churches of the early ages, and of the sacred countries of the East. Baptism by sprinkling (what a contradiction of terms) was rejected by the whole ancient church as no baptism at all.

But it is really a cause of gratitude that the Baptist denomination in these provinces and in the world at large has thus grown and prospered? A man who has gotten to himself much wealth by hard work and shrewdness in a needless or hurtful craft, carried on only for his own selfish ends, is not to be envied.

Let us ask then, Why are we Baptists? or rather, Why does our denomination maintain a separate existence? Have we distinctive principles that are both well founded and worth maintaining? And what have we done for the world that others have not done and are not doing as well as we.

These questions fully and formally would occupy far more time than can properly be devoted to this address. A few brief statements must suffice, which may lead the inquirer to obtain fuller answers. And let us appeal mainly to eminent authorities of other denominations who may be pronounced to speak without undue prejudice in our favor.

It is very generally supposed, even among Baptists when they are not well instructed, that almost the only important difference between us and all other denominations is about our baptism. It is the nature and subject of baptism, our name gives color to this idea. There is, however, a much more momentous and fundamental principle underlying all other differences, viz. our primitive and unalterable contention that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the all-sufficient and only rule of faith and practice, and judge of controversies."

Presbyterians, said: "The church did grant herself liberty, since the beginning, to change the rite (baptism) somewhat, excepting the substance"; and again, "It is not of the least consequence whether the person baptized is totally immersed, and that sprinkled by an affusion of water. This should be a matter of choice to the churches in different regions, though the word baptize means to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

The Church of England, in her 34th Article, declares: "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that (i. e. provided) that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Who, soever, through his private judgment willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and are necessary, ought to be rebuked, etc."

The striking language of Dean Stanley is quite consistent with this Article. After strongly stating the historical and exegetical truth, as he holds it, regarding baptism, he goes on to say: "The practice of immersion, apostolic and primitive as it was, was peculiarly suitable to the Southern and Eastern countries, for which it was designed, and peculiarly unsuitable to the temperate, northern, and the feelings of the countries of the North and West. Not by any degree of council or parliament, but by the general sentiment of Christian liberty, this great change was effected."

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that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Menonites, were the original Waldenses, and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all the ages." This is the way some others see us.

It would be apart from my present purpose to dwell at length upon the particular applications of this foundation principle of scriptural authority, but a few thoughts may not be out of place. And first as regards doctrine. I venture to affirm that the bulk of our denomination in this nineteenth century has, not so much in its recognized statements of belief as in the general sentiment of individuals, departed from its historical position in regard to one at least of the most prominent doctrines of the ancient church. From time to time we see carried with approval, to our Baptist periodicals, such passages as the following, which was copied from the New York Independent, noticing a work on "The Act of Baptism in the History of the Christian Church": "He (the author) holds that the practice of immersion has been the only Christian mode of baptism since the time of the Apostles. He holds that the practice of immersion has been the only Christian mode of baptism since the time of the Apostles. He holds that the practice of immersion has been the only Christian mode of baptism since the time of the Apostles."

Now let the same weight be accorded to such authority on other points. There is a doctrine which is clearly taught in the Bible, in the opinion of a host of modern exegetical scholars of all ages, which was apparently uppermost in the minds of the early Christians, which is believed to have been the unquestioned faith of the church until near the close of the third century, which was clearly a part of the faith of the professors of our modern Baptist churches, and has continued to be held and taught by multitudes of enlightened Christians down to the present time. I refer to the doctrine of the literal and personal second coming of Christ, antecedent and causative of the substitution of the spirit of the millennium doctrine. All eminent authorities, so far as I know, agree that this was "the general belief of all orthodox Christians in the age immediately following the Apostles" down to the fourth century. It has been held as taught in the scriptures by such men as Bengel, Lange, Dörner, Schlegel, Baumgarten, Krummacher, Delitzsch, Ebrard, Meyer, Koch, Olshausen, DeWette, Theurer, and other German scholars; such Presbyterians as Chalmers, Irving, Candlish, Hugh Miller, McChesney, Gillin, Cummings, Faussett, and Edgely; such Episcopalians as Sir Isaac Newton, Birkbeck, Heber, Elliott, Horns, Ryle, Elliott, Alford, Grosvenor and the Tyngs; and passing over other denominations, such Baptists as John Bunyan, John Milton, John Gill, Robert Hall, George Muller, and Charles Spurgeon. It is not necessary to verify all the references, but accept all upon good authority.

A recent Baptist writer, speaking of the so-called Anabaptists in Germany, says: "They united the worldly principles of Luther as to civil power, with the millenarian views and rejection of infant baptism of the true Baptists." Through the Waldenses of the middle ages, and the Donatists or Puritans of the fourth century, we trace back our Baptist history to the apostolic age, and these are said to have been pre-millennialists. In 1660, twenty thousand Baptists in England presented to King Charles II. a declaration of faith, signed by many leading ministers and laymen, including John Bunyan, in which the same doctrine is clearly set forth. Dr. Duffin of Princeton, with whom other writers on this point agree, wrote thus a few years ago: "The common doctrine respecting the millennium is a novelty in the history of the church. It is not to be found in the scriptures, nor in the writings of the Reformers;—by several it is implicitly repudiated. The doctrine was first proposed by Whitty but little more than 150 years ago, and avowedly as 'a new hypothesis'—yet, in the face of all this mass of expository and historical authority, many of our Baptist ministers and people to-day refuse even to investigate the subject, and treat as erratic and heretical those who maintain that our Lord is to return before and not after the predicted 'times of refreshing.' I might say further, in the second place, concerning the attitude of our denomination as to the ceremonies of the church; but on this point probably enough has been said already.

Thirdly, then, we come to the polity or form of government of our denomination of Baptist churches. Our denomination has ever adhered strictly to the entire independence of each church or local association of baptized believers, and to the congregational form of government; as being most nearly in accord with the apostolic model. In this of course we are not alone. It was my purpose to dwell more at length upon this part of the subject, and less than I have done upon the question of doctrine; but having learned that church polity was to be discussed before the Ministers' Institute by one far more competent, has changed my plan. Permit me, however, to say that I have often thought—and in this I am far from being alone—that possibly there is a tendency among us to carry the idea of church independence somewhat too far. Do not the New Testament epistles warrant us in believing that not only the Apostles but their successors exercised more authority among the brethren than our people would now consider lawful? Is it not least worthy of consideration whether it would not also be the view of the manifestly to have a ministerial conference or council, with duties and powers somewhat similar to the "Elders' Conference" of our Free Baptist brethren, as an addition to our present denominational arrangements. Might it not be desirable to have a ministerial conference or council, with duties and powers somewhat similar to the "Elders' Conference" of our Free Baptist brethren, as an addition to our present denominational arrangements. Might it not be desirable to have a ministerial conference or council, with duties and powers somewhat similar to the "Elders' Conference" of our Free Baptist brethren, as an addition to our present denominational arrangements.

Palace Car Piety. BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D. Good John Bunyan lived before the days of railroads, and he sent his pilgrim to the Celestial City on foot. Some pretty rough walking and hard climbing did Christian find before he reached the straight road from the City of God. His convictions of guilt were deep and pungent, his conversion was thorough, and when he reaches a dark and dangerous dell on the way, he bravely says, "I see not but that this is the way to the Celestial City, and I will go with a firm and steady heart, and I will not flinch. The piety of the pilgrim was stalwart, self-denying, sin-hating and uncompromising; the man relished the severities of duty and never oddled himself with confectation. It is there that a strong tendency in our day to make a Christian life a great deal easier and more self-indulgent—and instead of a sturdy walk with God, to make it a comfortable ride to the heavens in a palace car.

1. This tendency shows itself in quite too much of the preaching to the unconverted. The Apostle Paul's first discourse after Pentecost was not a bid for popularity; he did not seek to bribe those Jerusalem sinners by telling them how easy it was for them to become Christians and what a "good time" they would have if they embraced the new

gospel. He knew that the very best thing for them was to convict them of their sins and a prompt acceptance and confession of Jesus Christ. Through conviction brought through conversion; then came gladness of heart and steadfast continuance in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship. This same kind of sub-soil plowing down to the roots was the characteristic of Whitfield, Finney, Edwards, Nettleton and Lyman Beecher; it is the characteristic of Spurgeon's preaching to-day. The best service that can be rendered to a sinner is first to convince him of his sinfulness and then lead to Jesus' blood; the more thoroughly convicted of sin he becomes, the more he gets the bad stuff out of him by deep repentance, the healthier, holier, Christian he will be afterwards. But to preach to an unconverted man that "it is just the easiest thing in the world to be a Christian" and to urge him to come on board the church-train just as he is, and his transgressions and comforts to parade, is pretty sure to either hoax him into self-deception or to make him a crude, half-converted, self-indulgent professor to the last. When the deadly hurt of sin is salved over, or "healed slightly," it breaks out again, and the sinner is invited to come to him, but he frankly told them that unless they were willing to deny themselves and take up a cross and follow him, they could not be his disciples. There was a magnificent reward waiting for them at the terminus, but no one was to carry the cross with them. The young ruler who fancied he might find one, and ride to heaven "like a gentleman" went away disgusted and disappointed. Brethren, we are always safe when we copy our blessed Master. So in dealing with the unconverted and with the weakened inquirer, let us be honest with them and tell them that if their "right hand" be a favorite sin, the hand must come off. The biggest devil in a sinner's heart is self, and unless that greedy devil is cast out, Christ can not and will not come in to flood the soul with peace and joy and power. What is it but the subtle spirit of self that would seek to bargain with Christ for a safe and "gentle" journey to heaven in a palace car.

2. Our blessed Master—who loved sinners infinitely more than we can—never imparted discipline. He invited them to come to him, but he frankly told them that unless they were willing to deny themselves and take up a cross and follow him, they could not be his disciples. There was a magnificent reward waiting for them at the terminus, but no one was to carry the cross with them. The young ruler who fancied he might find one, and ride to heaven "like a gentleman" went away disgusted and disappointed. Brethren, we are always safe when we copy our blessed Master. So in dealing with the unconverted and with the weakened inquirer, let us be honest with them and tell them that if their "right hand" be a favorite sin, the hand must come off. The biggest devil in a sinner's heart is self, and unless that greedy devil is cast out, Christ can not and will not come in to flood the soul with peace and joy and power. What is it but the subtle spirit of self that would seek to bargain with Christ for a safe and "gentle" journey to heaven in a palace car.

3. The spirit of indulgence eats like a canker into the life of too many members of our churches. It leads them to presume as their place of worship—not the one in which they are the most needed—but the prosperous one, in which they have the lightest load and the most luxuries. The wealth that ought to feed a dozen feeble churches into independence, runs right down into the pool of one aristocratic church and stagnates there. How many inquires—"Who preaches there? Is he eloquent? Is the music fine? And do the best society go there?" In plain English this means—bribe me with a seat in the drawing-room car and I will go with you. Self-indulgence always goes to its store through a storm, and hires a carriage on the bitterest nights to reach a pleasure party; but it leaves Christ's ambassadors to preach to empty pews on an unpleasant Sabbath. The conduct of a vast portion of Christ's professed followers (I fear a majority of them) on a severe reproach and works a severer damage to our Christianity than the ribald assaults of an hundred Ingersoll's. It practically means—"My religion will be worth heaven to me in eternity; but in this world it is not worth a little exposure and discomfort. Brethren and sisters, we have but one journey to make through this world. Let us make it on foot, helping up other poor fellow-travellers as we go along. Jesus will walk with us over our rugged paths of self-denial and sweeten every step. We shall be the best of company—home missionaries who wear old coats to teach men new hearts—poor needle-women who give hard-earned dollars to their Master—and rich men also who give Christ the key to their iron safes and check books. Let us be in no hurry to get to heaven, for "Our Beloved" is with us on the road and we are needed in this sin-cursed world. When we get to the celestial "station" we will not find many who came there in a palace car.—Interior.

"Just My Luck!" The Watchman gives its readers this week a few sentences regarding "luck," which are well worth repeating. If the boy who exclaims "Just my luck!" was truthful, he would say, "Just my business!" or "Just my intention!" Mr. Cobden wrote proverbs about "Luck and Labor." It would be well for boys to memorize them: Luck is waiting for something to turn up. Labor, with keen eyes and strong will, will turn up something. Luck lies in bed and wishes the post-man would bring him news of a legacy. Labor turns out at six o'clock, and with busy pen or ringing hammer lays the foundation of a competence. Luck whines. Labor whistles. Luck relies on chances. Labor, on character. Luck slips down to indigence. Labor strides upward to independence.

Shall Women be Allowed to Vote? The question of female suffrage has agitated the "press" and the pens of reformers for many years, and good arguments have been adduced for and against it. Many of the softer sex vote intelligently, and many would vote as their husbands did, and give no thought to the merits of a political issue. They would all vote as their husbands. Favorite Prescription, for they know it is a boon to their sex. It is unequalled for the cure of leucorrhoea, abnormal discharges, morning sickness, and the countless ills to which women are subjected. It is the only remedy for Female Pity, Acrid Menstruation, Chloroma, Painful Menses, and all the ailments which afflict the fairer sex. It is sold by druggists, under a positive guarantee from the manufacturers, that it will give satisfaction in every case, or money will be refunded. See guarantee on wrapper around bottle.

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