

Concerning the Baptists, Their Present Status and Principles

NEED RALLYING CRY.

PART IV.

And we can well afford to do this. The sects which any misapplication of our principles and practices could make possible, have been made and gone out from us. We are one as never before unified, compact and strong. There is no division in sight and no reasonable interpretation of liberty of conscience justifies a prophecy of one in the future. The tendency is all toward unity in a larger liberty. We are done having splits from our platform. Thank God the future is not ominous, but lighted with a larger hope, a broader faith, a nobler liberty, and a deeper unity.

Now, one comprehensive doctrine, as the rallying cry of our forces, as the bond of our unity, as the fundamental principle of our common service and faith, this we need and this we may have. There can be but one fundamental, one ultimate, the basis of all our common faith, the logical and vital precedent of all our practices. We need to do this so that we shall not be open to the perils of cultivating sects in the denomination, created by bodies of men, each of whom lifts to the dignity of a logical premise what is a deduction to the "one" premise, and thus creates new centers of thought and activity.

We need to do it that we may present to thinking men and women, not yet of us, a reason for our existence, more significant than the form or method of observing an ordinance or more accurate than one which is claimed by every denomination of Christians, or more comprehensive than which includes only some part of our churches in the world.

I may be mistaken but I judge that the need of such a synthetic principle is recognized. One of our historians, within one chapter, twice speaks of the fundamental principle of the Baptists; each time announcing a different doctrine. At present we seem bound together more by virtue of our practice with the ordinances, by common name, by missionary projects and general association, than by any constructive, synthetic principle.

THE SYMBOLS OF GOD.

There are several doctrines, however, generally recognized as unifying the churches. The fault chiefly lies in our uncertainty as to which is ultimate and fundamental. Which is the one out of which all the others may logically be derived? That is the question. This is not the time for such a discussion. I can only barely mention them and in the order in which I believe they logically belong. In this order the fundamental is conceived to be—Christianity is a life from God, begotten in the soul, upon personal, unmediated, faith in Jesus Christ. The consistent and logical maintenance of this fact and doctrine includes all those vital principles and practices which we recognize as parts of our denominational life, and separates us clearly from all other denominations.

If such is the nature of Christianity, the nature of the church is readily seen to be a body of those in whom this life is begotten; the doctrine of regenerate Church membership.

The government of the Church logically should be by the continued activity of that life from God in all the members. This is our doctrine of congregational church government.

The individual logically should be ruled by the continuing activity of that life in his soul. This

is our doctrine of soul liberty, freedom of conscience.

Naturally the one guide and test of conduct in principle and precept should be the Bible, which records the activity of that life from God, in especially chosen men, inspired by the spirit of God. This is our doctrine of "the Bible, our rule of faith and practice," or, the same in other words, "fidelity to the strict truth of the Bible."

With eminent fitness, the only ordinances should be the symbols of that life from God in the soul; its beginning in the observance of baptism, and its continuous activity in the service of the communion.

These principles are not arbitrarily stated, nor consciously given a formal cast. They may be stated in other words, and still be true. They include all, so far as I am aware, that has ever been claimed as in any sense fundamental to us, and they all belong in the synthesis of the first principles stated.

However this may be, the obligation remains true for many reasons, that we should conceive the denominations under some unifying synthetic principle. Our ability and opportunity offer the obligation to use the reserve forces, resident in great numbers and wealth, for the intensive qualities of the religious life of the denomination.

Ways of Doing That are Unfair Unlawful and Unjust.

When we solicit subscriptions for this paper we always tell the subscribers that our policy in managing lifts to send it to all subscribers until we are ordered to stop it. But all arrangements must be paid before a discontinuance is allowed. But instead of complying with this law and custom concerning the papers, there is every little while a postmaster's card received informing us that Mr. —'s paper is left in his office "refused." In several instances the party has been getting it for months after the year was up for which they had paid; and in some cases no payment was made at all for any part of the time for which they had been getting it. We want to inform such people that such notice is void until full payment is made, then if the paper is sent afterward you need not take it from the office, and will not be responsible for any further payment. There are others also who change their place of residence and never let us know of it, and their paper is sent to them in good faith supposing it is all right, and months after their removal we accidentally find it out. In many cases no payment is ever made, and when we write them at their new address and send their paper to them we get no response. This kind of treatment is very unfair to us, or any other paper.

Religious News.

As news from the churches PRINCE WILLIAM is always interesting I send AND KINGSCLEAR, a few lines from the field; we have been laboring with this people for only six months but have found some of the kindest, most sympathetic people in our denomination. Our prayer meetings at Prince William and Long's Creek are increasing in attendance and interest and some are expressing a desire to live a Christian life. We have received donations both from Kingclear and Prince William. About a month ago while the pastor and his wife were making pastoral calls our Bro. had a barrel of flour rolled into our pantry. Our congregation as a general thing are good and we are praying for an outpouring of God's Spirit.

On Sunday the 24th of Nov. the pastor exchanged pulpits with Bro. Rogers of Mangerville, who preached two very interesting and instructive sermons.

C. N. S.

ST. ANDREWS. We are trying to hold the fort amid much discouragement. The attendances at our services is not what we would like to see it. Since the coming of cold weather a good many have dropped out, and some have moved away, but there are several upon whom we can depend, making it possible for us to carry on the work.

We have engaged to remain six months longer on the field, and we humbly request the prayers of all interested Christians, that the Lord will bless our feeble efforts on this difficult field.
Dec. 10th, 1901. C. CURRIE.

ROLLING DAM, CHARLOTTE CO.

The Lord's work at this place is advancing more and more, and interest good, all denominations come. Con-

gregations large as can be expected for this place. Conferences well attended at times, the Divine Spirit always present. Souls are being saved. Three came out in our meetings lately and are waiting baptism. The dear Master is leading us on in the good and great work. We are trying to do our best, we trust for him. We are expecting great things from God and also attempting great things for God. H. D. WORDEN.

POINT DE BUTE

The meeting house has been repaired, and it was a pleasure on a recent visit to find the walls newly papered, and the seats cushioned. Sunday School has been kept up to the mark by Frank Trueman while the veteran superintendent, W. M. Tingley has been laid off for a time by lameness. Also at Westmorland Point, there is a good Summer Sunday School, Bro. Colpitts filling superintendency, and a regular prayer-meeting presided over by Dea Jas. Minor. Rev. D. A. Steele preaches at both places.

NEW HORTON, N. B.

We rejoice to be able to report good things of this old church, once one of the leading churches of Albert Co. As a result of special services held during last month the members have been drawn closer to each other and to God; some whose voices have long been silent in the prayer-meetings have been revived and are again heard from; fifteen have professed conversion and on Dec 1st, we buried in baptism eight rejoicing converts, Mrs. Moody Reid, Mrs. Geo. Reid, Misses Eliza Copp, Laura Reid, Bronzellip Forsythe, May Canning, Minnie Wilbur and Mr. Enias Gallagher. We expect others to follow soon. A site for the new church has been agreed upon, the plan procured; and the work of preparing material has begun. We plan to hold more special meetings in the lower section very soon and are expecting a blessing. Altogether there is much reason for thankfulness and encouragement on this part of the field. M. E. FLETCHER.

Is a somewhat neglected CANAAN SLATION place. Since returning from a grand trip west we have enjoyed a good series of meetings here. 7 or 8 took a decided stand for Jesus Christ while 16 in all expressed a desire to become Christians. A prayer-meeting was organized and started. A S. School was desired by some but did not seem possible till spring. The lessons are to be studied from quarterlies during the winter. There is some talk of building a church in spring. BRAMAN.