

Christianity and Politics.

Mr. Editor.—I thank you for having published my note of May 18th, also, for your article on the grounds of Prohibition in your June 2nd issue in reply thereto.

My obscure manner of expression must have led you into supposing that I require an express precept in favor of Prohibition such, however, is not the case. If it can be shown that Prohibition is in accord with Gospel principles I shall be fully satisfied. If the New Testament warrants Christians as such or the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ going into politics for any purpose whatever, then I have certainly read the Book to no purpose in that respect. Leaving for the time being the deeper and more profound teachings of the word, the following proposition appears obvious to me. That God has instituted and ordained two systems of government, one, for the management of the affairs of this life, of the "here and now" which has been called the State. The other for the purpose of regulating the conduct of those who have believed, or shall believe on the Lord Jesus unto eternal life, which in the Scripture is called the Church of the Living God whose functions relate mainly to the future life. The Church like the State is composed of individuals. The New Testament then may be regarded as a special power of attorney giving a certain definite authority to the church, which in the words of Matthew's Gospel reads as follows: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always; even unto the end of the world." This power is contained in a letter of instructions teaching us what our conduct should be in every relation of life; toward God and his Son, toward our fellow Christians, toward our enemies, toward our own selves, (the natural man); towards the world of mankind, and toward "the powers that be," the State. We are instructed also, by this letter as to our personal life, internal and external; our home duties, our social duties, our duty to our neighbor, and our duty as individual members of the church, as well as in our collective capacity. As to the what, when, and how we are to keep and obey, we are left to faith. For we are saved through faith. "By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." We live by faith. "The just by his faith shall live." We are kept by faith. "You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "We walk by faith and not by sight." This is a brief and very imperfect outline of scripture teaching, but may answer my present purpose. We are told that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. We are exhorted to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." There is not, so far as I have read the New Testament, a single precept, example or principle which warrants the Christian or church in seeking aid from, or coercing the state in any way whatever. This must necessarily be so, because the ultimate power of the state rests in the sword, the Army and the navy. Whereas the power of the Christian church rests upon the principle of love as exemplified by the dear Saviour when he laid down his life for his enemies. I reply thus to your article because in it when you say "The supporters of prohibi-

tion call for it on ground similar to that on which other reformatory or beneficial legislation is advocated and enacted, you relegate "Prohibition" to the moral political realm where in my judgment it properly belongs. Hence the burning question ceases to be, is prohibition right or wrong in principle and becomes this. Are the churches of God right or wrong in trying to secure the enactment of such a law by the state? It looks to me that they are equally wrong from a scriptural standpoint, whether they seek aid from the state, or aim to force the state into a certain line of conduct through political action. Until this question is settled the discussion of the principles involved in legal prohibition can well remain in abeyance.

Let us test this question a little by your argument. If the church has a scriptural right to appeal to, or aid the state in the discharge of its duties, then the church has been exceedingly remiss in duty in the past. Since the battle of Westphalia when modern religions war ceased, and after which wars of state began, there has not been very much appeal made by the Christian church to the state, in respect to purely religious matters. It is plain to me that if the Christian can lawfully appeal to the legislature in behalf of one piece of beneficial legislation, he ought to do so in behalf of all other such pieces. How would such a report as the following strike you: "A delegation composed of the Rev. Mr. Fisher, brethren Godbait and Ketchum representing the Baptist Convention of Ontario, which held its annual meeting in London, Ont., last week, yesterday waited upon the Government at Ottawa in reference to the laws for the protection of the lobster and other fisheries. They represented to the government with great moderation, but with much force, the fact that the present law permits fishermen to trap lobsters as small as four inches in length. And that this course of action which results have proved to be greatly inimical to the general interests of society should be at once prohibited. The delegation as the conservators of the moral and religious interests of the Dominion, therefore urged the Government to take immediate action upon this important matter, and to press such a prohibitory law as wisdom may suggest in respect to it; otherwise the votes and influence of the entire Baptist connection will at the next general election be used against the present government. And so on in regard to every particular named in your article, legal prohibition included."

Your reference to Slavery in the United States appears to me still more striking than the other things named in your article, because it is certain the churches did not procure the liberation of the slave. That was done by the civil government. The churches went into the question on religious grounds, with the result that they were rent asunder, and so far as I know they remain so for the most part until now. Political animosities were very soon largely condoned. Officers and soldiers who fought each other were easily reconciled; but religious feuds still remain, though an entire generation has passed away since the war.

The foundation of the United States civil government rests upon the declaration that "all men are born free and equal and are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Is it any wonder that a people violating so clear a statement of principle as this should be compelled to expiate the crime in sorrow, anguish and blood? They entered into a moral-political contract, they violated it and were compelled to pay the penalty.

Let us then understand what our civil and religious duties are according to the Scriptures, and also the laws and constitution of our country, and let us Christians avoid the mistake of Christians in the days of Constantine, that the horrors of the dark ages may be avoided, and that the blessings of God may rest upon us because of our obedience.

I have already written too long for a newspaper article. I have criticised your article freely, not in any spirit of malevolence, but that you may be equally frank with this if you find it untrue to sound Scripture principles, because we should do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. June 25. W. E. S.

Notices.

Correspondents of the Baptist church at Souris, P. E. I., will please address all correspondence to Sister Mrs. M. Brehant, Church Clerk.

Will all who have any intention of going to Northfield, Mass., to attend the Moody Bible Conference in August next, report at once to me, you will probably obtain valuable information as to special rates etc. B. H. THOMAS.

Correspondents of the Baptist church at Lawrence town Annapolis Co., N. S., will please address all correspondence to T. G. BISHOP, church clerk.

The annual meeting of the Maritime Baptist Publishing company, will be held at their office 85 Germain street, St. John N. B., on Monday morning Aug. 23rd at 9 o'clock. B. A. STAMERS, Sec'y. P. S. The Directors of the company will meet at 85 Germain St. Saturday morning Aug. 21st, at 9 o'clock.

The Queens County, N. S., Quarterly Meeting, will convene with the Brooklyn church on Monday and Tuesday Aug. 9th and 10th. All churches in the county are hereby requested to send delegates. F. M. CHRISTOPHER, Sec'y.

All who are interested in the general Conference for Christian workers at Northfield Mass., from July 29th to Aug. 16th, will please note that the International Steamship Company will give a 30 day limit excursion return ticket on their line between St. John and Boston, for \$5. Purchasers will inform the Purser that they intend going to Northfield Conference. The Dominion Atlantic Railway will charge one first class fare on their line and will return delegates free, providing 10 delegates go, otherwise 1/2 return fare will be charged. The party should take the St. Croix on Thursday July 29th or Tuesday Aug. 2nd from St. John to Boston direct. The writer expects to go on Tuesday Aug. 2nd. Entire expenses guaranteed to be under \$25. Let there be a large party. B. H. THOMAS.

Northfield, Mass.

The Convention—Travelling Arrangements. The Railway and Steamboat lines will carry delegates to the Baptist Convention to be held at St. John, N. B., 20th to 25th August, at one first class fare as follows: Steamer Cann, Churchill Line, Steamer City of St. John, Steamer Alpha; N. B. and P. E. I. Railway, Salisbury and Harvey Railway, Cumberland Railway and Coal Co., Central Railway of N. B. Canada Coal and Railway Co., Star Line, Elgin and Havelock Railway; full local fare to be paid going and return free on presentation of a certificate of attendance, signed by the secretary to the ticket agent or purser. The Canadian Eastern Railway will issue return tickets from 17th to 20th, on Charlottetown Steam Navigation steamers; ask for a delegates ticket and get their certificate which you will present to the purser on your return.

The Intercolonial Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, Shore Line Railway, Dominion Atlantic Railway, Prince Edward Island Railway and Central Railway of N. S., will provide standard certificates to delegates at the starting station, which must be filled in by the ticket agent, delegate and secretary to present to the ticket agent for a ticket to return.

The Canadian Pacific Railway will return delegates at one third fare, the other lines free. Certificates for all lines good until 23rd August.

The same arrangements will apply to the meeting of the Womens Baptist Missionary Union at Sackville N. B. on the 18th and 19 August. Certificates to be good for return until 21st August. J. J. WALLACH, Chairman Com. Trans. of Arrangements. Moncton, N. B., July 15th.

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