

Is It Now A Fossil?

Formerly—perhaps two or three decades ago—without dash or intrusion, a memo, an old summary, frequently appeared in the minutes of Baptist gatherings. No comment, no clue whatever attached, as to its history. There it seemed enshrined as an authority simply, and as a wind-up of the final pages. What has become of it—this "Declaration of Faith and Practice?" Why has it ceased to appear? Does it no longer survive, as among the fittest? Is it consigned to some nook or shelf as a curio? Amongst dry leaves of the forest, has it been swept into oblivion by gales of advanced wisdom? Or trampled heedlessly does it lie in the dust, down trodden under the hustle and hurry of aspirants for points of vantage? Are its whispers drowned in the clamour, the tinkling, the trumpeting and eager push of pietistic forces? Simply remains the fact, with the query, where is it, and why is it now a fossil?

By the first Baptist Association, at its rise in 1800, this Declaration was assumed as fundamental, and so announced. Did it originate at that time, or was its birth previous? Its history extends into the past. In the last years of John Bunyan's life, 1687, upwards of one hundred congregations of Baptists in England, in conformity with their views, announced and issued this Declaration, this admirable scriptural confession and summary of Baptist faith and practice—the faith and practice maintained and preserved untarnished and intact from the times of the apostles. They were now just lifting their heads from the fiery trials of the past, and in concert announced their unalterable adherence to the truth and the order established in the apostolic churches.

In the year 1742 this 'Confession' was adopted by the Association of Philadelphia, and in 1800 by the Baptists of the British Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

But at this day how many communicants are there who never even heard an inkling of it! Yes, whole churches ignorant of its very existence. If, instead of being thus ignored and consigned to the silence of neglected archives, this scriptural synopsis, this venerable memorial of historic note, were found in the portfolio of every minister of the denomination, and carefully used and preserved among the records of every church, uniformity and stable security would result. This faithful witness of what we have always held and claimed as Baptists includes all that was deemed needful by our predecessors at the time of its compilation, and requires no modern addition or subtraction, either as to its doctrines and practice, or as to its sublime covenant. It is really in all respects very perfect and worthy of assured usefulness and perpetuity.

G. A. HAMMOND.

Kingslear, April 28th.

Cromwellianism.

Oliver Cromwell is enjoying a re-birth over in England. Ever since the grim Seer of Chelsea rescued his name and fame from dishonor and misrepresentation his worth and work have been rising higher and higher in the esteem not only of Englishmen, but of the world, except perhaps in the little green Isle of Erin, where his memory is less fragrant than the rose. The Nonconformists have a happy opportunity in the coming to pass of the three hundredth anniversary of Cromwell's birth for the setting forth of his religious principles and theirs. The life of the great Puritan sheds plentiful light upon the controversies in which they are engaged. The religious rather than the political side of his life will be rehearsed, although religion and politics were not two things, but one with him. He was first and foremost a religious man, having a spiritual experience as deep as Bunyan himself. People who to-day talk of old-fashioned conversions must be thinking of Cromwell's; for those were convictions that were pungent and a change that went to the roots of his life; there was a faith that had a broad and deep doctrinal basis to it which would satisfy Augustine and Calvin. It is safe to say that no soldier or statesman whose bravery and diplomacy have challenged the admiration of the world ever was so immersed in religious contemplations as Cromwell. He has been pictured as a farmer

riding among his cattle and over his broad acres with Bible in hand abstracted in spiritual meditations. When he was at the head of his resistless army he was the same religious man; when alone he was on his knees in prayer and when with his soldiers singing and exhorting them to piety. His state papers and speeches were half-sermons or more. The sincerity of his religion was often challenged as it is natural to expect, and made the subject of incessant ridicule. But his enemies were bitter and their views were biased by their hate of spiritual religion and religious freedom. The people of England to-day are free; religion is delivered of its shackles because Cromwell resisted the king and espoused the people's cause on the one hand, and withstood the system of religion which the Episcopalians and Presbyterians of the day wanted to impose on the country. He laid the corner-stone of liberty. A man must be judged in the light of his own age, for he is in large sense the product of his age. Cromwell was the product of the deep religious life stirring in the hearts of the common people and the quenchless desire to be free from both King and Priest. The Cromwell spirit is needed to-day. We need statesmen who are guided by religious principles; we need citizens who have iron in their blood; we need Christians who have will and courage to resist the intrigue and machinations of Priestcraft to rob free peoples of their rights as the sons of God.

An Injurious Epithet

A man's reputation is often wronged by an epithet. No doubt Thomas has had many unflattering reference made to him during the past Easter services. He is called Doubting Thomas, as if doubt were his chief characteristic. If we knew more about him we should probably see that his unbelief in the story of the risen Christ was a subordinate incident in a noble life. He suffered an eclipse of faith, and he demanded in a moment of despondency and impetuosity unwarranted evidence of the resurrection, but there is nothing more than this to merit the dubious epithet. We are too fond of characterizing others by some incident of their life. No man's character should be judged by one act or word, done or spoken, in the crisis of a great trial.

The World's Influence.

Not long ago we were looking into a jeweler's window at a watch placed in the centre of a circle of magnets. It was a new sight to us, and very suggestive. From each of those magnets there was going forth an invisible and undetected influence upon the watch. Each was making it the point of attack, and working to produce deflection and irregularity in its movements. The presence of those magnets would stop an ordinary watch or throw it out of true movement. The watch in the centre was, however, a non-magnetic watch, and the presence of the magnets could not affect its movements the smallest part of a second.

We are exposed to influences that gather upon us from every quarter. The magnetism of the world stops the wheels of a holy and spiritual life. No man alone can withstand them; but it is possible to be made like the non-magnetic watch so that we shall not be affected by the subtle, unseen influences of a world that is hostile to God and faith. The world, in its essential character, is the same as when the Apostle John warned believers against the love of the world. By "the world" we do not mean mountains and plains, earth and air, nor the business or the natural pleasures of life, but that evil spirit in the world that is hostile to pure, unselfish and noble living. Ambition for its honors, a thirst for its pleasures and absorption in its occupations ever tend to make earnest souls deflect from the way of goodness and usefulness.

A Variety of Hinderers.

They are trying to do the impossible. It cannot be done. Great army of discouragers! Great prophets of failure! Only men of hope can rise

above the influence of such people. Tell us not of these things. Tell us of possibilities, not of impossibilities. Bring news that cheers, not news that depresses.

How easy to raise a laugh! How they laughed and made scornful merriment over Nehemiah and his raw masons on the walls. In olden times one man slew an army with the jaw bone of an ass. The jaw bone is still a destructive weapon, and thousands are slain by the laugh and sneer and ridicule. Many are laughed and ridiculed out of their faith and out of heaven.

Gashmer says it. He spreads a rumor about Nehemiah's sincerity. He insinuated a base motive. Who Gashmer was nobody can tell. An unknown man who steals another in the dark. Don't impugn a man's motives nor spread abroad injurious rumors. Don't be tools of Gashmer.

They changed their tactics. Those enemies adopted methods of indirection. Meet us, say they, on the plains of Ono and let us talk over the business, and they made the same plea many times. Persistent tempters often gain their point. Many break down under repeated appeals to evil, and are ruined in soul and estate. Our cities are full of those who lay snares for souls. Discuss not with evil doers. "Get thee behind me, Satan," are the peremptory words we ought to speak. When the tempted begin to parley their feet are in the sand. When the enemy gains your ear, he will probably get you, as he got Eve the moment she began to listen to his wily speech. Be sure to shut ear-gate when the tempter comes near.

"The Greatest of The Means of Grace is Man."

This is a saying of the noted churchman, William Law. We suppose that it means something like this: that the greatest blessing comes into our life through the action of another life upon ours. As one candle is kindled into flame by the fire of another, so the life or power possessed by one man is used in producing the same in others.

We are very largely what others make us. Half our strength and hope comes from our companions or fellow-workers. When God answers our prayers and blesses us with increased good He uses men to bring this to pass rather than angels. Old Father Taylor, on his dying bed, was comforted by one of his visitors by the remark that the angels of God were around his bed ministering to him. But the honest and quaint old man said: "I don't want angels; I want folks." How attractively human and real the Apostle Paul appears when, seeing the brethren who had travelled forty miles from Rome to welcome and cheer while he was being taken in chains, he "thanked God and took courage;" and later, when in prison, he wrote, begging his young friend Timothy to come quickly to him, as his other friends had all left him except Luke. He leaned on man as on an arm for support. We ought to think of the action of our life on other lives. We bless or hurt them; we inspire or discourage them; we save or ruin them—spirit inspires spirit; love kindles love; cheer spreads cheer; benevolence propagates benevolence; song wakes music in other hearts. It is a high honor and joy when God uses any of us as means of grace to faltering and sinning men and women.

Americanism is Dead.

It has been slain to the death by the recent mild and measured letter of Pope Leo addressed to Cardinal Gibbons. So, at least, the just published letter of Archbishop Corrigan to the Pope declares. "The monster," writes the New York Ecclesiastic, "has, on its first appearance, been struck down dead. But it is to you that the glory of this happy result is due." It seems a little hard on those simple-minded Catholics who, in striving after Christian perfection, are laying more stress on the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit than upon external authority and vows and ascetic habits, to have their movement for larger spiritual freedom described as "the monster." But evidently that which appears to be a legitimate position for children of God to hold, is regarded as monstrous heresy by