

THE ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

"Go speak to the people ALL the words of this Life."

Vol. 4

OWEN SOUND, ONTARIO, AUGUST, 1889.

No. 4.

Poetry.

THE ERRING.

BY JULIA A. FLETCHER.

Think gently of the erring!
Ye know not of the power
With which the dark temptation came,
In some unguarded hour.
Ye may not know how earnestly
They struggled, or how well,
Until the hour of weakness came,
And sadly, thus they fell.

Think gently of the erring!
Oh, do not to forget
However darkly stained by sin,
He is thy brother yet,
Heir of the self-same heritage!
Child of the self-same God!
He hath but stumbled in the path
Thou hast in weakness trod.

Speak gently to the erring!
For is it not enough
That innocence and peace have gone,
Without thy censure rough?
It sure must be a weary lot,
That sin-cursed heart to bear,
And they who share a happier fate,
Their chidings well may spare.

Speak gently to the erring!
Thou yet may'st lead them back,
With holy words, and tones of love,
From misery's thorny track.
Forget not thou hast often sinned,
And sinful yet must be—
Deal gently with the erring one,
As God hath dealt with thee.

Original.

EXPEDIENTS.

The considerate and devoted Christian is pained and perplexed in the contemplation of the many diversities that exist among those who profess to be the followers of Christ, not only among those who appear to be merely formal religionists, but, also amongst those who seem to be in earnest and who show much love for Christ and are earnest and zealous in his cause.

Certainly the strifes and divisions that separate the followers of Him who prayed that his people might be one are not the result of obedience to his will, nor in accord with the apostolic injunction that the disciples of Christ should "be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind,"—but must be accounted for by the departures from the Divine rule.

If we take the definitions of a reliable dictionary, an expedient is "That which helps forward; means to an end, devised or employed in an exigence; a contrivance or chance," and it is with these definitions before us that we undertake to show that it is the use of expedients that is both justly and unjustly the cause of divisions.

Though it is not the intention of the writer to examine or explain the peculiar views of the many orders and sects of Christendom, but rather to refer to the divisions amongst ourselves, yet he will point out one expedient used by a large majority of the Christian world, which, undoubtedly comes under the definition of a "shift," and unjustly and unscripturally sets aside a positive command of Christ. We refer to Infant Baptism, for which no authority whatever is found in the Word of God as admitted by the most learned and candid Divines of the different churches which have adopted it.

Now, if our brethren adopt any expedient which sets aside or in any way interferes with a Divine command or a Scriptural precedent, it should at once be condemned as a "shift," dishonoring to the Saviour and destructive of true Christian union.

On the other hand, if an expedient is adopted to "help forward" the cause of Christ it is not only unwise but un-Christian to oppose it, and to wrangle and contend over a "means to an end" by which much good can be done. The co-operation of churches and of individual Christians to send the messengers of Gospel

peace to the darkened place, of our own country or to foreign nations is not to supersede the commission of the Saviour, but more effectually to carry it out.

There is no direct command or example for singing in the assembly of the Saints either with or without an accompaniment. If singing of Psalms, or Hymns, or Spiritual Songs set aside or interfered with "the Apostle's Doctrine," "the Fellowship," "the breaking of bread," or "prayers," then as an expedient it should at once be ignored, but as it does not in any way do so, then it is an expedient in congregational worship to "help forward" our compliance with the exhortation "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." The foregoing is humbly submitted for consideration in behalf of peace and union. Let us, dear brethren, be loyal to our Lord and Master on the one hand, on the other do the things that make for peace and prosperity among ourselves.

E. SHEPPARD.

WOMAN'S WORK.

I have been asked to write a paper on "Woman's Work." "There is nothing new under the sun." Woman's work seems to lie principally in self-denial. But there are other and larger ways of putting it into practice than that old oft-quoted stanza,

"The trivial round, the common task,
Should furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To lead us nearer unto God."

The grand work done by medical and other women in the Zenanas of India, in China Japan and the islands of the South Sea, has become almost like an old story to some of us. There are few comparatively who can do that work—who can afford to leave home and parents; but those who do go open up ways of self-denial to those whose places are at home. There are not many Christian women who do not wear cheaper clothing than their taste dictates in order to devote the surplus to missions. A lady in this city pays only 35 cents for a pair of gloves, but balances the matter by putting from 75 to 90 cents in the missionary box at the same time. Many of us could easily afford to give up some of the luxuries we daily place on our tables. There are many more ways of economizing that we could devise if we set resolutely about it to find them out. Consider how much more rapidly this good work would go on if we were more thoughtful about the five and ten cent pieces that are so small and so easily spent.

In our interest in home and foreign missions we must not forget the real vital point at issue in our own country, namely, the Liquor question. Temperance work seems, as if by common consent, to have fallen largely into the hands of women. Fortunately it has been made considerably easier by the partial extension of the franchise to us. But we need more workers; the word adopted by the W.C.T.U. comes to me irresistibly, "The Lord giveth the word, the women that publish the tidings are a great host." We can hardly be called "a great host" yet, though the work demands a host of workers—every one can find that for which she is best fitted—we all have one talent, the ability to love and serve God. Let me mention some of the branches of work done by the Women's and Young Women's Unions, for your choice.—White Shield work, which is really a work to prevent the growth of the social evil; another branch under this head is to reclaim fallen women. Work among sailors, soldiers, railroad men, prison and police work. Evangelistic Temperance work; Juvenile work, which comprises Band of work, instruction on temperance given in schools and homes of destitute children. Sewing and cooking classes for little gittle girls, combined with kitchen garden work, (this let me say in passing, is teaching the children of poor and ignorant parents how to do ordinary house-work.) Flower and delicacy missions—distribution of literature, religious and secular—visiting the sick in hospitals and in their own homes, etc.—these are some of the branches of work done. The beauty of it is there is room and scope for all, old and young, married and unmarried, ROOM FOR ALL.—I cannot say it often enough. Begin at home, where charity or love always should begin, then reach

out to other homes less fortunate than yours or to those who have no real home. There is plenty for young ladies to do in this direction, for who can measure the influence a young girl can have over the opposite sex. See that you are in the right paths yourselves, girls, then go on, reach all the men you can—fascinate them with the beauty of a true, good life, open your homes to them; do it with a heart single to the glory of God and you need not fear the results.

Local unions are organized by ladies appointed to do that work by the Provincial Union, a small annual fee is charged, the members take the pledge. The badge worn is a small knot of white ribbon.

I should like to say a word or two about the flower and delicacy mission; this work reaches many whose lives are dark and dreary, the mission carried on by the "Y.S." here in Toronto is almost exclusively for the poor and for the gratis patients in the general and the children's hospital. I wish you could see the little ones' pale faces brighten when the girls come to them with the flowers; they know that under the gay exterior the basket is lined with glasses of jelly. The grown up children in the general hospital are just as well pleased to see them, though of course in a quieter way. This work is so beautiful and so pleasant; get some names and addresses of sick and poor from your own doctor, and try a flower mission on your own account for a few weeks and taste the happiness of giving pleasure to God's poor. Take time? of course it does, does not all work for Christ involve self-sacrifice? "As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men, and especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "For God and Home and Native Land."

GARDEN THOUGHTS.

Go through the world we must; we must not be conquered, we must overcome the world. Faith is the means.

See that the old net is repaired if you intend to use it.

Keep the memorial of your salvation: it is dangerous to be forgetful of good.

You can learn better from a practical man than one who has only theory (Luke 10: 37).

Zeal is not always an evidence of truth, e.g. the S.A. but those who have the truth should be on the double-quick.

Cultivation improves the growth of a plant. Zeal in the mission of the Glad Tidings is the plant we want to see flourish: always stir the soil about that plant when you go into the pulpit. Cultivation has a double effect for good: weeds are destroyed, and the growth of the good plants aided. So likewise those who are active in the Master's service are healthier spiritually, and less sinful.

J. B. L.

Selections.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REFORMATORY PRINCIPLE.

When Richard Baxter uttered the famous words: "In things essential, unity; in things indifferent, liberty; in all things charity," he stated a fundamental principle of the religious reformation demanded by the evils of his day and inaugurated early in the succeeding century. It is not probable that he saw all that was involved in his memorable motto. What he did see evidently, was an utter lack of discrimination, in the popular mind between the things which are vital and those which are incidental, and the consequent effort to enforce uniformity at the expense of unity. Against this fatal error he aimed his remarkable statement, which as we believe, contains the germinal principle of the Reformation we plead. Wickliffe has been called "morning star of the Reformation" of the 14th century. It is hardly too much to call Richard Baxter the morning star of the Reformation of the 17th century. If he had been called on to state more specifically what were the "things essential," and what the "things indifferent," his answer, doubtless, would have borne the marks and the limitations of the religious thought

of his times. It was for another age to develop, more clearly than was possible at that time, the application of this principle to the religious problems upon which Christendom had divided into hostile camps.

In the early part of the present century, Thomas Campbell, looking at the same evils which Baxter had seen and deplored, uttered a not less remarkable saying in the memorable words which he made the battle cry of reform: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak, and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." The clear import of this striking motto was, What is enjoined upon men by divine authority we shall insist on being observed; and where the word of God has left men free, we shall not bind them. The phrase of Baxter, "things essential," had now been interpreted to mean the things required by the Scriptures, and the "things indifferent" were those where the silence of the Scriptures left men free to follow their best judgment. In both these mottoes there is a clear recognition of divine authority, and an equally distinct rejection of human authority in matters of religious faith and practice. In each of them there is a solemn emphasis of loyalty to God; on the one hand, and of freedom from the tyranny of opinion, on the other. But, "where the Scriptures speak" is a decided advance, in the direction of clearness and definiteness, beyond the "things essential."

In the progress of the Reformation as urged by the Campbells and their co-laborers, another distinction of great value came into vogue. The "things essential" of Baxter and the things enjoined by the Scriptures, were called matters of faith, while inferences on matters where the Scriptures are "silent,"—the "things indifferent" of Baxter—were called matters of opinion. This distinction between faith and opinion—the one resting on divine authority, the other on men's fallible judgement—served to clear away a good deal of fog from the religious atmosphere, and to enable men to go forward in the work of reform with a firmer step. It was now seen that a great many things which properly belonged to the category of knowledge, and might be classified, as such, representing the results of Biblical investigation, could never be classified as belonging to the thing of faith or have any legitimate place in a creed or confession of faith. It was the clear perception of this distinction that led our reformatory fathers to reject, as bonds of union and communion, all human creeds and confessions of faith. It was not that these creeds contained errors, though doubtless they did, being the results of fallible human thought, but that they contained matter which, whether true or false, had no business in a creed or confession of faith, to serve as a basis of fellowship among Christians. If true, they belong to the category of knowledge, not faith. If they suggested wise methods of organization, work or worship, they belong to the "things indifferent," and not to "things essential."

In the historic evolution of this reformatory principle, there was yet another step taken, which was essential to the application of the Baxterian motto to the religious questions of the age, and necessary to bring the reformers clearly on to New Testament ground. It was soon perceived in the light of the New Testament teaching that the faith which the gospel requires—the truly evangelical faith—was faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ the Son of the living God. It was not faith in dogmas, propositions, or ordinances, but in a Saviour, that constitutes saving faith. To believe in him, and to obey his commandments because we believe in him—these, now, it was seen, were the "essential things" in which there must be "unity." Other matters, not contravening these, were the "things indifferent" concerning which there must be "liberty." How significant, now, the saying of Paul, "There is one faith!" Here, at least was perspicuity itself. The magnificent generalization of Baxter, illumined thus by the light of the New Testament, becomes an operative principle. Only men are now needed with the courage of their convictions, to test this principle in the practical work of reform. The men were not wanting. They did test it; and with what result the world knows.

Perhaps there has not always been a due recognition of the last clause in Baxter's motto

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