

The Canadian Evangelist.

U. W. O. LIBRARY

"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

Vol. VIII., No. 14.

HAMILTON, NOV. 15, 1893.

\$1 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE

The Canadian Evangelist

Is devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, and pleads for the union of all believers in the Lord Jesus in harmony with His own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and on the basis set forth by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—Eph. iv. 1-6.

This paper, while not claiming to be what is styled an "organ," may be taken as fairly representing the people known as Disciples of Christ in this country.

The Use of the Bible.

The study of the Bible to find possible flaws, seemingly contradictory statements, evidence of the infirmities of human transcribers or something that can be twisted into an objectionable representation of the nature of God, is unprofitable. It has had full trial, and the results are not inviting or encouraging. From the day when the gospel was acknowledged to be foolishness to the Greek and a stumbling block to the Jew, this kind of study has been going on. Nothing of value has come out of it. The great mass of the outcome has proved absolutely worthless. The alleged flaws, contradictions, misrepresentations of Divine attributes and methods, have pretty much all been proved unfounded. The blunders that have been made by the objectors to the Bible have been very numerous and have been exposed. This kind of study has called itself rational, scholarly, and claimed admiration for its sincere endeavor to get at the truth. In practice it has generally reached a lie, that is, the results vociferously declared to be attained, have proved untrue and have been abandoned necessarily.

Deporable results have also followed this manner of Biblical research. Regard for the authority of God has been reduced in the minds and consciences of men, and a decline of morality has followed. The connection between morality and intelligence is so close that as men in the mass have declined in morals by substituting a human for the revealed standard, they have become also less intelligent. Crime has increased, philanthropy has languished, domestic and social life have become corrupt, political life has degenerated, as this kind of study of the Bible has flourished.

But there is another use of the Bible. It is illustrated in the habit of Boerhaave, the famous Dutch physician, one of the fathers of modern medical practice, of whom it is said that his "celebrity has scarcely been equalled by that of any physician in modern times." His biographers say that it was his custom to select every morning a verse or passage of Scripture for prayerful meditation during the day, to attain spiritual profit. He accepted it in simple, perfect faith as the Word of God, and received it into his heart with supplication for the help of the

Holy Spirit to enable him to understand it and to obtain from it the benefit it was intended to bestow. He is a specimen of the profitable study of the Bible. There have been many like him in this. It made him unusually intelligent, benevolent, pure and strong, remarkably successful in his profession, peaceful, hopeful and happy in life and in death, and the benefactor of mankind. Before his death, in about the year 1740, his fame had extended not only through out Christendom, but even to the empire of China.

What this use of the Bible in simple, filial faith did for the great Dutch physician, it has done for centuries for thousands of men and women and children. They have been made the children of God, the followers of Christ, partaking of His nature, the heirs of the Most High God, and heirs of everlasting life. They have been the fountains of intelligence, examples in morals, patterns of benevolence, the mainstay of truth and goodness in the communities in which they have lived. Superstitions have vanished, useful discoveries and inventions have multiplied, philanthropic endeavors to relieve human want and woe have flourished in their presence and by their example and influence. No other book has done so much for men as individuals or for communities and nations. It has proved itself adapted to the intellectual, moral and religious wants of men as are sunlight, moonlight and starlight, and air, and physical needs. Nothing like it has ever existed among men.

This is the proper use of the Bible now. One of the best of men, on whom other men leaned, to whom they looked for counsel, whose co-operation they sought in their commercial enterprises and who had a large part in the financial and commercial endeavors to promote invention, transportation and trade forty years ago, said to his pastor, "I have found that I must have an hour to myself, free from interruption, every morning for the study of the Bible and for prayer, to prepare me for the duties of the day." That hour made him what he was. He was not only distinguished in trade, but also eminent in philanthropy. Such an hour will yield like fruit to other men.

Another use of the Bible is to preach it, or to sustain the preaching of it. There is no substitute for it. What is called "worship," does not and cannot take the place of the preaching of the Word of God. The Bible has been entrusted to the church with the divine command, "Go, teach it," "Go, preach it," to every man everywhere. It is the Bible which is to be preached, to be made known, to be applied to human consciences and conduct, to be furnished as mental, moral and spiritual food, refreshment and comfort. The power of the church of God resides in declaring the whole counsel of God, and illustrating and enforcing it by example.

Such preaching since Christ died has never been in vain. It has made bad men good, cruel men kind, ignorant men intelligent, indolent men industrious, despondent and despairing men hopeful, and filled perishing men

with the power of an endless life. It has reformed communities, enlightened and elevated the world. Since the world began there have been many philosophies, many religions, many methods of instruction, but never anything worthy to be compared with the preaching of the Bible.

It is a great thing to be a preacher of the Bible. Young men who have recently graduated from college ought to consider seriously whether they shall not devote themselves to preaching the Word of the Lord. Parents, also, should consider whether their sons can be dedicated to any occupation superior to the preaching of the truth revealed by God.—*New York Christian Intelligencer.*

Fruitless Emotion.

Fact is supreme to-day. Not the cause of fact, nor the deductions from fact, but fact itself, is the pre-eminent thing. Feeling has taken a secondary place, if, indeed, it has not come to be regarded as obsolete and old-fashioned. There was perhaps a reason for this; since false sentiment—that is, sentiment that found no outlet in action—was the other extreme of the arc to which the pendulum swung in the early part of the century under the influence of the Byronic school of writers. But the value of feeling and its force in the world is the same whether attention is directed to it or not, or whether it is the fashion to laud it or to neglect it. We have an esteem for great feeling, because we know that it may lead to great action.

It is noticeable that the Bible says little of feeling directly, and appeals to it for the most part indirectly. This is like the grandeur of its reticence on many ideas; which are simply assumed, as are all the capital facts of man's nature. All is based on the elementary ground that every man is capable of emotion. But, with no attempt at the tragic or pathetic rendering of events, the Bible is of all books that one which most powerfully affects the feelings. And in this way it not only pays the strongest tribute to the power of human feeling, but it ennobles emotion by expecting much from it, and by showing how much God values it. But it never brings upon us that deadly malady of over-emotion which is caused by many a book. All feeling awakened by the Bible prompts to action.

Feeling is like the mordant poured on the waxen tablet of the etcher, that eats into the metal plate beneath the lines which he has drawn. We can hardly estimate highly enough the value of right feeling which is at the same time deep feeling. DeQuincey says, "It is astonishing how large a harvest of new truths would be reaped simply through the accident of a man's feeling, or being made to feel more deeply than other men. He sees the same objects, neither more nor less, but he sees them engraved in lines far stronger and more determinate, and the difference in the strength of feeling makes the whole difference between consciousness and sub-consciousness." But no new harvest of truth will be reaped from this more intense feeling, unless the man

who is the subject of it transforms the feeling into action.

The logical outcome of emotion is action. But poor human nature is vastly illogical, and no doubt the far larger proportion of human emotion, for lack of consequent action, is fruitless. Emotion is like the sap that runs through the vine. Unless the result of the flow be fruit, it would be as well that no flow of the sap took place. Certainly there would be less disappointment in the end. Much sap pours into barren shoots. Much emotion evaporates in the subjective feelings of pity, distress, or indignation, where it should turn into the precious fruits of hearty helpfulness, real assistance, and strenuous labor to change the conditions which cause the need of commiseration or indignation.

In these days Christians have, in common with others, had their horizon enlarged; and, in consequence, the needs of a greater number of people and the knowledge of a greater variety of evils are constantly forced upon the mind. Each of these evils and the sufferings of those afflicted by them, if sufficiently dwelt upon, awakens within us degrees of sympathetic emotion varying according to the depth and accuracy of our knowledge of the situation, and according to temperament and sensibility.

What shall we do with this intensity of emotion when it is thus stirred and aroused? There are three ways of disposing of it, if we may thus speak of so intangible and subjective a thing as emotion. First, we may set it aside, reject it by an act of the will, or by diverting the mind to other channels, or we may let it turn its strong tide inward upon our own soul, overwhelming and de-voluting our sensibilities, spending itself in mere stress—perhaps in tears—in an inward energy of suffering, most painful and most ineffective. A third method remains, and that is to devise an object of action upon which the strong feeling can expend itself, to work out some relief for the suffering or trouble that has produced the emotion in us, and thus give our surcharged feeling adequate outlet. This last is the true and only end for which emotion was given us. It may seem especially true of our painful emotions; for, while pleasurable feeling appears more like an end in itself than painful emotion, yet this is only because our intensely pleasurable feelings more naturally seek and find an outlet for themselves.

The Bible everywhere represents God as possessing feeling. We must think that vast emotions, majestic in their mighty ebb and flow, fill the heart of God with eternal pulsations. Love as an emotion—what must it be in God? But had his love been but an emotion, what had been the condition then of a lost race of sinners! His emotion ceased not, satisfied with the desire alone. His tremendous feeling went forth in an act. God sent his Son. He put forth energy impelled by the force of an emotion powerful as His very nature. Activity was consequent on his feeling. Like God, we His children must put our emotion into act. We must go forth, flow out in activity. Oh, what a pouring forth of

feeling there was when all God's love to man poured into the channel of the glowing heart of Jesus, and outward to humanity through His life of constantly active goodness!

Feeling was given us that we might have momentum enough for an action. How greatly would the sphere of action be diminished in the world, were it not for emotion! It prompts to far more action than does the resolution of the will. Feeling for self is much more easily carried over into action than feeling for others. Emotion for self leads to action for self. If our feeling for others were as strong as for self, how quickly should we be propelled into action! Emotion is the steam that drives the great piston of the world's activity. It is in moments of intense emotion that deep primal truths are indelibly etched upon the soul, leaving eternal tracing-lines. Deep emotion is the deep stirring of the soul. And when we remember what the soul is, we see how much it means that such an infinite entity should be stirred through all its depths.

The possession of emotion does not necessitate that it come out in the form of emotion. Feeling may be manifested in many ways beside frenzy or tears. Deep feeling on the part of a preacher, a vivid conception of truth accompanied with a tremendous feeling of its importance, need not show itself in tears and a broken voice. But it may show itself in courageous words; in a grip on men's consciences; in a portrayal of divine things such as men cannot forget, leaving an impression of force, of necessity, of truth, as of inner vision. So with the private Christian. There need be no fruitless emotion of any sort. All may turn to help, or prayer, or praise.

Eugenie de Guerin, a pious, gifted soul, so sensitively organized that feeling was most intense in her case, says: "As much as possible I turn my tears into prayers. It is the best testimony of love that Christians can show." In the many cases where action is impossible for us, no matter how intense our sympathetic feeling may be, it still remains true that the feeling may be transformed to power, even though the sphere of action is totally severed from our sphere of feeling. The tortures of Siberian exiles, or the slaver's atrocities in Africa, fill us with inexpressible feelings of distress. But it does not seem possible for us to act in any direct way of immediate relief. Is there any way to make our deep feeling count for the commiserated object when we are absolutely cut off from action? Yes, there is God, in whom the sphere of our action is always contained. There remains the pouring out of our feeling into the heart of God, and the request that he who has the power should work the relief impossible to us. Feeling may turn into fervor in prayer. It may turn into true worship as praise. All our gifts—the result of feelings of pity and sympathy—properly fall under the head of action.

Sentiment, to escape being sentimentality, must produce either action, prayer, or praise. That it may lift man into these three great powers of his being, is the true glory and end of human emotion.—*Sunday School Times.*