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THE

ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

Vol. I.

GUELPH, ONTARIO, MAY, 1886.

No. 1.

POETRY.

AN EARNEST MINISTER.

Could I but preach as if I saw the woe
Which, like a sea, spreads over all below,
As if I heard earth's weeping millions cry,
"Give us the light before we faint and die,"
With eloquence of words and tears I then
Would rouse the church to pity dying men.

Oh, could I preach as if my heart was fired,
By gazing on the cross where Christ expired—
As if it felt the mighty love that he,
By dying ransoms, proved his own love to be—
How soon would guilty, stubborn souls embrace
The joyful tidings of redeeming grace!

Oh, could I preach as Christ would have me do,
With heaven and hell immediately in view—
With heart inflamed with pure, seraphic love,
Like those that wait and minister above—
What victories, then, would from my labor spring
To honor Christ, my blessed Lord and King!

Oh, could I preach as if I saw the day—
Dark day of doom, of sorrow and dismay;
When weeping mercy shall in tears retire,
And burning justice wrap the world in fire—
How would the thoughtless and the guilty hear,
And apathily give way to anxious fear!

Oh, could I preach as I will wish at last,
When days, and months, and rolling years are past,
And just before me, in deep mystery, lie
The world unseen as yet by human eyes,
How would I agonize in love to bring
Mankind in sweet submission to their King.

THE PRESBYTERIAN.

ORIGINAL.

INCIDENTAL RELIGION.

As a general rule whatever we obtain incidentally is not so fully appreciated as that which we get by study, by labor or by deliberate choice, and not being properly appreciated is not profitably used nor carefully retained.

It is also true that when we do make a right choice incidental circumstances may have made our decision so easy that we have not fully realized the great advantages and superior worth of our selection.

This is, doubtless, one reason why so many of our young people when they move away from their homes, which are in the neighborhood of a church, are larger and more prosperous, fail to adhere to their principles and change their fellowship. With them union with the Disciples was simply a profession of religion; not a choice of their communion because their position is more Scriptural than the creeds of other religious bodies, but incidentally as easy and as popular, or, perhaps, more easy, and, in some instances, more popular than membership with other churches.

It was not the discovery of the simplicity and grandeur of Bible truth in contrast with denominational error; it was not a determination to bear reproach and suffer affliction, if necessary, with a people despised in many communities on account of their strict adherence to Christian doctrine and practice, but was with them simply "joining" a church.

Of course we need not wonder at the defection of such persons, nor to hear the complaint of good brethren of the great difference between so many of our young people and the faithful old disciples, who left the church of their fathers and professed a purer faith as the result of a careful and prayerful investigation of the Word of God, and who so fully appreciated and loved the truth that they have always steadfastly adhered to it, and loyally served and honored their Saviour under all circumstances and through all the changing scenes of life, and who, one after another, are passing away from us to be with Christ, and and to receive from Him the high honors and rich rewards he has promised to the faithful.

Everton, May 14th, 1886.

E. S.

SELECTIONS.

MR. SPURGEON ON ETERNAL GLORY.

THE Rev. C. H. Spurgeon was again in his accustomed place on Sunday last. In the morning he took for his text 1 Peter v. 10, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." This, he said was a vast subject to enter upon. There were three questions to ask; first, "What is the destiny of the saved?" second, "Wherein does this glory consist?" and third, "What shall be the influence of this prospect upon our heart?" What manner of people ought we to be whose destiny is eternal glory? How amazing it is that the glory which belongs to God should be in store for us poor creatures! David said in the 73rd Psalm, 24th verse, "Thou

shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." In another place he says, "The Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Nothing in Heaven will be kept from the saints, not even the throne, for Christ has said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." We are called to repentance, faith, holiness, perseverance, and afterwards to glory. We read in 1 Thessalonians ii. 12, "who hath called us unto His Kingdom and glory." If He did not mean to have it He would not have called us to it. "Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called: and whom He called them He also justified: and whom He justified them He also glorified." Paul says, "Salvation and glory are riveted together." Again in the 9th Romans we read, "The vessels which He had afore prepared unto glory." That process is going on every day; we are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, it may be by affliction, but "this light affliction is but for a moment, and works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Paul says in Rom. viii. 17, "If so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together." It is the going to prison with Christ that will bring us into the palace with Him, and who would not be with Him in his humiliation, if that is to be the guarantee that we shall be with Him in His glory. Let us shoulder the cross, for it will secure us the crown. "For it became Him in bringing many saints unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." We are called to it, we are living for it, and we shall be brought to it. This glory will be for our entire manhood; for our body as well as our soul. Notice that verse Corinthians, "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." Again in Philippians iii. speaking of the coming of the Lord, "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." We shall carry there none of these infirmities which hamper our spiritual nature. There are no graves in glory. Our bodies shall be greatly increased in power; we shall probably be able to move as swift as lightning. I will now try to show what glory means. In reply to Moses' request, God said, "Thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen." I shall only be able to touch, as it were, the skirts of the robe, for the Lord shall not be seen here below. Even if one should come from above, he could not find language to express what he had seen. Notice in what the glory of Solomon consisted. He had riches, rank, power, conquest, and all these things which make the ears of men to tingle when they hear of them. Yet this is but a dim shadow of what God means. His people shall be wise, famous, they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever; they shall be rich, for the very streets are paved with gold. God's people shall be singular, for they are a chosen, special people, a royal priesthood, an holy nation. Guess, then, what glory means, and then come and learn a little more of it. Glory to a saint means, first of all glorified character. There shall be no relics of the past estate. They shall be fit to consort with Christ himself. The next glory will be our perfect manhood. God's description of Adam is very remarkable. "He made him to have dominion over all the works of his hands." Man was made a little lower than the angels. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." God gave Solomon largeness of heart as the sands of the sea; this also will be included. Then we shall know even as we are known. Now, we see through a glass darkly; then, face to face. The smallest babe shall be wiser than our greatest philosophers. Only think what Christ is; and it is to His image we are to be transformed. We cannot think what we shall be. I hate the word glory when associated with garments rolled in blood. The soldiers of the Cross shall have the honor which belongs to men who have fought a good fight, and they shall wear that crown of life which fadeth not away. Purified character, perfected nature, and complete victory. It is glorious to have the approbation of our Queen and country, but what must it be to have the approbation of God—His "Well done good and faithful servant," and Christ's "Come ye blessed of my Father?" Are we now despised and rejected by men? one approving glance from the eye of Christ will be glory enough for every one of us. The children of God will have the glory of reflecting the glory of God. Some men glory in their royal descent, but that is a poor thing to be being descended from the King of kings. Angels are only servants; we are sons of the Highest. It will be our glory to be connected with Christ in everything. Christ came to save man, He died, He rose again—all for man. It will be said of us, these are of a nature Christ assumed, and those perfected beings will open their eyes and marvel when they see us and say, "These are the bride, the Lamb's wife. Again we shall dwell in the immediate presence of God, for He hath called us into His glory. Whom He justified them He also glorified. The glory is to be bestowed by God himself. Again we are called unto His eternal glory. This is the gem of the ring. Glory forever; it will never be stale. Imagine a man born in the time of Adam and living in all the glory of Solomon for seven thousand years; that is as a flash compared with our glory. Now, what influence shall all this have upon our hearts?

First, it ought to excite desires to get that glory. Will not you fall down and worship Christ when he gives you all these? Secondly, this ought to move us to a feeling of fear. Let us tremble lest we come short of it. If there were no hell it would be hell enough to miss Heaven. Will you not draw your sword and fight for Christ that you may share in His glory?

OUR OBJECT IN GIVING.

It is to be feared that there is little general knowledge of the motives and objects which constitute true Christian benevolence. Much is given avowedly for the support of the gospel and the Lord's work, which if traced to its source, would be found to take its rise in some selfish human desire. To give cheerfully, liberally and habitually, in the spirit of Christ, is probably the highest attainment in the Christian life; for it involves the exercise of sacrifice and self-denial with regard to time, talent, comfort, worldly goods and the pride of the flesh in every conceivable form. And while some things to be given are of greater consequence than money, yet, as money is the recognized standard of value, so we may estimate the whole subject upon what may be called a money basis, and at least our present endeavor will be to consider somewhat the subject of giving as relating to and practised by the churches generally, in their public work and services.

There is a widely varied practice among the many religious bodies calling themselves Christians, (mostly if not all with some human or exclusive designation in addition thereto,) but the basis of all concentrated effort is the same, i. e., general participation. Hence, whether the ordinary expenses of the church are met by selling or leasing the seats in the house of worship, by subscription paper, treasury boxes or public collections, the idea at the bottom is the same, that all should share in the grace of giving. Without, therefore, demonstrating this point from scripture, we assume it as recognized by all as a fundamental condition, that all citizens share equally in this duty and privilege.

It will be found that vastly the larger part of church giving is nothing more than the fulfilment of business obligations. The people want a place for worship, so they give the money, sometimes to the glory of God, but oftener perhaps to rival some neighboring congregation and gain or preserve some partisan advantage. Then they want a preacher, and as able an one as they can get, and for this purpose they will likewise contribute somewhat in proportion to the desire they have to be entertained or taught, with perhaps little real thought of the public good.

In like manner will be met all expenses for furnishing and adorning, just as the several members of the church will build and furnish their several homes. A congregation will also pay directly from its pocket for its organ and choir, or piously eat strawberries and cream with the world for twenty-five cents a dish, or get up some other catchpenny device to induce the devil to come and help the saints.

Now in all this we wish to inquire what more is done than is prompted by self-interest and society or party pride? Not that all or even the most of our giving is of this character, but who will dare say that a very large part of such giving is not giving a dollar for a dollar's worth after the manner of the flesh? How much will the average "church member" contribute when he does not like the preacher or congregation? How many are there who make their subscriptions or contributions wholly dependent upon whether or not their tastes are gratified, the same as in any other business transaction? Do not even the publicans so?

There is but one right way to look at this part of the work of the Christian family. Whatever may be deemed a legitimate expense in the congregation should be treated as a debt of honor, to be paid as any private bill for coal, provisions, school tax or hired help. And it should be divided among the members of the family and disposed of without a thought of its being given to the Lord, inasmuch as they are supposed to get their money's worth. Why should we not pay for our religious privileges as well as any others, without charging it on the Lord's account? But how many there are who ease their consciences by paying rent for a seat in the meeting-house, by a subscription toward the preacher's salary, or eating oysters in the name of the Lord, to eke out the interest on the church debt or pay a soprano for operatic screaming at a time when all the people should join their voices in praising God!

All the foregoing may be included under the authority of such Scripture as, "owe no man any thing," "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and "walk honestly toward them that are without." But now we have a word with reference to real Christian giving, and in brief it may be included in that little understood and less-observed divine institution, "the fellowship of the saints." All the example and precept of the New Testament concerning Christian liberality has reference to the collection and distribution of the fund for the

poor. That was the great test of primitive discipleship, and then the question was not "How much shall I pay towards the salary of the Rev. Simon Peter?" but on the other hand, "What can I give into the fellowship fund for the widows and poor saints?"

Until the church in these latter days shall give for the good of other that cannot recompense her, as the poor within her gates or the heathen without—she will be spiritually lean; and as long as she pays her servants from the poor box, so long will many that God has chosen "rich in faith" go without what the Lord intended for them.—N. E. Evangelist.

IS THE BIBLE REASONABLE?

We believe the Bible is in accord with the highest reason and that the God of the Bible demands of us not a blind, but an intelligent faith. In his celebrated debate with Alexander Campbell, Robert Owen made the sweeping assertion that all religion has grown out of ignorance and credulity. He made no exceptions. The Christian religion met with the same condemnation. He announced what he was pleased to call "twelve fundamental laws of nature," which were to subvert the Christian religion and become the basis of universal society. Where now is Robert Owen and his twelve laws? His laws are as dead as the clods that cover his dead body; but Christianity lives and flourishes like "a green bay tree." Voltaire pronounced the Bible an unreasonable book and prophesied the decay of religion with the eighteenth century. Voltaire is dead enough but religion survives him.

A more modern apostle of unbelief has made like predictions with Owen and Voltaire. He boasts that the Bible makes slaves of men and that only unbelievers are free-thinkers. He says a man cannot believe the Bible except at the expense of his reason, and that he longs for the day when Reason enthroned upon the world's brain will be the king of kings and the god of gods.

These are proud boasts; but are they true? What is the spirit of the Bible? Does God demand the sacrifice of our reason in order to accept the volume of Revelation? A book should be permitted to speak for itself. The Bible, like every other book, should be its own interpreter. It is my purpose in this connection to collate a few passages bearing directly upon this thought.

In the 13th chapter of Isaiah we have these words: "Come, let us reason together saith the Lord." Here God challenges us to use our reason.

When John the Baptist was in prison he became despondent, and doubts as to the true character of Jesus flitted across his mind. He sent two of his disciples to the Master with the question, "Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?" Jesus did not send them back with a dogmatic answer; but he sent him a most reasonable, and therefore a most convincing reply: "Go and tell John the things you do see and hear." And then he recounted all his works of love and mercy as so many proofs of his Messiahship. This is in perfect harmony with his proposition to the Jews at another time: "If I do not the works of my father believe me not; but if I do, if you believe not me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father." There could not be a more reasonable proposition.

The apostle Paul speaks in the highest praise of the people of Berea and censures the Thessalonians, because the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things are true, while the Thessalonians neglected to do so. In Paul's estimate, careful investigation was the badge of true nobility. This don't look like making slaves of men.

When this grand old apostle of faith stood in the presence of Agrippa and made his masterly, logical defence of the resurrection, he personally appealed to the king. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" This word "incredible" is almost a synonym for "unreasonable." Thus Paul appealed to Agrippa's reason.

The apostle Peter also exhorts us to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for our hope, and he says in another place, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables... but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."

The beloved Lord says: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

A book never made more reasonable demands than the Bible. The character of the witnesses is such as to confirm our faith. "their honesty and heroic fidelity to their convictions kindles our constant admiration. They had every reason to know whereof they affirmed, and if we reject their testimony we may reject all history by the same process of reasoning.

The Bible comes to us confirmed by many infallible proofs. The resurrection of Christ is the greatest fact of the ages. It is greatest in the superabundance of testimony supporting it, and greatest in its benign influence upon the human family. As we stand in the presence of these, we are compelled like Thomas to exclaim, "My Lord and my God."—Christian-Evangelist.