Duncan Robertson

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THE

ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

"Go speak to the p[illegible] to ALL [illegible] of this life."

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Poetry.

THE WORKER'S PRAYER.

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
The living echoes of thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children, lost and lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the Rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O give Thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from Thee,
To weary ones in needful hour.

O fill me with Thy fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when and where
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

Original.

STUMBLING.

"Unto you therefore who believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to those which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."—1 Pet. ii, 7, 8. Like many other portions of the word of God, this scripture has been pressed into the Calvinistic code, and construed to mean that God appointed the non-elect to be disobedient, entirely divesting them of any responsibility in the matter of their salvation, and, not only thus making God a respecter of persons but the author of damnation. To the unprejudiced and enlightened Christian it seems strange that any man, or set of men, could formulate a creed which represents God as more unjust and cruel in dealing with a large part of those whom he has created than the fancied Demons of the heathen are presented in their vain Mythology,—a creed which implies that a definite number of mankind, including infants, were born to be sent to hell, that in hell they will suffer the indescribable agony of burning in fire and brimstone throughout endless ages. Such a creed does not need revising nor amending, but ought to be burnt up in everlasting fire, instead of the non-elect infants.

Beza's exposition of the passage we are examining is "That some are rejected not because of their foreseen sins, but because of the good pleasure of the Divine will." We fail to see where the *good* pleasure comes in.

We cannot offer a better exegesis of this passage than the concise one of Jones of Nayland:—"Whereunto they were also appointed," not appointed to be disobedient, but appointed, since they would be disobedient, to take their own course and the consequences of it, to stumble and fall at difficulties, of which they would easily have seen the proper solution, and so got over them unhurt, had they but modestly begged, and dutifully followed the Divine illumination."

Yes, that is it,—appointed to stumble at the word because they are disobedient to its requirements.

How often, during Christ's ministry on earth, the Jews stumbled at his word, because they would neither believe in him nor obey him?

"The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men? Here was a stumbling block. In their unbelief and disobedience the chief priests and the elders fell right over it into the mire of dissimulation and falsehood;

What Scott says, concerning deceptions,—

"O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive?"

may also be said of those disobedient to God's word, of those who know their duty but will not do it: their words and actions become "a tangled web." In the way of truth and right, we can, *and* with little difficulty walk in a plain path and feel have the approval of our Divine Master; but the moment we become insincere, and through prejudice, indifference or worldly policy, set aside the commandments of Christ we shall have to hesitate, walk in darkness and stumble at the word which contains his precepts, and finally fall and be confounded.

Let one illustration suffice,—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." How many thousands of professing Christians stumble at this word "baptized"? Why? Because they are disobedient. We have heard of several preachers who, in quoting this Scripture, leave out the word *baptized*. Every time they come to the word they kick against it and stumble. The reader may have known of the Universalist who heard a preacher deal thus with Christ's commission, and afterwards accosted him, and said:—"On the same principle that you quote the 16th verse of the 16th chapter of Mark, I can establish the doctrine of universal salvation; you quote it "He that believeth shall be saved." I quote it "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be;" the difference between us being that you leave out the words "be baptized," and I leave out the words "be damned"; you not liking baptism, and I not liking damnation." Or in other words, one stumbles at one word, being disobedient to what it embodies; and the other stumbles at another word, because he does not fancy its import.

E. SHEPPARD.

Walkerton.

"FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE."

The words quoted above are perhaps most frequently applied to the giving of money, but they are by no means limited to this application, nor their force exhausted by it. It is told that an unbeliever once said to a Christian, "Your religion demands constant giving, in fact, seems to be a system of giving." This is perfectly true. Our Father has taught us this, both by example and precept. His gifts to us individually began with life, for we are taught that He is the Author of our being, the Creator of our bodies. He not only gave us life but added to it all the senses and faculties needful for its highest enjoyment; and to this were added such surroundings as would best minister to our happiness and comfort—the beauty, the "sweetness and light" of the world in which we are placed, the tender associations of home, the society of friends whose hearts and hopes and aims are one with ours—these, and so many more that thought is lost in trying to grasp or number them, are our Father's gifts to us, but all these precious as they are—are only as the grey dawn to the noonside glory compared with the greater gifts He has promised for the life to come, and of which He gives us the earnest here. Only as we value gifts by their preciousness to the giver can we estimate the price of God's greatest crowning gift to us. It is written, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life." We sing:

"Possessing Christ I *all* possess,
Wisdom and strength and righteousness,
And holiness complete."

and we read, "The free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." If it were possible for us to estimate the unwasting treasures of glory and bliss that are contained in the words *eternal life*, then we might conceive of God's wondrous love to us in the unspeakable gift of His Son. Wherefore, beloved, seeing we know these things, may we not well ask,

"What shall I render to my God
For all his mercies shown."

Does He who gives us *all* that we have ask aught in return? It is written, "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." Do we exclaim, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" In this age there are comparatively few, perhaps none in this favored land, to whom this demand comes literally; but if it should come to each one of us in its fullest meaning, could we stand upon Calvary, at the foot of the cross, and say Lord; it is too much? [illegible] Master does not [illegible] fellow Hu[illegible] salvation [illegible] It is written again, "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." [illegible] and *earns more* of the goods committed to his; *all* is his Lord's to be used as may serve his Master's interests. With this [illegible] possessing us, can we lightly or inconsiderately use a single dollar of our money? And this question applies with equal force to our use of our time, and to everything we possess. We sing,

"My heart, my life, my *all* I bring
To thee my Saviour and my King."

Is not this a reasonable service? Yea more, a *blessed* service, bringing reward a hundred-fold even in this life, and on the threshold of life to come our greeting will be "Well done good and *faithful* servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

S. M. B.

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

While all Christians admit that giving is one of the duties of their exalted position, some are found earnestly for spontaneous instead of systematic giving; but often, alas! spontaneous giving degenerates into spasmodic offerings; and that does not indicate a healthy state of affairs. If systematic giving there is a certain amount pledged to be paid weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly, as the case may be. Now the individual begins at once to make preparation for the payment thereof, and the money is always forthcoming, because forsooth it was laid by in store. I don't know how it is among the brethren, but I do know for a certainty that systematic giving is seldom, if ever, resorted to, in fact many, I fear, only say in which an occasional spasmodic impulse. But it has been urged by some that making a definite sum, as ten cents per month, is unscriptural, and also that it is beyond the means of some, while others could easily quadruple the amount; granted, and they have the privilege to do so, are earnestly exhorted to, in fact many do give four times that amount; but on the other hand, is it an established fact that ten cents per month is beyond the means of any? I sincerely doubt it. I know some who say they can't afford it; but at Christmas time they'll spend a great deal more than the aggregate in gewgaws and poisonous candies for their children, and do not hesitate to buy ice-cream and cooling drinks upon occasion; so I think I may be pardoned for doubting their inability to pay ten cents per month, were they so minded.

Giving as the Lord prospers, is a good Scriptural method, and may be carried out systematically. Evidently Jehovah, in the government of His people under the law, had an eye to the development of His people under grace, and I am sure that there was system in their giving. "The tenth is the Lord's," and if we would take example from what we learn there, we must give much more liberally and systematically than heretofore.

Now in regard to voluntary giving, there is this to be urged,—that unless people with limited incomes make calculation upon giving a stated sum at intervals they will seldom find themselves with any loose cash to give, because the daily needs of our temporal abodes will seem to demand all we have and more too. Especially is this true among the women. But thinking of our obligations and the blessed privilege of being co-workers with the Lord in the carrying out of the great commission, we can manage to save (yes, *save* is the magic word) enough that we may add our mite with others and as "many a nickle makes a muckle" there is soon enough in the treasury to give the much-needed help to some struggling mission. And herein is the principle of sacrifice involved, for who will affirm that it entails no sacrifice when a woman, with all the refinements begotten of education and accomplishments, denies herself some coveted luxury that her money may be ready when called for. But it is not only among the wealthy that sacrifices are made; many of the thousands contributed by women to foreign missions represent self denials on so small a scale they seem scarcely worth noticing, but to the donors are not small things by any means. A yard less of ribbon on the new bonnet, or the old one worn another [illegible] bought; when the [illegible] were so fashionable, one egg less in the cake for tea, a moderate loss of sugar in the morning coffee; one lump used where two would make a much more brilliant light, finishing Mary's skirt with a broad hem when that lovely embroidery was so tempting, neatly darning the thin spots that Johnnie's pants may last a while longer, and withal practising these small economies with an object in view, viz: to save money for going to the cause that we love so well. And were there not a time and place appointed there would not be the same incentive to save.

True the Lord's Day collections might gather these all up were our churches all alive to the interests of mission work which unfortunately they are not. So it remains for the individuals in each congregation who are interested to lay by in store and trust some reliable person to take care of the money, just as Paul was going to do with the money provided by the churches in Galatia and Corinth.

Now in regard to the constitution which seems to be a stumbling block to some, I would say that it is not obligatory upon any Auxiliary or Mission Band to use it. It may be a help in organizing, but can be laid aside at will, if I understand the spirit of the C.W.B.M. aright. I am not a president nor official of any kind and therefore may speak plainly without seeming to rule, and perhaps I can make my argument more forcible by relating our experience, which is known to many, while others may hear it for the first time. We organized five years ago without a constitution and have continued our meetings every month with a goodly attendance considering our limited number. When we signified our intention of becoming Auxiliary to the O.C.W.B.M. there were no questions asked whether we had adopted the constitution or not. They gave us a hearty welcome, and we were satisfied with our reception. But does some one ask how did you know what to do or how to organize? Well this is how we knew; Some of the sisters had attended the N. Y. State meeting at Buffalo, and using their eyes and ears to good purpose had an idea how to proceed, and with good common sense to help us we are able to go on. We we copied after the Buffalo Auxiliary which had a constitution, so we are precisely upon the same basis, but the fact remains we have adopted no constitution which is quite a redeeming feature in the eyes of some. Now I have written all this with a view of helping some who are perhaps conscientiously opposed to written constitutions, and yet are anxious to work in the vineyard of the Lord, and desirous of helping to spread the gospel in heathen lands. To such I would say appoint a meeting, collect all the missionary intelligence you can get, read selections from papers or magazines on the subject, write essays and read them, inform yourselves concerning this great work, and no danger but that you will be benefitted, and your work recognized. But above all do not let little differences of opinion hinder you from engaging in some way in this noble and soul-inspiring work.

MRS. W. ANGLE.

Wainfleet, Sept. 23rd, 1889.

Life must be measured by action, not by time; for a man may die at thirty, and young at eighty: nay, the one lives after death, and the other perished before he died.

THE progress of Christianity among the heathen is one of the marvels of this century. Something over a hundred years ago Voltaire declared in a room in Geneva, "that before the 19th century Christianity would have disappeared from the earth." And now this very room is being used for a Bible repository.

STONE HIM.—Who? The man whose arguments you cannot meet. What right has he to use logic which you cannot parry off? Up and at him. If his face has a heavenly radiance, hurl stones at it, for it has no right to shine in opposition to your views. If the laws of the country forbid you the pleasure of the old-time method of defending your orthodoxy, do the next best thing. Hurl ugly names and epithets at those who hurl "thus saith the Lord" into your face, and thus shall you show that you are worthy descendants of the men who laid down their clothes before Saul while they argued with Stephen.