

Contributions.

The Order of Confirmation Again.

It is with pleasure that the writer notices the criticism of the Rev. Mr. Belt, on the article which appeared in a late number of the Christian Evangelist, on the Order of Confirmation. With the exception of two or three remarks, it is written in a very kind and courteous spirit, and though the writer says he has "no intention of entering upon any controversy upon the subject," he surely will give a candid examination of this brief response to what he has written upon the subject. It is not correct to say that Mr. Shoppard is boiling over with righteous indignation at several unholy teachings of the Church of England; but, rather, that he, viewing with high respect the many pious, talented and learned men among her clergy, the extensive religious influence she exerts in the world, her many beneficent and charitable institutions, feels a sincere regret that her usefulness among men and her approval by the Saviour, should be marred and imperilled by the practice of rites, which are not only "unscriptural, anti-scriptural and absurd," but, in some respects, farcical.

Let it be understood that we have not stated that the laying on of hands is unscriptural, but that neither our modern bishops nor any other dignitary or ordinary layman has the power to communicate the extraordinary gifts, resulting from the reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, as did the Apostles Peter, John, and Paul at Samaria and Ephesus in the first century; and our objection is that the Bishop referred to the Scriptures containing these records for his authority when conducting the Confirmation service in Guelph. "And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." This is one of the Bishop's proof texts for Confirmation. If the agency were authoritative and efficient, where were the manifest results? How many of those confirmed "spoke with tongues and prophesied?"

But, furthermore, our rev. critic in the references he makes to the Scriptures, and to various denominational writers, assumes that the laying on of hands and the Order of Confirmation are identical.

The following quotation is rather strange: "Concerning imposition of hands, we believe it was the practice of the Apostles and the primitive church to lay hands upon the newly baptized believers, and it should be perpetuated in the church." Join with this the following: "The six Principal Baptists took their name from the six principles of II-b. vi. 1, 2, one of which was the doctrine of the laying on of hands, i. e., Confirmation." Notice, it is Mr. Belt who cites these authorities for what he designates Confirmation, and yet instead of laying hands on "newly baptized believers," the Bishop in Guelph laid hands on those "baptized" from fourteen to sixteen years ago, and who were only infants then and not believers.

But we return to the Divine record. As we stated in the previous article, if the Order of Confirmation which the Rector of Guelph asserts is a religious practice which was universally observed by the early Christians, and which to-day seven out of every eight Christians, at least, hold to as a scriptural and apostolic ordinance, why, in the name of reason and faith, is there no mention made of it in the Scriptures either by precept or in example?

Where in God's Word is there any reference to godfathers and godmothers?

Where is the chapter and verse that records that a Bishop says to those baptized in infancy "and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?"

Is it a breach of the ninth commandment, as the rev gentleman insinuates, to say that, in the face of a total absence of Bible proof, that the Order of Confirmation as practised by the Episcopal church is unscriptural? We think not.

Let us not confound the scriptural accounts of the laying on of the hands of the Apostles for the communication of the Holy Spirit, nor the same practice in the ordination of officers in the church with what is claimed as authority for the modern Order of Confirmation.

In the seven-eighths of all Christians who hold Confirmation as a scriptural and apostolic ordinance, we suppose our critic includes the Roman Catholic church, which church does not regard it simply as an ordinance but as a sacrament, and in its administration, according to my Encyclopedia; "unction and the sign of the cross are used; and instead of the imposition of hands, the person confirmed receives a little blow on the cheek, to remind him that he must in future suffer affronts for the name of Christ."

In the changes and modifications made in this rite at the Reformation, the leading object is still in view, and as far as the Order of Confirmation is concerned there is as much scriptural authority for the blow on the cheek as for the imposition of a Bishop's hands.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to inform the clergyman who deems him severe in his previous remarks on this subject, that he was in his youth a zealous Episcopalian; that he received all his first religious impressions in a home and in the churches of that sect. Not for self-adulation, but for truth's sake, he can conscientiously state before God that he early sought after God, and yearned for a true and thorough conversion. At the proper age he was examined by the Rector of the church he attended as a candidate for Confirmation. With prayer and fasting, and self-examination, he sought to do everything the church required. He was confirmed at St. Mary's, Ishington, by Blomfield, the Bishop of London; from such teaching as that embodied in the address of the Bishop of Niagara, he expected to receive the inspiring and converting power of the Holy Spirit from the imposition of the Bishop's hands. Of course he was disappointed, and his heart sank within him. He reviewed and reviewed again and again all his thoughts and words and deeds connected with his reception of the rite to ascertain, if possible, if anything was lacking on his part, but in vain, and was driven almost to distraction. A few years after he was invited to attend the services of the body he is now connected with, and in spite of the bitterest prejudice against anything that was outside of the church of his fathers, he was convinced that faith, repentance and baptism, as enjoined in the great commission, were the requisites for church fellowship and union with Christ, and acted accordingly. Ever since, though he knows that the majority of professing Christians are averse to the simplicity of Gospel truth, it has been his life's work to promulgate the truths by which he himself was blessed, and hopes to do so the residue of his days for the good of his fellow man, and for the glory of God. E. SHEPPARD.

Patient in Tribulation

E. SHEPPARD, WALKERTON

Be patient in your tribulations here, For these the faithful Saviour has foretold; Yet He has kindly bid you have good cheer, For soon, like Him, you'll overcome the world.*

Fight on, with valor, the good fight of faith, Yield not unto the wily hosts of sin; The conflict ends in victory at death, The conqueror's crown of life you're sure to win.

Work with energy in the gospel field, Constrained by gratitude and ardent love, Your willing labors will a fragrance yield, And give sweet memories to the rest above.

Though weary with the roughness of the way, And tired of the pilgrim's lonely road, Press on;—the waning light of closing day But shows you're nearer to your home and God.

There with the vast multitude, clothed in white, Who came through tribulations great and sore, You'll serve your God and Saviour "day and night," The Lamb of God eternally adore.

Minnedosa Letter.

DEAR EVANGELIST,—It is now nearly four months since I came here. I wish to say I like the country; the climate is all that could be desired; that season which we called "Indian summer" in Ontario, when the sun seemed to be shining through a golden film, tinging every object with that hue, is a specimen of the weather we have enjoyed throughout. We have had some frost and two or three flurries of snow; no sleighing yet. No mud. Rubbers are little used here. I hope that fact will induce some of the good folks in the Niagara District to "get out of the mud" and "come thou with us, and we will do thee good"; the Lord is blessing us; "and whatsoever good thing the Lord will do unto us, the same will we do unto you." The land is fertile, produces abundant crops; there were 16,000 bushels of wheat grown on one farm (section) in this neighborhood. Ten years ago there was just one log-house here; now we have quite a town, and I think Minnedosa exports more grain than many of the large towns in Ontario; there are five or six buyers kept pretty busy. But, if you are not a missionary man, we have no use for you. We want you to come and work for the Lord, and He will give you fruitful seasons. We don't want you either if you are going to quarrel about methods of work. The Lord has opened the way for you either to make garments for the needy or sell your property and put it into the treasury, and go to exhorting sinners to turn to the Lord. He has not defined whether you are to chop right-handed or left-handed, only you must chop, or exhort, or make garments; and, if you do not, some one who does will get your capabilities. I like the people here—everybody is kind. The little church here is happy in doing good deeds. Now it would just do you good to be in the preacher's house some times: the best of the beef, a ham, a chicken, a turkey, a pail of delicious milk, wood, etc. Now, "who put such things into their heads?" 'Tis the Bible, the love of God, the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. It is terrible to be clubbed this way. It does not cause one's blood to go into

*John xvi. 33.

the ground that it shall cry unto the Lord; it makes one bleed internally, and from our poor heart caustic "many thanksgivings to go up to God." Sectarianism is uglier here than in any place where I have yet lived. But the Methodist friends have shown us kindness. The others are determined that we must not live here; they "Take counsel against us," bid us and say to the people: "Why hear ye him?" I think the Lord will bring us good out of the evil. So far the result has been favorable. It has served also to draw out more truth. A new mission point is opening, and I like the way it is opening.

We started a Sunday school shortly after our arrival here, which is showing evidence of good fruit. We had our holiday entertainment in common with the rest of the folks; it consisted of a programme and a tree. We had a house full. Our programme occupied two hours. There were no speeches. Every recitation was well received. We took a collection and received \$13. The only appeal after the programme was: "We ask you to help our Sunday school." The tree produced over thirty presents. I helped to arrange it, was the last to leave the house and the first to return for the entertainment. I had the key, but somehow that tree budded, blossomed and bore a Persian lamb cap for myself and one for Mrs. Lister. Now, children, don't you believe that Santa comes down the chimney?

"A happy New Year" to all.

J. B. LISTER.

Minnedosa, Man., Jan. 2, 1891.

Our Literature in Japan.

To the Disciples in America:—

In Japan as in America and Europe the doctrines of philosophy and religion are now, comparatively speaking, but meagerly propagated by word of mouth. Men prefer to sit in their homes and read books and papers; and in this way obtain their knowledge, rather than stand in the market-places to hear some stivrant lecturer. Hence, to meet the demands of this book-reading and journal-reading age, books and periodicals of all descriptions have been enormously multiplied.

In Japan publications are increasing at a wonderful rate. Nearly every month records the birth of a new magazine or paper. Especially is the religious soil prolific in this direction. The missionaries well know how eagerly the Japanese devour books; and equally aware of the great demand for reading matter, they have, by help from the churches at home, sought to supply the demand.

No one among us can possibly question the wisdom of putting our church literature into the Japanese language. In doing this we can most effectually put the great principles of our plea in the hearts of this people—especially the Christian people. Of course all efforts in this direction at this early time will necessarily be feeble. Year before last when the Methodists began the publication of their little monthly, a small instalment of the biography of Wesley was published each month in English. This publication has continued right on, but has been translated into the Japanese language. The Japanese people, in this transition period of their country's history, devote industrious study to biography, especially biography of great reformers. What an inspiring volume the "Memoirs of Campbell" would make translated into the Japanese language! But at this time we may not be able to aspire to so grand a work.

But we have now begun the publication of the monthly Christian Journal, a copy of which we send you.

Each month 1,000 copies are issued; and, as far as possible, the whole issue will be distributed, many copies as free tracts. The publishing and mailing cost about \$13.00 of our money, the payment of which, I assume. That the Christian Journal may grow to be a means of great good in this land is my cherished desire.

I send home this circular to interest the brethren in our publications in Japan; and to solicit their co-operation in presenting, in this country, the principles of our plea. I believe that our Japanese brethren, when they shall have sufficiently increased in numbers, will go forward in the spreading of the Gospel as held forth by our reformation. But just now, when we are so few in Japan, the work of putting our literature into this language must be done largely by the brethren at home. While the Christian Journal is now conducted by myself, yet it is expected in the not distant future that it will pass into the hands of the Japanese brethren. To this end the price of the subscription has been put within the reach of all, so that by obtaining a large subscription, the paper may become self-supporting, and then pass to the management of some Japanese brethren.

But, that we may begin to publish the literature of our church now, we solicit the help of the brethren at home. This is the way: Let any brother send us a tract or book which he may desire published, accompanied by money to the amount of half of what it would cost to get out an edition in America, and we will translate it and issue it in a similar edition here. As the translation will cost something beyond our own labour, all that is asked to meet this expense is the privilege of publishing in the Christian Journal any part of the tract or book. We have many splendid tracts at home which, if translated into this language, would accomplish great good. Besides the constant plea for the union of all Christians, we have tracts and books illustrating other equally important phases of Christian life, viz.: the growth of spirituality and goodness, and the difficulties and doubts which arise in the minds of many by reason of the sceptical and infidel literature which has spread abroad. Here is an opening to brethren who have means, and who wish in this way to bless the people of Japan. Fraternally, Tokyo, Japan. E. SNODGRASS.

The Surprised Mohammedan.

On one occasion, travelling in the Barbary States with a companion who possessed some knowledge of medicine, we had arrived at a door near which we were about to pitch our tents, when a crowd of Arabs surrounded us, cursing and swearing at the "rebellers against God." My friend, who spoke a little Arabic, turning round to an elderly person, whose garb bespoke him a priest, said:—

"Who taught you that we were disbelievers? Hear my daily prayer, and judge for yourselves."

He then repeated the Lord's Prayer. All stood amazed and silent, till the priest exclaimed:—

"May God curse me if ever I curse again those who hold such belief! Nay, more, that prayer shall be my prayer till my hour be come. I pray thee, O Nazarene, repeat the prayer, that it may be remembered and written among us in letters of gold."—Hay's "Western Barbary."

Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up.—Ruskin.

Be loving, and you will never want for love; be humble, and you will never want for guiding.—Miss Mulock.