

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

JOURNEY BREAD.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."

Aloft in siller grandeur,
The solemn mountains stood;
Mourning beneath, and fearful,
A silent nation bowed;
And every gaze was fastened where
A man of God went in to prayer.

They knew that he was burdened
For them with care and shame;
They felt His awful presence
Who there to meet him came;
They saw the robes of Deity,
And worship stood in every eye.

Without, the people trembled;
Within, beneath the cloud,
"Jehovah talked with Moses"—
The God of glory vowed,
In grace and truth and faithfulness,
To bear them through the wilderness.

"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest"—
As richly fills the promise,
Still, for each pilgrim's breast;
And grace bestowed will thirst renew
Till we behold the glory too.

Digby.

Religious.

EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE; OR, CHURCH QUARRELS.

BY REV. JOHN STOCK, LL. D., ENGLAND.

Towards the close of the Epistle to the Philippians there occurs this touching appeal: "I beseech Euodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I entreat thee also, a true yoke-fellow, help them, seeing that they labored with me in the Gospel." (iv. 2, 3.)

And who were Euodia and Syntyche? They were pious women, members of the Church at Philippi. They were evidently among those referred to in the following verse: "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side; (the Gangites or Gangas) where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake unto the women who resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, of," etc., etc. (Acts xvi. 13, 14.) Hence it seems that the Gospel at Philippi was first received by women, among the rest by Euodia and Syntyche, who afterwards labored for the conversion of their own sex to Christ. They were, in the main, holy, devoted and useful women, an ornament and blessing to the church with which they were connected; but, that they were not perfect the two verses that we have quoted clearly prove.

For it is evident that these women had their tempers, and that they had quarreled about something or other. They were at the time of the writing of this Epistle at variance; perhaps not on speaking terms with each other. What they had fallen out about we know not. It may have been about the management of a "Doreas Meeting," or the relief of some needy widow, or an imaginary slight, or the true exposition of some knotty doctrine. All that is recorded is that they had so differed as to excite anxiety in the mind of the Apostle; and anxiety so deep as to induce him to insert a touching exhortation to reconciliation in this inspired Epistle. Alas, for the infirmities of the best of men and women! Well may we say with the Psalmist,—"I have seen an end of all perfection!" Verily "there is not a just man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not." And if the best of people have so many imperfections what must the worst be? If the church have such blemishes how deep must be the corruption of the world!

Information of the unseemly contention of these otherwise good women had reached the ears of the Apostle Paul, and his

heart was pained by the tidings. He knew their worth; remembered their past labors with himself in the cause of the gospel; and mourned that Satan had now succeeded in setting them by the ears. For their own sakes he was grieved; for well he knew the injurious influence of such unholy strife upon those who indulged in it. He foresaw that if it continued it would enervate their whole religious life, deaden their spirituality and destroy their usefulness. For how can people who are cherishing sullen antipathies and bitter passion walk closely with the God of Love. The thing is simply impossible! By such unchristian tempers the Holy Spirit is grieved, and our joy and peace reduced to a minimum.

But the apostle trembled as well for the peace of the whole church. He knew that such strife is apt to spread, and that when two members in a church fall out other are likely very soon to mingle in the fray; the danger of this being in exact proportion to the good character and spiritual influence of the original disputants. Soon some would be taking sides with Euodia, and others with Syntyche, for they were both good and useful women; and (as is always the case when really holy people disagree) were, no doubt, both partly in the right and partly in the wrong.

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" A fire at first no bigger than the flame of a taper may consume a mansion or a palace. One Roman soldier's torch flung into the holiest of all burned down to the ground the temple of the Lord in the days of Titus. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." The trickling of a few drops through an embankment may be the precursor of an inundation like the Holmfrith flood. When strife commences in a church God only knows where it will end. It is sad to reflect on the trivial causes that will sometimes scatter and divide once flourishing communities like chaff of the threshing floor! The apostle's profound acquaintance with human nature, his deep sense of the perils of strife among church members, and his fervent love for his Saviour's kingdom upon earth stirred him to pen the plaintive and pathetic appeal,—"I beseech Euodia, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." Mark, reader, the touching repetition of the "I beseech," before each name, and the thrilling allusion to their common union to the Lord as furnishing a sufficient reason why they should be of one mind. "In the Lord!" This reference supplies both the reason and the rule of their desired oneness. The apostle writes as a suppliant in a style which conveys the idea that his eyes were filled with tears as he penned the words. It would have been too tame for his burdened soul to have merely written, "I beseech Euodia and Syntyche to be reconciled."

And if Paul were on earth now would he not address the same appeal to our contentious Euodias and Syntyches? Would he not with the same deep emotion beseech all the members of our churches who are at hateful feud with each other, to be of the same mind in the Lord?

But the apostle was not contented with thus exhorting the offenders themselves; for he begs the pastor of the church (probably Epaphroditus, who returned this Epistle to Philippi) to use his best endeavors to bring about a renewal of sisterly love between these women of infirm temper. "Yea, I entreat thee also, a true yoke-fellow, help them, seeing that they labored with me in the gospel!" This is, help them to be reconciled.

He was to abstain from making himself a partisan in the strife, for to do that would only aggravate the mischief. Ministers often ruin their own comfort and influence by forgetting the impartiality that becomes them in such cases. The presiding Elder or pastor of the church was to help these women to a renewal of mutual love by his judicious counsels, admonitions and entreaties, as well as by his fervent prayer to God. He was to urge upon both the duty of moderation and concession. He

was to remind them of their common union to the Lord, and of the scandal which they were causing by their unholy strife. By every means that an enlightened Christian friendship could suggest he was to pave the way for the removal of misunderstandings, and the softening of asperities. Perhaps the disputants might only be waiting for the discreet interposition of a third party; each too proud or too fortified in a conviction of the justice of her own side of the quarrel to take the first step towards reconciliation.

Solomon says, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." (Prov. 18: 19.) But we believe a sister offended is harder to be won than a brother. Women have warmer hearts than men, both for love and hatred; their attachments are stronger, and their resentments deeper. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives; but the apostle seems to have thought it quite unnecessary to address such an admonition to wives. (See Eph. 5: 22, 33 and Col. 3: 18, 19.) The older women by their example of deep devotion are to teach this lesson to the younger women. (Titus 2: 3, 5.) In short a woman's love is very tenacious, and a woman's hatred very terrible. Hence, the quarrels of pious women are far harder to settle than those of God-fearing men, are more dangerous to the peace of a church, and need special help in their pacification.

It may be asked,—Do you then believe that a minister should meddle with all the petty-fogging strife of the women of his church? Our answer is, We do believe that a minister is bound to do his best to reconcile his people who have quarrelled. A thing in itself of little moment becomes serious when it jeopardizes the peace of the church. Paul's true yoke-fellow at Philippi was exhorted to make peace, if possible, between Euodia and Syntyche. And has not One infinitely greater than Paul said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God?" (Matt. 5: 9.) Can a minister be better employed than in helping those to be again "of the same mind in the Lord," whom infirmity of temper and Satan's temptations have estranged? A little more of this proper human element in our pastors would be better for our churches. Ministers are apt to live in a region of abstractions. If they would descend now and then from this lofty and ideal world of their own, and sympathize more deeply with their flocks in their real troubles and infirmities, both shepherd and sheep would be all the happier, the more united and the more useful.

But to draw this paper to a close. From this incidental allusion we learn that, the Apostolic churches were troubled with the same difficulties that disturb our churches in the present day. The members of those primitive communities were people of like passions with ourselves. The Bible is an intensely human book; wonderfully true to nature and to fact. No attempt is made to veil the faults of the first Christians. The quarrels of Euodia and Syntyche; the contentions of Paul and Peter at Antioch; (Gal. 2: 11, 21) and of Paul and Barnabas about John, Mark, (Acts 15: 36, 41) are related with the utmost fidelity. We see these men and women to have been real characters. We feel that we are reading honest and truthful records which conceal nothing and state only the exact truth. There is no attempt to make out a case by special pleading, or by decking out the first Christians in angelic perfection. Their faults and infirmities are narrated with as much circumstantial accuracy as their virtues. In all ages the professing church has been an imperfect body and will continue so to the close of time.

Does not the case before us also remind us how important it is that all church members should study the things where-with one may edify another? We cannot be too cautious in watching over our own tempers, and in avoiding that which will irritate others. Let all determine neither

to give nor to take offence. Let not our hands place a stumbling-block in the way of a brother or sister. Let us not be the first to kindle the torch of discord, lest we should set the house of God in flames.

And surely this subject should stir up those Christians who have become estranged from each other to be again "of the same mind in the Lord." Their Lord pleads with them in his word, and beseeches them to be so. Brethren!—Sisters! Let not him beseech in vain!

And,—Brethren, if a man (or a woman) be overtaken in (this) fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted!" (Gal. 6: 1.)—C.H. Era.

ANECDOTE OF REV. P. J. SAFFERY.

We were much pleased to find the following very instructive anecdote among the selections of our contemporary the *P. Wesleyan* of last week. The Rev. P. J. Saffery, here spoken of, was the much esteemed and beloved pastor of the Baptist Church in England in which we had the privilege of membership for several years; and from whose hands we received the ordinance of Christian Baptism:—

Rev. Philip J. Saffery was for many years Association Secretary of the Religious Tract Society. His earnest piety and genial spirit made his visits always welcome. He died at Tottenham, 5th July, 1869, aged 69. The following is a characteristic anecdote. The incident occurred in an English first-class railway carriage.

Three gentlemen occupied one side of the compartment, and Mr. Saffery was for some time the only occupant of the other side. On stopping at one of the stations the guard opened the carriage door and and lot in a pleasant looking Quaker lady, who took one of the vacant seats by the side of our friend. The train had not long been in motion, before the lady opened a reticule, which she carried in her hand, and taking out a small parcel of neatly printed tracts, she kindly presented a copy to one of the gentlemen opposite her, and asked his acceptance of it. In a very uncourteous manner, he said, holding up a newspaper in his hand, "I want to read the paper; I don't want any of your tracts." After a few moments of silence, or perhaps of prayer, she addressed the next gentlemen, "Wilt thou kindly accept one?" "No," replied he; don't bother me with tracts; I want to read the *Times*, when my friend here is done with it."

Although thus repulsed, the lady still persevered. On politely offering the tract to the third gentleman, he folded his arms, closed his eyes, thrust himself into the corner of the seat, and in a surly manner, said, "I don't want it; I want to sleep."

It was perhaps with a feeling despondency that the lady turned to Mr. Saffery, on her right hand, who hitherto had been a silent spectator, and who was now wondering whether the lady would offer a tract to him. She repeated timidly the question for the fourth time, "Wilt thou kindly accept one?"

"With pleasure, madam," was Mr. Saffery's prompt reply, "and I cannot refrain from expressing my deep regret that in an English railway carriage a lady has experienced the rude treatment she has in this."

There was now a profound silence; strong feelings were evidently at work. The gentleman who had the *Times* was not a little disturbed. The motion of the newspaper in his hand showed that a struggle was going on in his mind. At length he broke the silence:

"Madam," said he, "I beg your pardon; I must acknowledge that you have been rudely treated. I apologize, and if will give me one of the tracts, I will with pleasure accept it."

Scarcely had the tract been handed,