

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY, NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

Rev. J. McLEOD,

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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The Intelligencer.

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 quarrelled 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 "Dorcas 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 others 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 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 telleth out water." The trickling of a few drops through an enhancement 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 Euodia 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 dispute 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. xviii. 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. v. 22-33 and Col. iii. 18, 19.) The older women by their example of deep devotion were to teach this lesson to the younger women. (Titus ii. 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. v. 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. ii. 11-21); and of Paul and Barnabas about John Mark (Acts xv. 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 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. vi. 1.)—Christian Era.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

All men sin of necessity, for they have been conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. But there is one act of sin which, when committed, is inevitable death to the soul. This is commonly called "the sin against the Holy Ghost." But that phrase really defines nothing, as all sin is against him as one of the persons of the Trinity. It is peculiarly a sin of New Testament times, and in every case must be committed against objective and subjective light. The man guilty of it must first have had the gospel revelation; and its truths, as truths from God, must have had some lodgment in his understanding and conscience. Saul of Tarsus could not commit it before his conversion, because he lacked subjective light. It was because of this lack that he could truthfully say, "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." Had he known in his conscience, that the cause which he persecuted was the true cause of God, he would have been chargeable with the sin unto death. Besides, it seems evident that this sin does not always consist in the same act. It

can't be so closely defined, that a man can say, This, and this only, is the unpardonable sin. In the case of the Pharisees, it seemed to consist in uttering blasphemous things against the miracles of Christ, while with the Hebrew apostates it was an abandonment of the truth and going back to sensual abominations.

In our day, the cases which look most like this awful, deadly sin are found among those who have been reared in the church, have made a profession of religion, have in some measure reformed their conduct and acquainted themselves with the leading doctrines of Christianity without doubting their truth, and yet have forsaken the sanctuary, profaned the Sabbath, and learned to sneer at Christians and their religion. They seem the most hopeless of all men,—the hardest to recover. Indeed, they seem to be past feeling, for nothing seems to excite the emotions of their moral nature. It is an awful thing for any man to step out of the church and become a cold-hearted skeptic, ever railing at the faults of professors in vindication of his own ungodliness. Such a man may well be suspicious, lest he has sinned unto death.

But it is perhaps never wise to say of any man that he has committed this sin. I am not sure that we can be absolutely certain of this in any case. I have known men to be sadly mistaken with regard to this in their own case. They had concluded, that there was no use in their seeking repentance and salvation, because they were doomed. However, they lived to see the folly of their conclusion. One such I know, who is to-day rejoicing in the sweet consciousness that all his sins have been blotted out. The agony and soul distress which he interpreted as a token of God's eternal abandonment of him, were but the strivings of God's Spirit conquering his rebellious soul to Christ. However, the possibility of our committing this sin should constantly deter us from all sin, and daily excite us to give all diligence that we may make our calling and election sure. So long as the soul strives, in some measure, against iniquity, and has dread of "the fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries," it will not commit "the sin unto death."

WHAT IS EARTH.

What is earth, sexton?
A place to dig graves.
What is earth, rich man?
A place to work slaves.
What is earth, greybeard?
A place to grow old.
What is earth, miser?
A place to dig gold.
What is earth, maiden?
A place to be gay.
What is earth, seamstress?
A place where I weep.
What is earth, shaggard?
A good place to sleep.
What is earth, soldier?
A place for a battle.
What is earth, herdsman?
A place to raise cattle.
What is earth, widow?
A place to work sorrow.
What is earth, tradesman?
I'll tell you to-morrow.
What is earth sick man?
'Tis nothing to me.
What is earth, sailor?
My home is the sea.
What is earth, statesman?
A place to win fame.
What is earth, author?
I'll write there my name.
What is earth, monarch?
For my realm it is given.
What is earth Christian?
The passage to heaven.

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

In a late discourse, Mr. Beecher made the following deliverance concerning singing in church:—

"I see, I feel, I know what power there is in singing; and that is one reason why, when I came into this church as your pastor, I determined that there should be singing in the congregation, and why I never change that determination. You know how, for eight or ten years, I fought you right and day. You differed from me in opinion; you thought you knew more than I did, and I could not have my own way; but after eight or ten years, when you were better instructed, and when you began to have confidence enough in me to let me have my own way,—(and I would have it; I knew I was right, and I would not give up)—congregational singing was inaugurated among us. And now all—men, women, and children—sing. And one reason why the Lord dwells among us so much, why there is so much spirituality in the church, why the people in the church are so cheerful and happy, and social, and why you love each other so much as you do, is that you sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And I always feel that a church that does not sing has hard bedding. Sleight-riding in winter, and no bells—think of it! A church that does not sing is like a spring without any flowers. Of all the world, a church that has four singers—four whole singers! A thousand people sitting down, and a thousand pairs of ears listening, and four mouths! Singing to the Lord was meant to open up the hearts of men who participate in it, and carry them near to God. There is no time when we come so near to the face of God, and speak to him so nearly, as when we are singing. A thousand folks, with four persons to do their singing with them, do not get very near to the Lord. And as a general thing the four singers do not get very near to him either. I know it is possible for them to sing devoutly—all things are possible with God; but they are not apt to do it. Give me a singing church! And in a church where the Spirit of the Lord is, singing must break out, it seems to me."

Mr. Spurgeon's reply to sundry brethren, who deprecated interference in politics because they "were not of this world," was, that they "might as well, being sheep of the Lord, declare a mutton chop on the plea of cannibalism."

EVERY-DAY LIFE.

Can a church attain its proper measure of success under the mere preaching of the word? We answer, no. The preacher may excel in eloquence and pulpit attractiveness, and many flock to hear him, and yet there be but little real parish life or thrift; so little that, if his voice be silenced, all the hands of the congregation hang down with feebleness, and the magnet is removed that held them together; so little that though his voice be not silenced, there is many a hearer hungering for the answer to the question of his heart, pining for Christian fellowship, and either sorrowful or imbecile because he stands in no fixed relation to the household of faith.

The craving for recognition, contact and response, to be a something and somewhere, is to be observed not less, and probably more, among a company of worshippers than anywhere else. If it be absent in any instance, it is the exception in which wealth, or ambition, or the pleasures of secular life, have stifled the longing. Besides, the life of the true believer cannot flow out to regenerate and sanctify the unbelieving through the narrow channel of a pulpit proxy, though the preaching in itself be never so faithful and wise.

And on whom does parochial labor properly fall? Evidently, first of all, on the minister. He is a preacher, but a pastor as well. He cannot preach suitably without knowing the intellectual, moral, and affectional condition of his people. He can thunder and blaze, and rain, and therein do some little good; but he cannot speak home to the heart, warning, reproving, encouraging, enfolding suffering, doubting, misled souls in his own heart, as he is commissioned to do. He can "draw" people with the right kind of drawing, only as they know him, to love and honor him as their friend and spiritual counsellor. For be it observed, there are two kinds of "drawing;" one that is through the natural attractiveness of eloquent or otherwise taking discourse, which has no relation whatever to the heart; and the other that is of divine truth, addressing itself to a needy soul, that of a loving pastor pouring out his heart to an object of his care.

The latter kind of "drawing" no man can effect without patient and continuous pastoral work, and so done as to be grateful to himself. This is not theory, but fact, illustrated by the whole history of parochial experience. Dr. Chalmers was a great parochial worker. Dr. Tynge, instead of counting himself able to draw men by his eloquence, has been accustomed to make nearly a thousand pastoral visits in a year. Henry Ward Beecher, who, if such a conceit were allowable in any man, might conceive himself endowed with gifts for the pulpit, and therefore excuse himself from pastoral labor, is, with all his other labors, one of the most patient visitors and parochial workers in America. Indeed, so palpably is parochial work an essential element of ministerial success, that no preacher, should allow himself to speak of it as though it had no place, or no other than a taskmaster's place, in his calling as a minister of Jesus Christ.

The work of a parish, however, is not laid upon the minister alone. He should never consent to attempt to do it alone, for many reasons. One of them—a trifling one to be sure, but not altogether without weight—is, that his parishioners will never thank him for bearing their burdens, but on the contrary, when they have become heavy and indolent through his sacrifice of himself for them, will wonder in their heaviness that he does not work the more, and if he ever is removed from them, will seek to replace him by some one who will by some means make things prosper without their share in the toil.

The great reason, however, is that the Church is in need of work. Work for itself, work among its pillars and accredited members; work among the mere hangers on, heart every where that shall knit heart to heart, and give the Church unity, fellowship, inspiration, and a life of its own—a life that thrives in itself, and in Christ Jesus, the sole head and dependence of the Church. The whole congregation are in duty bound to work with the pastor. And working they need not fail of success. It could be proved out of the laws of the human nature, out of the laws of grace, and by instances familiar to all. Indeed, so certainly does success follow the endeavor, that congregations that have only a moderately fair opportunity ought to be ashamed to put success or failure, on having or not having the help of one man, even though his place be as conspicuous as that of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

The mischief in all our strong-weak or weak-strong churches lies just here, in this proxy sufficiency; the disposition, perhaps, with theories sufficiently correct, to regard the minister as in some sort, a substitute, whose duty it is to make their ecclesiastical affairs prosperous, while they attend to their own secular interests or pleasure, a coachman, as it were, to drive on through smooth places and rough, with horses lean or strong, as the case may be, while they are the passengers, paying fare, toll, etc., but after all mere passengers.

In order to succeed, a minister should not spare himself; no more should he spare his people. Nor should the people spare themselves. It is for the elders, trustees, the rank and file, conspicuous and obscure, to make a congregation as prosperous as they desire, if they have only a mind to work.—Interior.

The Protestant Churchman says the venerable and Rev. Thos. Williams, of Providence, familiarly known as Father Williams, is noted for his ready wit and sharp retort. A devoted Ritualist was discussing the subject of liturgy with him, and claimed that the whole Bible furnished no instance of any other than written prayers—"No, sir, not a single one sir." "Do you really think so?" "Yes, sir. I defy you to point to a Scripture prayer that was not written. You cannot do it." "Well, can I ask you a question?" "Certainly." "Tell me, then, who held the candle when Jonah prayed in the whale's belly?"

WE ARE MOVING ON.

We have seen an account of a gentleman who was travelling the old overland route to California. As he pitched his tent for the night on a beautiful spot, his little boy, delighted with the scenery and the flowers, besought his father to build a house and make it their home. The father, as he looked upon his motherless boy, and saw the interest which he manifested, was himself moved to tears, and replied, "We cannot stop here, my child. To-morrow we must move on. Our home is still far away."

The child was pleased with the appearance of things around him, and, like Peter on the Mount, he wished to make it a permanent abode. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." The child said, "Let us make this our home." But, alas, how vain are all such calculations! We may calculate to remain where we are, but the mandates of destiny are—we must move on. We cannot stop where we are. On, on, we go, whether we will or not! It makes no difference whether we are willing and ready or not, time sweeps us onward in its inevitable march towards that country from which there is no return. We cannot go back if we would. We may be dissatisfied with our past improvement, and wish that we could retrace our steps and live over again what, with dissatisfaction we have passed through. But with all our regrets and wishes, we must move on.

We have a boy just the right age for a pet, and we wish we could keep him where he is, we are so delighted with him; but no, he must move on. We find ourselves pleasantly situated, surrounded with all that is necessary to make life desirable and happy, and we wish that we could stay where we are and enjoy ourselves. We are in the midst of life, with the wife of our choice and the "olive-plant" of our household around us, and our prospects are such that we imagine our fondest anticipations are about to be realized, but we must move on; our children grow up and are scattered, or, perhaps, some of them are with sadness consigned to the silent grave. Age creeps upon ourselves before we are aware of it, disease overtakes us, the grave stands gaping before us, we enter it, and thus pass on.

This is life. We pitch our tents for the night, but we are travellers and sojourners; to-morrow we must move on. Thus we are travellers to another country; we have no abiding city here; we are on our march, crossing the desert of time; and though our home seems afar off, and fleeting phantoms are ever ready to divert us from the course, yet we are not to turn from our way. "Onward" should be our motto, and progress, our history. We should not for a moment forget our destiny, or relax our efforts. Let us do the work of the day in the day, and never be satisfied unless we are making some spiritual advancement from day to day. Like the traveller, we may stop for the night, but to-morrow we must move on. Our home is still far away.

THE OSTRICH.

Far away in Africa, where there is a burning sun overhead and little more than sand under foot—in waste and desert places where few animals try to live—is to be found a strange, large bird, six or eight feet in height, which looks so much like a "Camel-bird." This strange large bird is an ostrich.

It has a long narrow neck almost bare of feathers. The wings are small, and cannot be used to fly with, but help it to run. Its legs are long and very strong, and its feet, which have but two toes, are something like a camel's and can bear great fatigue. Its color is a rusty black, with white wings and tail-feathers.

The feathers of the ostrich are very beautiful, and are preserved carefully by the hunters and sent to Europe and America, where they are dyed and used to trim bonnets and hats. All our little readers have seen ostrich feathers, but do any of them stop to think when they see one of these feathers how it was once growing far away in the greatest desert in the world, on a real live bird taller than a man?

The ostrich feeds on the tops of such plants as grow in the desert, and it can go a long time without water. Its cry sounds at a distance so much like that of the lion that it is often mistaken for it.

Ostriches go in small flocks of one male with from two to six females. The females lay their eggs all in one nest, each laying 10 or 12, and then take turns during the day sitting upon them to hatch them, while the male sits on the nest at night. This he continues to do after the young birds are hatched, to protect them from jackals, tigers, and other enemies. These animals are sometimes found lying dead near the nest, having been killed by one stroke of the foot of this powerful bird.

Ostrich eggs are very good to eat, and one of them is equal to 24 hen's eggs. They are about six inches in length, 12 in circumference, and weigh about three pounds.

These birds can run faster than the fastest horse; still, the Arabs hunt them, and manage to catch them. When the hunter has started the bird, he puts his horse upon a gentle gallop, so as to keep the ostrich in sight without coming near enough to frighten it and see it running at full speed. Finding itself pursued, it begins to run at first slowly. It does not run in a straight line, but in a circle, while the hunters, crossing the circle or running in a smaller circle, keep near the bird and do not tire their horses. This chase is often kept up for a day or two, hunters, taking turns to rest their horses. The ostrich at last becomes tired out and half starved, and finding it impossible to escape, it tries to hide itself in some thicket or buries its head in the sand, foolishly believing, because it cannot see, that it cannot be seen. The hunters then rush at full speed and easily kill the bird, taking care that no blood is allowed to get on the feathers.—Mrs. E. B. Duffey, in *Children's Hours*.

We look most effectually to the Lord, when we feel ourselves helpless and empty.