

# The Canadian Evangelist

## AND DISCIPLE OF CHRIST.

"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples."—Jesus the Christ.

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### The Canadian Evangelist

Is devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, and pleads for the union of all believers in the Lord Jesus in harmony with His own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and on the basis set forth by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—Eph. iv. 1-6.

THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST maintains that the commission given by Jesus Christ to His apostles should be rigidly adhered to, in theory and in practice, by all who acknowledge Him as their Lord. The commission reads thus: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 18-20, R. V.) This paper will constantly affirm that only those who teach and practice according to that commission have a right to call Jesus their Saviour, and to wear the name of Christ.

The phrase "DISCIPLE OF CHRIST," as a sub-head to this paper, is intended to make clear the meaning of the name "EVANGELIST," which signifies a publisher of good news or glad tidings. This "newspaper Evangelist" claims to receive its inspiration from Christ, and finds in His life and in His Word the means to revolutionize the world, socially, morally and spiritually. This paper holds to the New Testament as containing an accurate record of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles. It proposes, therefore, believing in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of the living God, to look upon this world of men in all their manifold, ever-varying relations and circumstances, through the medium of Christ's life and word, with the assurance that therein will be found the golden truth which will solve all problems, however difficult, and tend increasingly to the completer realization of "peace on earth and good will among men."

THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST maintains that there is no practicable *via media* between the rejection of the New Testament as an authoritative record, and the denial of Jesus of Nazareth as a Divine Lord. This Journal will therefore persistently insist that the New Testament must be accepted by all who profess to be Christians as an infallible rule of faith and practice, not as a mere ethical guide, in so far as we can see the truthness and fitness of its teaching. And that with regard to ordinances which have in themselves no necessary connection with moral and spiritual culture, as well as in reference to those matters which at present are entirely beyond our ken, it is ours reverently to believe, devoutly to obey.

### WHAT IS A CHURCH OF CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Our answer to the above question will be the more easily understood if the exact terms of the question be noted. "What is a Church of Christ," as distinguished from every other kind of a Church? And the New Testament—nothing else is to be the standard—not Creeds, Confessions, Decrees of Councils, nor Declarations of Popes, great or small.

A Church is a congregation, assembly, society of people, associated together for some purpose or purposes. Whenever there is such an association there is a way of becoming a member of it, and the conditions of membership determine the character of the society. "A Church of Christ" is a society whose conditions of membership are fixed by Christ, and which does in fact receive people according to the rules laid down by Christ Himself.

A sect may be defined as a society claiming to be a Church of Christ whose conditions of membership are not those ordained by Christ. It may demand more, it may accept less, than what Christ has appointed. In one way or another it violates the fundamental law of the church. It assumes to be wiser than the Lord Himself.

It follows that, if the point be raised as to whether a society, claiming to be a Church of Christ, is a Church of Christ, or merely a sect, enquiry should be made as to what its conditions of membership are. If they are what Christ commanded, it is a Church of Christ; if otherwise, it is a sect.

If our previous reasonings are correct, an important question arises: How shall we discover the method by which Christ desires people to be initiated into His Church? And we reply: By examining the New Testament, and noting what rules the Lord Jesus Himself has there laid down. The Great Commission (Matt. xxviii. 18-20) contains the directions given by Christ to His apostles. We need not quote it here, because it is given in full in the second paragraph of the first column on this page. That commission is plain in itself, and, moreover, it is illustrated by the teaching and practice of the apostles, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Those who conform to the conditions therein set forth are qualified for membership in a Church of Christ, and no others are. Briefly stated, the rule of membership in a Church of Christ is that a person should, according to the commission, be A BAPTIZED DISCIPLE OF CHRIST. To demand more, to accept less, is to violate Christ's law, and make the society claiming to be a Church of Christ a sectarian body.

Divisions arise when some person or some society separates from others professing to be Christians, without having a Scriptural reason therefor. A professed disciple of Christ who holds himself aloof from other disciples, for reasons which the law of the Lord does not justify, is a sectarian. A church which refuses to receive those who are Scripturally qualified, is a sect; and so is a church which receives those who are not Scripturally qualified. And so we might go on illustrating this great principle, that all unscriptural tests of fellowship are essentially sectarian, and divisive, whether applied to those seeking membership in a church, or to those who have already been received.

We conclude that the road to union lies along the line of excluding all that is sectarian in individual and collective Christian life. No Christian has a right to separate himself from the fellowship of any other Christian, unless the Word of the Lord requires him so to do. No church, claiming to be a Church of Christ, has any right to vary from the conditions of membership laid down by the Lord, and practised by the Apostles. When all believers in Christ, and all societies claiming to be Churches of Christ, become unsectarian, "the unity of the Spirit" will have been regained, and the Church of Christ will go forth "conquering and to conquer."

THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST appeals to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who accept the Bible as a Divine revelation, and the New Testament especially as the end of all controversy in matters pertaining to the Gospel of Christ. It will plead for an all-round, full-orbed Gospel, and urge the application of the ethics of Christ to all the relations of life. It will aim to keep an eye on religious affairs, especially in Canada, and where it thinks the cause of Christ demands, will criticise with a free but kindly hand. The times are ripe for bold, aggressive assertion of the teachings of Jesus. To those who think such aims and purposes good and laudable, we extend the invitation to become subscribers, and to use our columns to place their views before the people of Canada.