

# THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

## AND CANADIAN EVANGELIST.

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

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### The Disciple of Christ

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 holy 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.

This paper, while not claiming to be what is styled an "organ," may be taken as fairly representing the people known as Disciples of Christ in this country.

### A Hindu Pundit on Baptism.

In the year 1856 I was stationed in the holy city of Muttra, in the north-west portion of India, and had a learned Brahman to teach me the Hindustani, the vernacular of some sixty million people in that part of the country. After my lessons in the language, I often spoke to the pundit about the teachings of the Lord Jesus as found in our Holy Scriptures. One day I said:—

"Pundit, you see that we read your sacred books, in order to find out what they contain; why will you not do the same with our Scriptures?"

In answer to this he said:

"Well, sir, please lend me a copy of your holy book in Hindustani, and I will read it at home at my leisure."

I was very glad to comply with his request, and, as he was a very intelligent man, I hoped the reading of God's Word might be the means of convincing him of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Testament I gave him was the translation sanctioned by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in which the word used for baptism was not translated, but transliterated "*baptisma*;" and this one word, simple as it may appear, gave the pundit a strong objection against the integrity of the whole book.

After keeping the book by him for about three months, he one day brought it back. When I asked him if he had

read it, and how he liked it, he replied:

"Yes, I have read much of it, and the teachings of Jesus Christ are indeed most beautiful. I have never read anything like it in our holy books, and if all that is written gives true and reliable facts, he must have been a wonderful person, and worthy of worship. But," he added, with an air of cynical doubt, "I fear the book is *not trustworthy*."

I asked him what reason he had to think so. He immediately replied:

"Why, there are parts of it which you seem afraid to translate into our language."

This took me by surprise, and I asked what part. He turned to places he had marked, and called my attention to the word "*baptisma*," and said:

"I read of a man called John, who is said to have been the messenger of Jesus Christ, who went forth to preach and give *baptisma* to those who repented; and this *baptisma* seems to have been the initiative rite into the new religion. But what it can mean I cannot possibly find out; for the word has no affinity to any of our Indian languages. If I dissect the word into three separate portions, then I can make something of it, but a very ridiculous thing indeed. *Bap* means father; *tis* means thirty; *ma* means mother—so it would read a *thirty-father-mother*! But this, I suppose, is not the meaning; and I can only conclude that it is a word from some other language of which we people of India know nothing. Yet it would appear that it represents some *important* part of your religion, and that is the *one* act by which disciples who believe in Jesus are admitted into the Christian religion. For I find that not only did John practice it, but Jesus Himself tells His followers to give *baptisma* to all who believe in His name; and yet you do not tell us in our own language what this means, for the word is utterly strange to us."

I had now to explain, as best I could, how matters were, and I never in my life felt so ashamed before a heathen controversialist. I told him the word was merely transferred, not translated, in *that* version; for it was derived from the Greek *bapto* or *baptiso*; and that it was thus transferred because

there was one party in the Christian church who practised *sprinkling* of water, and another which used *immersion*.

"Well," he said, "which of these two parties translated this book?"

"Those who advocate *sprinkling*."

"Well," said he, "why then did they not put down *sprinkling* in our language? Why put a Greek word for a ceremony which your Christ commanded in a copy of your holy books for Hindus, who do not know a word of Greek? This is very strange."

And now he gave a knowing look, and said, rather sarcastically:

"I suppose the Christian teachers follow our plan. We give in the *vulgar* tongue for the common people only as much of the holy books as we think fit; and when a word comes, the meaning of which we do not wish all to know, we keep it in the dark under the thick veil of the original Sanskrit, which they do not know. I was not before aware of the fact that Christians do this also to preserve the power of the priests."

I now took down a copy of the Baptist translation, and showed him that the word was faithfully translated there into *doabki*, which means to *immerse*.

This, however, did not remove his suspicions, and he added:

"Suppose you had given this book you lent me to a person who lived miles away in the country, where he could have no one to tell him what it meant; how could he possibly find out the meaning of the word, or the nature of one of your greatest Christian rites? And though he should believe in Christ, how could he obey Him when you hide from us the nature of your ceremony for the admission of disciples to your church? He concluded by saying, "I have no wish to offend you, sir; but, to be candid, I must confess that this duplicity has quite shaken my faith in the *whole* of your holy book, for people who can prove untrue in *one* word cannot be trusted as true in *many* words; and I find that, after all, the Christian teachers are no better than ourselves, who, for selfish purposes, kept back a part of the Word of God from the common people."

His mind was so poisoned by this that he would never consent to read the Scriptures. And who can tell how many others have in the same taken offense as to the truth of God?

Does not the above suggest some very searching thoughts to every Christian? Is there not a grave responsibility resting on each one to be thoroughly loyal to the distinct command of Him whom we call Lord?

If, when our Master, Christ, has distinctly ordained that his disciples should be baptized, we obscure His teaching, or treat it as trivial, or put something else in its place, which man has invented, but which our Master Himself never enjoined, where is our boasted loyalty to our Lord? Where is our implicit obedience to His will? By our lack of faithfulness, even in what may appear a little matter, we may unwittingly put serious stumbling blocks in the way of others who watch us very narrowly, and so they also may be hindered.

One of the fiercest denunciations uttered by the "gentle" Saviour was pronounced by Him against those who taught the "traditions of men" for the "commandments of God." He also added, "Verily I say unto you, whoso shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, the same shall be called least in the Kingdom of God."

My reader, if you are a believer in Christ, search the New Testament yourself, unbiassed by prevailing fashion, and see if Christ has not distinctly made clear His will to all that are willing to follow His guidance. Search the Scriptures and see if this is not the thing which the Lord commanded.

His parting words were: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, and I will give unto them, and unto all that shall believe in me, all that the Father hath given unto me; and whosoever shall keep his words, he shall not see death, but shall have eternal life, and shall not be condemned."—John 17:20-23.

If you are a Christian, and are not early, please