

The Canadian Evangelist.

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"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

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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.

At the Door of the Year.

The Corridors of time
Are full of doors—the portals of closed years;
We enter them no more, though bitter tears
Beat hard against them, and we hear the chime
Of lost dreams, dirge like, in behind their ring
At memory's opening.
But one door stands ajar—
The New Year's; while a golden chain of days
Holds it half shut. The eager foot delays
That presses to its threshold's mighty bar;
And fears that shrink, and hopes that shout aloud,
Around it wait and crowd.
It shuts back the unknown.
And dare we truly welcome one more year,
Who down the past a mocking laughter hear
From idle aims like wandering breezes blown;
We whose large aspirations dimmed and shrank,
Till the year's scroll was blank?
We pause beside this door.
Thy year, O God, how shall we enter in?
How shall we thence Thy hidden treasures win?
Shall we return in beggary, as before,
When Thou art near at hand with infinite wealth,
Wisdom, and heavenly health?
The footsteps of a child
Sound close beside us. Listen! He will speak,
His birthday bells have hardly rung a week;
Yet has He trod the world's press undefiled,
'Come with me!'—hear Him through His smiling say,
'Behold, I am the Way!'
Against the door his face
Shines as the sun, His touch is a command,
The years unfold before His baby hand;
The beauty of His presence fills all space,
'Enter through Me,' he saith, 'nor wander more,
For lo! I am the Door.'
And all doors openeth He,
The new born Christ, the Lord of the New Year,
The threshold of our locked hearts standeth near;
And while he gives us back love's rusted key,
Our Father on us with His eyes has smiled
Even as a little child.

ANON.

The Unity of Churches.

A movement is in action to bring about the union of two of the larger religious bodies outside the churches who are under episcopal government.

The prime mover in this significant effort is "an able minister of the New Testament," who is not attached, officially, to either of the organizations whose union is mooted.

Were the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to become one the united body would number over one-third of the entire Christian population, being 1,602,668 according to the census of 1891, out of 3,799,556. If we take out the Roman Catholics there are left 1,809,091; so that the union which is proposed would absorb and amalgamate over 88 per cent. of the Protestants of this Dominion.

There are now about 1500 Roman Catholic clergy: the new organization would have 2700. That is, under the Roman Catholic system it requires only 1500 clergy to minister to two millions of members, which is one priest to every 1333 laymen, while the united Presbyterians and Methodists would have 2700 ministers for 1,600,000 members, or a clergyman for every 592 lay people.

This looks as though the sheep of those folds required more than double the number of shepherds to tend, feed and keep them out of the wilderness than the flocks pastured by Roman Catholic priests require. When we consider the zeal, the devotion to pastoral work of all kinds, which so nobly characterize the Catholic clergy, and the fidelity of their flocks, we cannot accept as an explanation of this diversity any theory which implies that Protestants are shepherded more watchfully than their religious opponents.

Indeed, taking them head for head, we venture to say that the 1333 Roman Catholics get more personal attention from their one pastor than the 592 Presbyterian and Methodist people do from their minister. These figures indeed have, we submit, only one explanation, which is that there is an enormous, costly and wholly inexcusable waste of energy and money in the existing system of working as independent and rival churches, two bodies that are as nearly identical in character as the Presbyterian and Methodist churches.

We may include in this generalization several other denominations, such as the Baptist and Congregationalists. We doubt much whether a dozen laymen could be found in this city who could state what the differences are between these bodies, and the grounds for them, with sufficient precision to find acceptance, if judged by theological and historical experts. We are quite certain that not one member of these churches, clerical or lay, could formulate an argument to justify their rivalry or disunion to those who regard the spiritual interests of the Christian flock and the higher work of the churches as of infinitely more importance than questions as to the methods of appointing shepherds, fixing their official status and dividing their spheres of work in the fold.

The main theological difference be-

tween the Presbyterians and the Methodists was at one time a battle-ground upon which fierce conflicts were fought without the slightest advantage to either, but to the scandal of both. "What they fought each other for" few know and fewer care. Those who are well read in the controversy between what are vulgarly called "Calvinism" and "Arminianism," terms almost now obsolete and highly unscientific, know that these systems run into each other, but the interlacing is shrouded by a metaphysical fog, so dense as to be utterly beyond the power of the human intellect to penetrate beyond the outer layer of darkness where these systems are seen to mingle.

For two bodies of Christians to be arrayed in hostile camps when nothing of moment parts them but nebulous metaphysics, a mere cloud of words, which neither fully comprehend, is a reproach to Christendom. The reconciliation of "Free Will" with "Divine Sovereignty and Fore Knowledge" is a problem which, as men cannot affect, they would do well to leave where they have to leave other theological mysteries, and devote their energies to those duties which are indisputable, and which alone justify the very existence of a Christian church.

Religion, in its Scriptural sense, the religion of Christ, following, was never so dead in England as it was when controversialists about church government and theological metaphysics were at it "hammer and tongs."

If some men's notions are correct, St. Paul when "talking straight" to Felix and his paramour would have reasoned not about "righteousness, temperance and judgment," but would have treated that worthy to a disquisition about "Free will," "Final perseverance," and other hair-splitting performances. He might have "trembled" as we do at other tight-rope exhibitions, but he would have never offered to see the Apostle again, just as laymen to-day avoid being worried and mystified by such verbal subtleties.

No! the times are practical; life is for all of us a battle; we sheep want leading into green pastures; butting our heads together stops the growth of wool and mutton, of which we have too little. We want our churches for consolation, for comfort, for wise guidance in life, and duty. We laymen demand also that our church organizations shall not waste our substance in rivalries that foment strife amongst those who would rejoice to live in "unity, peace and concord." Let then the Presbyterians and Methodists unite, set an example by lifting the reproach of Christian disunion, then will the church "bring forth her increase, and God, even our own God, will give us His blessing."—*Toronto World*.

"I see not a stop before me
As I tread on another year;
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy shall clear,
And what looks dark in the distance
May brighten as I draw near.

"O restful, blissful ignorance!
'Tis blessed not to know;
It holds me in those Mighty Arms
Which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest
On the bosom that loves me so."

Music in Worship.

The worship of God is two-fold in its element. It is, firstly, a devout attending to, and reception of, messages from God. It is, secondly, the devout expression to God of the purposes and feelings most appropriate to our moral and spiritual condition. In portions of the service God speaks to us. In other portions we speak to God. God speaks to the people in the reading of the Scriptures; in the sermon; in certain didactic psalms and hymns; and in the benedictions.

The people reply to God in prayers, hymns and psalms; and sometimes by aid of reverential music, with inaudible confessions and thanksgiving most acceptable to God and blessed in their effects upon the worshippers.

It would be possible for all the services of worship to be musically rendered, both the communications from God and the returning confessions, thanksgivings and adorations to Him.

In practice, however, large portions of the services of worship are spoken and not sung.

This covers the whole ground. There is nothing more, so far as the purpose of this article is concerned, to be mentioned or thought of. When God is not, in some way, speaking authoritatively to the people, they, without musical aid, are speaking to Him.

From these simple and indisputable facts it is easy to infer that any element in the music which does not aid the worshippers in receiving divine truth, or in expressing appropriate emotions and resolutions to God, is out of place and hurtful. For instance, any musical performance, however excellent, for the mere sake of itself, is an unwelcome intrusion—unwelcome, that is, to the devout and unworldly. Whatever, in music, does not aid in worship, should be resisted and thrust out.

No soloist or choir should be allowed to sing anything which is not either a message from God or a message to God. No organist should be allowed to introduce a single note of unhallowed, unworshipful tendency.

How far church music has wandered from its proper sphere all the readers of this article are too well aware.

Not a few church organists destroy or at least injure the effects of sermons and prayers by boisterous, roaring postludes.

An eminent clergyman who had long suffered sorely from organ preludes and postludes, once complained to the writer by the use of the following quotation: "A sower went forth to sow; then cometh the organist and snatcheth away that which was sown."

The reader is invited to ponder this question: Should not the organist who seizes the opportunity of the postludes to air his vanity upon the full organ, without regard to worship or the feeling of the people, be promptly discharged?

In the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, in New York, some years ago, Henry Gratten Guinness had preached a powerful and impressive discourse, which obviously produced a deep effect upon the crowded congregation. The organist followed the benediction with a stormy, irreverential scramble of sounds. The noble and sensible

preacher thundered, "Stop that organ," and the ungodly rattle ceased.

Church choirs should be instructed that churches are not the places for mere musical performances, aside from the uses of worship. A vain vocal exploit in church worship is as much out of place as a Gatling gun in Paradise, and, to devout worshippers, utterly unwelcome and abominable.—C. C. KIMBALL, in *Musical Herald*.

The Coming Year.

I stand on the shore, as the waning Year
Floats into the dim and silent Past,
I think of the battles of Hope and Fear
Which over its day-dreams their shadows cast.
My heart fondly asks, though the tongue is mute,
What shall the coming year bring me?
Shall its buds of hope yield golden fruits?
Shall it prove but a leafless, blasted tree?
A wordless voice answers soft and low:
"From the seeds that thou hast sown each bygone day,
The flowers or thorns of life shall grow,
That shall sadden or gladden thy future way."

How much easier it is to recognize our responsibility for action in our sphere of duty, than it is to realize our dependence upon God for guidance and support in all our duty-doing! Even in a convocation of Christian ministers in an important ecclesiastical crisis, more members will be promptly on hand at the voting hour than at the hour of devotional exercises which opens the session for the day; as if the members were readier to see God's need of them than to feel their need of God. Nor is this a new thing under the sun. President Ashbel Green, of Princeton College, who was for a number of years one of the chaplains of the United States Congress, bears testimony to the same state of things a century ago. "About one-third of the members in Congress, in each house," he says, "were commonly present at prayers. On one occasion, I expressed to a member, who was a professor of religion, and with whom I was well acquainted, the feeling of regret I experienced that the attendance on prayers was not of a greater number. 'Will you,' said he in reply, 'tell me, on your veracity, whether our attendance is not as good as that of the members of your (Presbyterian) General Assembly, or Synod, at your constituting prayer in the morning?' I was completely confounded with this interrogation; for, on recollection, I was convinced that our ecclesiastical bodies were not more numerous attended at the opening prayer than was the fact in Congress of the United States; and this I had to admit to the member to whom I had expressed my regret at the beginning of the conversation on the subject." The former days were no better than these, in this thing, any more than in any other thing; but whenever and wherever this state of things is found to exist, it supplies proof that men do not give the first place in their thoughts to the need of God's help in their service of God.—*Sunday School Times*.