

Contributions.

Reminiscences of St. Thomas, Canada.

The growth of the church at St. Thomas brings to our memories recollections of the mighty workings of a little missionary seed sown in that soil. How true that "God moves in a mysterious way." In May, 1849, myself and wife moved to the city of London, Canada West. We opened a select school in the city. Becoming acquainted with the supervisors of the county, we learned of one Edmund Sheppard. He was a teacher and preacher from Bethany College. After six months we were offered the St. Thomas Seminary which we accepted, and visited Bro. Sheppard, some twelve miles distant. Attending meeting when we could, and becoming acquainted with him, we engaged him to visit our town and preach there. He also preached in the country, near town.

Bro. Sheppard held a discussion with a Methodist preacher at Aylmer, in which the writer acted as moderator for him. He succeeded admirably in the discussion. My wife and her sister were baptized by him soon after the debate.

While conducting the St. Thomas mission, we sent some twelve or fourteen students over the lake to Hiram. While there, some three of them united with the church in a meeting held by Isaac Errett, when 56 came forward and obeyed the Gospel.

We count on Bro. Sheppard's preaching in St. Thomas as the first of the Disciples sowing the seed of the Kingdom in that locality. But this was in 1852 or 1853. How wonderfully the seed planted by Bro. Sheppard and others since has grown! Of course the laborers since in watering the seed have done great things. Yet it is God who has given the increase.

During the four years conducting the Seminary we enjoyed the Christian friendship and fellowship of Bro. Sheppard—a choice spirit, gone to his reward. We also formed the acquaintance of Eiders Black, Oiphant, Kilgour, Anderson, and some others. Our perseverance in making Bro. Sheppard's acquaintance and insisting upon his coming to preach for us in St. Thomas was the first of any effort made in that town. We rejoice at the present growth and prosperity of the church there.

With great love for the truth and the brethren in Canada, I am,

Your most affectionate brother,

DR. J. B. CRANE, A.M.

Wedges.

ANNA D. BRADLEY.

I well remember, when I was quite a tiny child, being in the country, and seeing for the first time a woodman trying to insert a wedge in a huge log. I gazed wonderingly upon the strange process, until, overpowered by curiosity, I boldly asked the meaning of this mysterious performance.

"Why," explained the good-natured woodman, "you see I want to split this log, but the log don't want to be split. But if I can once get the fine point of this wedge driven in, why then the work is easy enough. The log will soon fall apart."

With a fascination that was new to me I stood by and gravely watched while the work went on, and, sure enough, in a little while, the huge log lay separated in two distinct parts.

Upon my childish spirit there seemed to fall something like a shadow. I did not like to see those two great halves of what appeared designed to be one perfect whole.

"No matter how much you had kept hitting the log, you never could have gotten it apart without the wedge, could you?" I questioned earnestly.

"Never in the world," was his reply, laughing either at the interest or the verdancy of his small interrogator; "but the wedge made it easy."

I turned and looked curiously at the wedge, which now lay on the ground between the two great halves. Yet it appeared so trivial. How could it accomplish such mighty results? My baby instinct of justice was aroused. I did not at all like that wedge. What right had it to exist when its only work was to separate what had been intended to live together!

Well, I grew older—this is an unfortunate habit into which most of us fall, but which none of us like to acknowledge—and by some means that first unpleasant impression of the wedge has, with persistent tenacity, clung to me ever since.

"Just get the least bit of the edge securely in," said the man, "and the rest is easy work."

How true!

I have seen friends of a lifetime—friends whom God had given to be a solace to each other—separated forever, because that the tiny edge of suspicion had been inserted. Once started, then deeper and deeper the dividing edge pressed, until at last there was no unkindness or unfaithfulness of which each did not believe the other capable. I have seen brothers and sisters, who used to kneel by the same little bed to

pray, grow cold and bitter toward each other, because the cruel wedge of distrust had driven them apart.

I have seen husbands and wives whom God had joined together, and whom He forbade others to put apart, allow this same deadly, poisonous wedge to come between them and to separate them forever. Indeed, the nearer and the dearer the tie, it seems that if once the fatal wedge is inserted, the farther asunder the two are driven. "For of course," as the woodman said, "we don't need a wedge except for that which is intended to cling very close together."

I have seen disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom once the world looked upon as "one body," but again and again the wedge has been inserted, until now even the King Himself might weep to see in how many fragments the kingdom is divided.

And I have seen—and this is the saddest sight I ever saw—those who were at one time happy, trusting Christians, rejoicing in the unspeakable love of their Saviour; courting no sacrifice too great if it did but draw them nearer and yet nearer to the Heart divine; I have seen the cold, piercing wedge of indifference, doubt or infidelity come between them and their Saviour. And those who once had rejoicingly held up the banner of the Cross now trail it in the dust, and scoffingly deride the sacred Name which once they had revered.

I revert again to that first lesson, learned in my childhood days, concerning the wedge. I remember how the woodman said to me, "You just make the point sharp and fine enough and you can drive it in every time where you may want to rend it."

And this peculiarity of the conquering power of the wedge was not without its weighty lesson to the listening, wondering child of long ago. She lived to see how very true this was.

You cannot come to me and boldly assert some monstrous tale of evil about a friend I love. I who love him would boldly tell you that your tale was false, and love and trust him more because he had been so maligned.

But you might drop a tiny, almost invisible seed of distrust in my heart, and you might nourish it with such care that it would grow into a mighty wedge that would drive me forever from the side of my once trusted, trusting friend.

Ah me! I cannot help but wish—as I did in my baby days—that there was no such thing as a wedge. What friendship or love or companionship is proof against its sharp and cruel edge?

But while it is well nigh impossible

to dislodge the wedge that has once been thoroughly inserted, still it is possible to fight back its first approach. The first insinuation of doubt, unkindness or of fancied slight means only an attempt to insert the wedge. For the sake of our own future happiness; in the name of all that we hold sacred and pure and true, let us fight back the cruel instrument that would divide us from all we hold so dear. Oftener than otherwise the one we love, but doubt, has given us no cause for our distrust, and if we were not too proud to ask and offer explanation, much bitter sorrow and many future tears might be prevented. But no! We cry to our secret soul that the change is not in us, but in the one we love. And though we still love, yet do we allow the wedge to be driven deeper and yet deeper, until after awhile no power in heaven or in earth could bind again the severed hearts.

BEWARE OF THE WEDGE.

What We Believe, and Why We Believe It.

W. D. CUNNINGHAM.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."—1 Peter iii. 15.

No man has a right to hold or teach a religious faith for which he has no adequate foundation. Fancy and speculation may be excusable in other realms of thought, but never here. The value of an immortal soul is so great, that its salvation must rest upon no mere theory while plain truth is close at hand. If, when the Christian world was practically one, it was necessary to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you," how much more at the present day, when the body of Christ is so dismembered and warring factions hold and teach for gospel truth, opinions so contradictory—how much more necessary is it for each one to be able to give as a foundation of his faith a "Thus saith the Lord." If such a foundation cannot be found, would it not be in the interest of peace and the readier evangelization of the world, to renounce such faith and cling only to that of which we may say, "We know and are sure"?

It is my purpose to state as briefly as is consistent with clearness, the faith held and taught by the Disciples of Christ, together with the Scriptures

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