

# The Christian.

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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### BROTHER SKINFLINT'S SOLILOQUY.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Church is in a bad way. A man must have his hand in his pocket all the time now. In the good old days the Government built the churches, and paid the ministers. One could sit in the church for years in these happy times and never put his hand in his pocket. Those were the days when religion flourished and the people could put their money in mortgages at twenty per cent.

Things are much worse now than when this country was settled. In those early times ministers got three or four hundred dollars for stipend. It was enough. The arrangements for collecting the stipend then were much better than now. Part of the stipend was often paid in produce. If a man had anything that he could not sell for money on the market he could always take it to the minister. It was so handy when one had small potatoes or produce of any kind that would not sell to take it to the minister; when the collector came around one could always say, "I paid in produce." The plan of paying in kind was a good plan. It was far better than the envelope system. The envelope system makes a man keep his hand in his pocket all the time. That is the weak point about the envelope system. The envelope system was devised by worldly-minded men, who say that one should pay for the Gospel by the week instead of putting one's money in the bank, or lend it on mortgages at twenty per cent.

I read in the *Mail*, that I borrowed from one of the neighbors last week, that the Church is in a state of decay. The *Mail* says the Church has lost its influence in the world and blames Huxley and Darwin and men of that kind for making the Church so weak that, like Wellington at Waterloo, it calls for night or Blucher. The *Mail* does not understand the question. Darwin and his people have not injured the Church to any great extent. The injury has been done by the envelope system. The worldly-minded men who devised that system shows how weak we are by dividing our annual subscription by fifty-two and showing how small the quotient is. The quotient is often weak, so weak that you have to handle the little thing tenderly or it might die. I have always paid four dollars a year for my pew, which holds nine. Taken as a lump sum my contribution looked respectable. I always liked to hand it to the minister himself. I wished to produce a feeling of dependence in him, and keep him from spiritual pride. It was his spiritual good I had in view. Our congregation elected a worldly-minded man for treasurer, and he introduced the envelope system, and divided my contributions by fifty-two. He said the quotient was only about seven cents per Sabbath for the Gospel for the family, or three and a half cents for those who went to church twice. Then he tried to divide the seven cents by the number

of my family, and he couldn't get any quotient at all. He was a very worldly-minded man, that treasurer, but, he couldn't find any quotient. Such carnal devices as dividing one's contribution by fifty-two should not be allowed. The Church will always call for night or Blucher until the envelope system is abolished.

Some of our ministers say too much about the Scheme. I was always a liberal supporter of missions. I never allowed the plate to pass me on collection day without putting five cents on it. Never. Dr. Cochrane came here a short time ago, and made such a fuss about Home Missions that I had to double my contribution. He spoke nearly two hours and so worked up the people that several liberal contributors like myself, had to double up. He said that "half farthings were just coined to give Scotchmen a chance to contribute to charitable and religious institutions." I deny the charge. I never gave less than a cent for any religious or charitable purpose in my life. I am afraid Cochrane is a worldly-minded man like these who introduce the envelope system and divide by fifty-two.

I have no great admiration for Mr. Macdonell. I am afraid he has a touch of worldly-mindedness, too. He goes up and down through the Church speaking on augmentation and making the people believe that a minister should have \$750 a year and a manse! The worst thing about it is that a great many people do believe him. He has a terribly earnest way about him and makes his points so clear and plausible, that simple-minded good people are carried away by him. He is a dangerous man to come into a congregation—about as dangerous as Principal Grant. Any man who takes the ground that a minister should have \$750 a year, is worldly-minded. I can hire a man to do all kinds of work for half that sum.

Why cannot our colleges be supported by the Government? If Mr. Mowat is not willing to give us part of the surplus, then why should not the Church try Sir John? I always had the good of the colleges at heart and am perfectly willing that either Government should endow and support them out of the public funds. Farther than this no man can reasonably be expected to go.

I don't like much of the preaching of these modern times. There is too much about gratitude, and obedience and self-sacrifice and all that sort of thing. Why don't our ministers preach more about the Jews? They were a wicked people and should be condemned. Judas was a very wicked man. If he had been the right kind of a man he would have kept the thirty pieces of silver and lent it at twenty per cent. Our ministers should dwell more on these early times. A preacher who has proper regard for the feelings of good people, will not come within five hundred years of the present time.

I like controversial sermons. It does me good to hear a preacher pitch into the Catholics and warm up the Methodists. Sermons of that kind do Catholics more good

than French Evangelization. They do not cost money and French Evangelization does. The Catholics should be pitched into quite often. It does me more good to hear a preacher pitch into the Jews and Catholics than to hear him preach about duty and love and obedience and gratitude and self-sacrifice and that sort of thing. I conclude as I began—the Church is in a bad way.—*Canada Presbyterian.*

### THE INSCRIPTION ON THE CROSS.

BY REV. S. F. SMITH, D. D.

The inscription placed upon the cross by Pilate is recorded by all the four evangelists, and by each of them in a different form. Matthew puts it (XXVII; 37), "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;" Mark (XV; 26), "The King of the Jews;" Luke (XXIII; 38), "This is the King of the Jews;" John (XIX; 19), "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The question is often asked, "Whence this difference?"

The difference in these statements has often been urged against the evangelists as an inconsistency. But it is far otherwise; each statement is in harmony with truth and fact. It is to be accounted for from the fact that the inscription was in three different languages, in Hebrew, that it might be read and understood by the Jews; in Greek, for the strangers in Jerusalem at the time of the great feast, who generally spoke Greek; and in Latin, as the language of the court by which Jesus was condemned; and the evangelists give it to us as they read it in the different languages.

Matthew, formerly an officer of the Roman Government, and therefore familiar with Latin, plainly gives us the translation of the inscription in Latin,—"*Hic est Jesus, rex Judaeorum*"—"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Mark, who wrote especially for Gentile Christians, translates also the Latin inscription, putting it briefly, as comprehending the whole, "The King of the Jews." Luke was a Greek by birth and of heathen origin. He was therefore familiar with the Greek language, and it was natural that he should translate the Greek form of the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews." John, a Hebrew by birth, gives us the inscription in Hebrew, his mother-tongue,—"*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"

Hence the apparent difference between the evangelists arises from the difference of the original form which each translated. If the inscription in each case was different, being in different languages, and each of the evangelists translates a different original, then the translation must in each case be different. It is wholly natural that it should be so, and would be unnatural if it were otherwise. Hence this difference, which may seem to the unlearned an inconsistency, is, on the contrary, a proof of the genuineness of the gospels. It is also noticeable that, notwithstanding the difference in their translations, the evangelists agree as to the substance of the record, and are wholly consistent one with another.