

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.

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.

EDMUND SHEPPARD.

The subject of this notice was born in Newark, England, seventy-one years ago. He came to this country when a young man, twenty years of age. During his minority he had educational advantages which he improved by laying the foundation of a good education and acquiring a literary taste.

Upon coming to this country he identified himself with its educational interests, and became one of the few to whom this Province is indebted for its splendid educational system.

Although he enjoyed the advantages of a collegiate drill for only a short time, yet by close and constant attention to study, he made for himself a reputation as a scholar of which he might justly be proud.

He taught school in the township of Markham and in other places from 1844 to 1850.

Upon the recommendation of Judge Elliott, of London, who recognized his splendid abilities, he was appointed to the office of Local Superintendent of Schools in North and South Dorchester. This was in the year 1850. In 1859 he was appointed Superintendent of Schools in East Elgin, and subsequently he was made Superintendent of the entire county, which position he held until compelled to resign on account of failing health in the year 1867.

Of his labors, his devotion to duty and his sacrifices during these years we cannot write. They would fill a volume.

Bro. Sheppard was married in 1848 to Miss Nancy Bentley, who preceded him to the land of rest about ten years ago. Too much could not be said in praise of her many virtues. The work accomplished by him could not have been done but for her help—her patience and cheer under difficulties, at times well-nigh overwhelming. She knew all about the trials and joys, the disappointments and triumphs of a pioneer preacher's life; neither was she a stranger to sorrow. No less than nine times did the dark angel cast his shadow athwart the home, leaving but three children out of a family of twelve.

On January 29th, 1887, Brother Sheppard was united in marriage to

Miss Marjory Stevenson, of Michigan, a gifted and accomplished lady who, with two bright little boys, mourn the loss of husband and father.

The subject of this sketch was born into the fold of the Episcopal Church and nurtured upon Episcopal diet. There was in the doctrine and service of this church, which he always respected even to the day of his death, something wanting.

They failed to satisfy the demands of his earnest nature. His efforts in the search of the truth seemed in vain, and the assistance of those who would be his spiritual advisers only served to confuse. In after years he has been heard to say, after listening to a plain gospel sermon, "O! what would I not have given at one time to hear a sermon like that!"

Immediately after emigrating to Canada there fell into his hands the writings of Alexander Campbell. His was a heart like good soil prepared for the seed. His prejudices, however, were all in favor of the English Church, and up to that time he thought it was the church, and that there was salvation in none other.

The change of religious views and affiliation was not without a struggle. Peculiarly there was nothing to gain, but probably much to be lost.

It meant separation from an old established society to be identified with a small body, at that time despised and persecuted.

It was not till after careful investigation and earnest wrestlings of spirit that he repudiated the authority of an unauthorized creed and took his stand with those who recognize no authority but that of Christ, and no creed but the divine word.

Realizing what the gospel had done for him in lifting him out of the bondage of doubt and narrow prejudices into a state of sweet peace and confident assurance, he found himself possessed with an irresistible desire to proclaim to others this gospel which had so recently, by a vision of its full orbed beauty and glory, irradiated his own heart. That this was no spasmodic religious fervor but the decision of an enlightened mind—the product of a noble but renewed heart—was evidenced by the zeal and activity of his after life.

South Dorchester was the field of his early efforts, where a church was established from which hundreds of earnest Disciples have gone out to form the nucleus of many other organizations.

In subsequent years it could be said that this whole western country was his field of labor. Almost every church in this section is more or less indebted to him for its existence.

For a number of years he was associated in labor in this field with the late Dugald Sinclair, whom he always held in the highest esteem for his ability, piety, and learning.

Bro. Sheppard's splendid pulpit abilities were soon recognized, and

his services were in demand for yearly meetings and evangelistic purposes all over the Province.

I suppose we would be safe in saying that there is scarcely a place in Ontario where the name Disciple is known that his voice has not been heard.

As a preacher it is no exaggeration to say that Edmund Sheppard had few equals. He was the peer of any preacher in the land, and qualified to stand before any audience. Intellectual people were attracted and charmed by his originality of thought and the richness of his language. In his palmist days he was a powerful and eloquent proclaimer of Christ's gospel. His earnest and stirring appeals to the heart and conscience were always through the understanding.

He was the most conscientious preacher I ever knew in his appeals to the people. No one ever heard him make use of an unworthy motive. He strove by the grandeur of the gospel theme and the beauty and richness of the Divine life to stir the nobler impulse of the human heart.

He had the qualifications in a high degree of a great preacher. He was serious in his deportment, devout and reverent by nature, and thoroughly in earnest. His voice was melodious, his utterance rapid, his language always choice and rich, and his conceptions original and lofty.

He had his moods. Sometimes he was on the mountain top, at other times in the valley. This, however, was less an indication of weakness than an evidence of genius. But while he experienced a fluctuation in feelings, in his religious experience he was always the same—he never entertained a doubt.

The sacrifices made by our departed brother during a ministry of nearly half a century cannot now be told. His superior ability, natural and acquired, fitted him for the most responsible and lucrative positions. These he conscientiously declined. He considered himself a servant of Christ, and Him he served to the end.

He was an outspoken opponent of everything that was evil, and an ardent supporter of everything good. He deplored the existing traffic in intoxicating liquors and was consequently a warm advocate of temperance, as he was of every cause which ameliorated the condition of society.

He finished his work. In doing it, all who knew him can testify, that he spared not himself. Though in much affliction, he labored to the end. He died at his post in the midst of his activities. He missed but one Lord's day from the pulpit.

He has gone over the border. We have bidden him adieu till the morning. Though dead he yet lives, and the influence of his noble, active, life will not be fully known until the last wave of time breaks upon the golden shores of eternity.

T. L. FOWLER.

The little loving charities of daily life preach loudly for Him who went about doing good.

Conference on Union.

ST. THOMAS, ONT.,
June 25, 1884.

DEAR BRO. MUNRO:—The meeting called by Mr. Spencer, pastor of the Central Baptist Church of this city, to consider the union of those evangelical Christians who practice immersion for baptism, was not large, but all present seemed to be quite in favor of bringing about Christian unity. All the prayers and speeches had this ring. I took occasion to present a few items on which the Disciples and Regular Baptists are agreed, as I think. These points were:

1. The divine authority and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures as a revelation from God to man.

2. The divine authority and sufficiency of the New Testament as a revelation of salvation through Jesus Christ, and as a rule of faith and practice.

3. The revelation of God therein in the manifestation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the great work of redemption.

4. The divinity of Jesus as the Son of God, and His Messianic offices of Prophet, Priest and King, to enlighten us by His teachings, to redeem us by His sin offering, to rule over us by His kingly authority.

5. The mission of the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to abide with the saved as an indwelling guest and comforter—the earnest of the heavenly inheritance.

6. The Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

7. The necessity of "repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," in order to admission to baptism, and through baptism to membership in the church.

8. The immersion of every penitent believer, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

9. The obligation of all thus baptized to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. The competency of every church to manage its own affairs, free from any outside ecclesiastical power.

11. The desirableness and expediency of union and co-operation among the churches of Christ for missionary and benevolent purposes. There seemed to be substantial concurrence in these eleven items.

It was not deemed wise to uncover the disagreements. A committee was appointed to arrange time and place for another meeting at which the disagreements may be discussed. I hope there will be no discussion of the differences—at least not directly—but rather this question: "Are the differences sufficiently vital to keep these religious bodies separate?"

I was prepared to give some of the differences between the Disciples and Regular Baptists as follows:

1. The Disciples believe that the Spirit of God and the Word of God

co-operate in conversion—that in this work the one is not separated from the other—that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation—that the sinner can hear the truth, understand the truth, love the truth, obey the truth, and that the truth will make him free. In other words that the faith which justifies is faith in Jesus Christ, and that this faith comes by hearing the word of God.

The Baptists believe that there is an influence of the Spirit, internal, mighty, efficacious, differing from moral suasion, by which the sinner is turned from the love and service of sin and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and that it is only this direct agency of the Holy Spirit working in the sinner's heart that convicts him of sin, and so reveals Christ to him that he is made willing to forsake sin and rely on Christ for salvation.

2. The Disciples believe that regeneration covers the entire process of that change by which the sinner is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It includes all that is comprehended in faith, repentance and baptism; and so far as it is expressive of birth, it refers to baptism more than to faith or repentance; for birth is not life, it is only the transition from one form to another. Faith and repentance betoken the quickening of the Spirit, and baptism is the "birth of water," in which he who has already been made alive in God is introduced into new relations to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Baptists believe that regeneration is the sovereign act of the Holy Spirit, and conversion logically the result and consequence of regeneration. They do not consider baptism as in any sense the completion of the new birth, but rather that the new birth must be a completed thing before the believer has a right to be baptized.

3. Growing out of these views, there is a marked difference in practice, viz.:

The Disciples preach Christ and promise the Spirit.

The Baptists preach the Spirit and promise Christ.

The Disciples exhort sinners to turn to the Lord.

The Baptists pray the Lord to send His Spirit to convert sinners.

The Disciples preach the word in order that men may first believe, then repent.

The Baptists place repentance before faith.

4. The Disciples believe when one solemnly affirms that he believes in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, with all his heart, and has resolved to forsake sin and follow Jesus, that this is sufficient evidence of fitness for baptism.

The Baptists believe this is not sufficient; but that there must be also evidence of an "inward experience," which in all cases is necessary to admission to baptism.

5. The Disciples believe that Jesus Christ has ordained Faith, Repentance and Baptism for remission of