

Duncan Robertson

U. W. O. LIBRARY

The Canadian Evangelist.

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

Vol. V.

TORONTO, MAY 1st, 1890.

No. 1.

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. 4: 1-6.

[EDITORIAL.]

The Church.

We closed the article on the word "church" in the March number with these words: "Every one who has been baptized into Christ has put on Christ, and is in Christ, in His Church, by immediate and necessary consequence." From which the inference would seem to be easy and safe, that as no one religious society now contains all who are in Christ, no such society is "The Church of Christ," and therefore it follows that it is not proper to call the people known as "Disciples of Christ," the "Church of Christ." We know some of our brethren even vehemently contend that we are "The Church of Christ," and, if we understand them, they do that without holding that our brotherhood includes all who "have put on Christ." After carefully considering the New Testament usage of the term "church," we are confident that these brethren make a claim which is destitute of Scriptural support. Though we have given their arguments some attention, we are not sure that we comprehend the grounds on which they so strenuously maintain that we are "The Church of Christ," or, shall we say, the horror with which they appear to contemplate the possibility of our not being "The Church of Christ."

This appears to us to be entirely beyond reasonable question, viz.: That in the New Testament the word "church" is never used in an exclusive sense, but without exception is inclusive of all the Christians in the universe, on the earth, in a country, in a province or district, or in a town or city as the case may be. And this being the fact it is not using Scriptural language in a Scriptural way to designate the people known as "Disciples of Christ" as "The Church of Christ."

What seems to us to be the important matter is, that every person should be satisfied, first, that he is in Christ, a member of His body, the Church; and, second, that the congregation with which he works and worships is a church of Christ. And so far as we, as a people, are concerned, we, of course, do believe that we are in the Church of Christ, and that our churches are churches of Christ. This being the case nothing would be gained by our claiming to be, and calling our-

selves what we are not, "The Church of Christ."

Just here some one might interpose and say that when we call ourselves "The Disciples" we use an exclusive term. But do we call ourselves "The Disciples" or "Disciples?" We have noticed with pleasure that leading men among the brethren are careful to say "Disciples of Christ," and we have admired the truly catholic spirit thereby exhibited. We do not wish to be thought the only Disciples, but that we are Disciples, no more and no less. Of course, it is inevitable that we shall be called "The Disciples," and that people will speak of "The Disciple Church," etc., etc. We cannot help that. But we can use due care for our own part and employ only such expressions which, while they do justice to ourselves, do no injustice to others.

It is our boast that we are not sectarian, that we demand nothing as a test of fellowship but what the apostles required, that we seek to impose on no man as a matter of faith that which the New Testament does not clearly enjoin. Now if we should call ourselves "The Church of Christ," would we not thereby be declaring that fellowship with us is necessary to salvation? And this we have no right to do, inasmuch as there are those not of our number who by being "baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

[EDITORIAL.]

What Baptists Think of Us.

Some, perhaps many, of our readers would be astonished to find in Mr. Waddell's letter in the March number of this paper the statement "that Baptists do not believe that, in a Scriptural sense, Disciples are baptized believers." Mr. Waddell being himself a Baptist, it might be presumed that he is in a position to represent the opinion of the Baptists on the subject. But, while we do not question but that he gives his impression of what his brethren think of the Disciples, we are glad to know that all Baptists have not so poor an opinion of us, nor so imperfect a conception of what the Scriptures require as prerequisite to baptism. For example a "Baptist pastor" writing some time ago in the Chicago Standard took the editor of that paper sharply to task for some utterances of his in disparagement of the validity of Disciples' baptism, and showed from the most authoritative and recent of the literature of the Disciples that the faith and repentance which they require as indispensable prerequisites to baptism are thoroughly Scriptural and evangelical. And went on to say, "From my present light I could not re-baptize a Disciple, unless he asked it because he thought himself unconverted before his immersion." And no doubt the same sensible "Baptist pastor" would re-baptize a Baptist on the same grounds; and so would sensible preachers among the Disciples, as, indeed, to our knowledge, they have re-baptized both "Baptists" and "Disciples."

Just here let us say, while this matter is up, we have great respect for Alexander Campbell, and we think that, generally speaking, his writings would still be profitable reading, but he is no oracle with us. We receive such of his views as seem to us, upon personal investigation, to be in harmony with the Word of God. Very many Disciples know little about Alexander Campbell, and less about his writings. And even if it could be shown from his works that he over-estimated, or under-estimated the place and importance of baptism, that would in no wise justify the assertion that the Disciples now make a like mistake.

What the Disciples teach is, that a person who believes in Jesus Christ with all his heart, who truly repents, and who confesses with his mouth Jesus as his Lord, is ready to be baptized, and should be baptized without unnecessary delay, and when he has been baptized, that he is a baptized believer in the true Scriptural sense, and that none but such are baptized believers in the Scriptural sense. If, notwithstanding such teaching, and a conscientious endeavor to carry it out in practice, the Baptists still consider us unbaptized, we shall not be disturbed, but appeal unto "the law and to the testimony," and kindly recommend them to take the Bible, and the "Baptist Church Manual" less.

One other remark of Mr. Waddell's we quote here: "We believe there are many regenerate persons among Disciples, but it is not because of the correctness of their doctrines that such is the case." On which we would briefly say, in the words of the Apostle Peter, that, "We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they,"—Baptists and all others who shall be saved.

The Religion of Japan.

ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

BY TOLU OHNO, OF TOKIO, JAPAN.

No. 1.—Its Past.

The original religion of Japan is Shintoism. It was invented and practiced by the Japanese. Shintoism has in it some vague notions of the immortality of the soul, of a future state of existence, of rewards and punishments, of a paradise, and of a hell. It declares that good people who keep God's law shall inherit paradise, and that they shall enter the realm of Kami (God). The wicked who do not keep God's law shall be thrust into hell.

What is God's law? It answers 1st. Purity of soul heart and body; 2nd. An exact observation of festival days; 3rd. Pilgrimage; 4th. The worship of God both in the temple and in the family. The people however did not worship images or idols, but their custom was to hang up their mirror and a smooth white paper on the wall which were emblems of the purity of their hearts. There were many strange customs. When women reached fifteen years of age and men twenty, they were obliged to go to the old temples

which are situated in the central provinces of Japan. The people were not allowed to marry until they made this pilgrimage.

A foreign religion called "Buddhism," was introduced into Japan two thousand years ago when an image of Buddha and his holy books were brought from Kudara. This is what Japanese traditions say. The crown prince of that time became a believer in Buddhism. From that time the Buddhist religion spread rapidly throughout all the land of Japan. Many high officers were opposed to Buddhism in Japan, believing that it would not be well for the country to allow a foreign religion to enter the land. Finally there were civil wars, but the party of anti-Buddhists were defeated by those who were converts to Buddhism, and from that time Buddhism was allowed to flourish without any opposition. When in ancient times the King of Japan visited the Temple, he humbled himself by calling himself a slave. For some time the priests of Buddha had wonderful power, and their opinions had great influence on the politics of the country. After a time the priests differed in their opinions, and divided up into sects, and thus Buddhism became separated into seventeen different branches, each of which had a temple of its own and preserved a strict separation from all the others. The introduction of the teaching of Confucius was before the introduction of Buddhism, but his doctrines are not religious, but are the science of politics and morality.

Western scholars think Confucianism is an oriental religion. I think it is a mistake. Confucius was a great scholar of ancient philosophy, and he was once Prime Minister of Yei (an ancient dynasty of the Chinese Empire). This doctrine was believed in by the knighthood of Japan, but they did not believe in this as a religion but as a classical morality of ancient times. The doctrine of Confucianism has been translated into English. Those were the three prevailing systems of religion and ethics of old Japan. The name of Japan was unknown to Europeans until the year 1542, when a Portuguese vessel, bound for Macao, in India, was driven far out of her course by a tempest, and finally arrived on the coast of the west province of Japan.

Although the Japanese were cautious and vigilant to avoid intercourse with foreigners, there was no danger from such intercourse, and the Portuguese were received with a welcome. Seven years later several Jesuit priests went to Japan, among them the famous Francis Xavier in order to undertake the conversion of the people. These priests were kindly welcomed through the western provinces. The Portuguese also were free to preach as well as to trade. In 1682 an embassy was sent to Rome by the feudal lord, Date, (a Japanese Catholic Convert) bearing letters and presents to the Pope, in token of his allegiance to him as the Supreme Pontiff. By the end of the century the number of converts was estimated at two hundred thousand.

In 1622 it was found that a conspiracy had been formed by Roman Catholic converts to overthrow the Imperial Throne, and to destroy both the temples and idols; after two years of war the rebel party was destroyed by the Government forces of that time. There were very violent persecutions of the Roman converts; 22 priests and 200 converts were put to death, and the churches and schools were laid in ruins, and the foreign faith almost wiped out, even foreign traders were driven out of the country.

A national law was made prohibiting Christianity in Japan, and if any one believed in Christianity they were put to death, and all foreigners were expelled. This was the end of Catholic Christianity in Japan. At the same time a proclamation was set forth that no Japanese should leave Japan, and also that no Japanese should be allowed to return from any foreign country. The punishment for both was, that they should be put to death.

The distrust and dislike of foreigners shut the sea gates of Japan for almost two hundred years, until the visit of Commodore Perry of the American Navy. In 1853, on a Sunday, Perry with a squadron of American warships, cast anchor in Tokio Bay. Being a Christian he read the one hundredth psalm on the deck with his crew, and for the first time the voice of God rang out over Tokio's Bay, and echoed back over the quiet waters. This is the first introduction of Protestant Christianity into Japan. In 1854 a treaty was made between Japan and America. Japan opened her seaports, which were closed for many years; the Japanese awakened her sleeping eyes. Since then there has been wonderful progress in Japan toward Western civilization. Therefore historians have called her, "New Japan." "The Kingdom of the Rising Sun." From that time all nations came to Japan, and the Japanese went to every country in the world. Several hundreds of Japanese young men were sent to America and Europe, and after years, those returning to Japan were helping to organize "New Japan"; almost all of them were placed in positions in the Government. They were the centre of social organization, and they were helping forward the work of progress, toward modern civilization. The Empire of Japan situated east of Asia, therefore geographers called her an Asiatic nation, but Japan is not Asiatic because their customs and civilization are remarkably different from those other countries of Asia. The Government of Japan was an absolute monarchy, but in 1881 a representative system was introduced and a new constitution was established. They have a good parliamentary system, with an upper and a lower house. Every national law must have the sanction of both houses of Parliament; and of the Emperor. There has been much progress in Japan, not only in the political system but also in religion, in society, education, individual and family life, daily customs and in the manners of the people. There is almost nothing now as it was thirty years ago, only the national beauty of the scenery.