

Disciple of Christ

THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

AND CANADIAN EVANGELIST.

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"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples."—JESUS the Christ.

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The Disciple of Christ

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.

Editorial Notes.

This is a Special Home Mission Number.

The congregations of Disciples of Christ throughout the Province are asked to give a liberal collection for the Home Mission Fund of the Co-operation on the First Lord's Day in May.

Many reasons why this collection should be general, and according to the ability of the Disciples, are given in this paper. A careful reading of the various articles will interest, instruct, and, we think, inspire the readers to do their duty.

The Disciples of Christ are here in Ontario, and they think they have a right to stay. And they believe it is their duty to extend their borders in this country. They have been trying to do that in the past; they mean, by the help of the Lord, to do more in that direction in the future.

What is the aim of the Disciples? It is to realize fully in faith and practice the religion of Christ as set forth in the New Testament. They repudiate all human creeds, and all unscriptural tests of fellowship. They say that Christ, and Christ alone, is Lord.

The Disciples urge that the union the Lord prayed for His people should

work for. They say that if sectarianism was sinful in the days of Paul, it must be sinful now; that if it was wrong to wear a sectarian name then, so must it be now. And they therefore reason that the only way a Christian can deliver himself from the sin of sectarianism is to cut himself loose from it, and do all in his power otherwise to destroy it. They maintain that the honor of Christ, the good of His people, and the extension of His cause call loudly to those who believe in Him to lay aside their sectarian differences and be one in Him.

The Disciples contend that the fundamental sin of sectarianism is the making of unscriptural tests of fellowship, or conditions of membership in the church; that a sect may be described as a society claiming to be a church of Christ whose terms of admission are more strict, or more lax than the New Testament warrants. They hold that it is gross presumption to tamper with the rule laid down by the Lord and His inspired Apostles; that that, in fact, constitutes the essence of Popery whether among Catholics, or Protestants, or others.

If the Disciples are asked what are the Scriptural tests of fellowship they reply that the Acts of Apostles clearly show that the Apostles received those who with all the heart believed in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, repented toward God, confessed with the mouth Jesus as Lord, and were baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And they further point out that those so received were retained in the fellowship of the apostolic churches so long as their walk and conversation were in harmony with the Gospel of Christ, that harmony also is to be determined now, not by human standards, but by the New Testament. A careful observation of the practices of the different denominations, Catholic and Protestant, will show that men's opinions are made tests of fellowship to a greater or less extent. The Disciples therefore say that a sharp distinction should always be made between matters of faith and matters of opinion. No human opinion should be made a condition of

membership in a church of Christ.

Many people when first the position is presented to them think that it would not work. It seems to them that something more would be required to hold a church together. But a little thought will make it clear that this is no narrow basis of fellowship, although it can be stated in a few short sentences. The confession of Simon Peter—found in Matt. xvi. 16 is itself a big creed. When a person believes that with all his heart he should not delay making his faith known, and taking his stand with the followers of the Lord. Why should a young Christian be confronted with the Shorter Catechism, for example, and be required to pass an examination in that before being received into the church? Who has authorized any one to place that document between a loving heart and the blessings of Christian fellowship? And so with other similar human devices. "Back to the simplicity of apostolic days" should be the cry of every true disciple of the Lord Jesus.

Those who believe in Jesus as the Christ, and hold the principles set forth above, must, if they are conscientious, feel the obligation to be aggressive in maintaining and propagating them. That which bears so directly upon the honor of Christ and the furtherance of His cause can never be a matter of indifference to those who love Him. And as a matter of fact, intelligent and conscientious Disciples are zealous to advance the good cause. With no sectarian purpose to serve, with no personal ends to gain, but rather often at the sacrifice of what might be considered personal interests, they have given themselves to the advocacy of primitive Christianity, have determined to declare the whole counsel of God in the Gospel, and have resolved by the grace of God to enter into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

The Co-operation of Disciples of Christ in Ontario is in full sympathy with the position and purposes we have indicated, and on this ground feels warranted in appealing to all of a like mind to aid in carrying on the work of establishing churches of Christ pure

and simple in the Province of Ontario. This paper is also devoted to the same good cause, and so whatever influence it may have is cheerfully placed on the side of the Co-operation, and its voice is raised at the present juncture to urge that the May collection should be general and generous, worthy of a great cause, a faithful people, and a gracious Lord.

The discussion of the Sabbath question and of the running of street cars on Sunday still continues in the pulpits and the papers of this city. Those who stand for the fourth commandment are exhibiting quite a capacity for insisting upon their own limitations and qualifications being accepted as not interfering with the original law of Exodus; but they are exceedingly impatient of any limitations proposed by others. We are beginning to doubt whether there is a genuine Sabbatarian in Hamilton—Jew or Gentile.

This investigation of the Sabbath question should open up the larger question of the relation of the Old Testament to the New. It is amazing how little the most of the most pious know of the Bible as a book, rather as a collection of books. There is a big field for true Bible teachers. Young men of grit, grace and gumption, could not find a nobler or more useful sphere.

The great question of our day is, "What of the Bible?" The Bible is in the hands (or on the shelves) of the people, but it is not yet in their heads nor in their hearts as it ought to be, and must be if the religion of Jesus is to hold its own, not to say to gain ground among the children of men.

"THE DISCIPLE is a very welcome visitor. I think it is getting better all the time." So writes an isolated Disciple, who pays for our paper regularly and keeps it following him around almost from Dan to Beersheba.

"I thought the EVANGELIST could not be improved. I see it can. I am delighted with its new form and wish it every success. We have never had its equal since I have known our paper, which is over 25 years."—J. LEDIARD.