

Bureau Robertson

U. W. U. L. W. W. W.

# The Canadian Evangelist.

"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.

### Incongruous Things.

To the Editor of THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST:

Being a humble contributor to the fund for purchasing the ground on which to build the new Cecil Street church in this city, I trust that you will not consider it out of place for me to say a few words respecting the opening services in the new house. While it is quite right that the members of that congregation should be anxious to pay for their house of worship, in their effort to do so I am glad to think that many of them still have some sense of regard for what is proper on the Lord's day. All the members I have met since the meetings were held spoke freely about the good preaching they had, the large audiences, etc., on the opening day. But none of them made any reference to the ridiculous proceedings resorted to for the purpose of raising money. Judging from what is said to have taken place, "the minister" and others evidently thought it of more importance to extract money from the pockets of the many strangers present than to give them an object-lesson showing how the early Christians celebrated the Lord's day. This was postponed until the afternoon. The silence since manifested about the subscriptions and contributions then received, if not a mark of disapprobation, is an evidence of shame which is regarded as a hopeful indication for their future. This I am glad to see. It remained for a high church man to inform me as to that part of the program. He began by saying: "I was much surprised at not seeing you in the crowd at Cecil Street church last Sunday." I replied that he need not be, as I could not approve of the modern methods adopted by that advanced section of the so-called body of Christ. He remarked that "the preaching was good, but he was astounded and shocked at what he afterwards saw and heard there." After describing the performance, somewhat in detail, he remarked that "it was a regular old-fashioned Dutch auction." The audience was told that the Lord wanted about \$8,000 to apply on the building fund of this church, and the speaker wished to know how many persons would give \$1,000 toward that sum? how many \$500, etc., down to \$5. We read in that old-fashioned Book

that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver," but who can reasonably expect Him to bless money raised in this fashion, especially on His day, and in the house that had just been dedicated to His service? Yours, etc., EDWARD TROUT, Toronto, March 31, 1891.

### Is Infant Baptism Declining?

ORO T. SMITH.

The above is the title of an article in the *Magazine of Christian Literature* of October, '90. It is taken from the *Independent*.

The *Independent* declares that it would not be troubled if the assertion were true, but cannot be blind to the fact that it is not true. Unfortunately its vision is limited to five or six years, and as it will not disturb the equanimity of the *Independent* to know the truth we would invite the editor to lift up his eyes and take a broader view.

Look back 500 years and has not infant baptism declined? Then adult baptisms were rare; unbelievers' baptism was general. One hundred years ago the infant baptisms exceeded believers' baptism in every Pedobaptist sect in America. To-day, unless it be the Episcopalians and some dying obscure sects, the fact is reversed. So late as 1860 the Methodists reported infant baptisms 2,000 in excess, in 1870 the believers' baptisms were 18,000 in excess.

A few years ago the *Presbyterian Banner* said concerning infant baptism: Unfortunately remissness in the performance of this duty has been manifesting itself for some time in certain quarters. In many Congregational churches the baptisms are very few, and in one town in Massachusetts no child has been baptized in twenty years. That there has been a rapid decline proportionately in the number of children baptized in the Presbyterian church cannot be doubted. At least one-half of the Presbyterian church must be neglecting this ordinance of God and the proportion is increasing.

To assist the vision of the *Independent* we append a few figures, showing the proportion of infant baptisms to membership in the various churches, at different periods named: Episcopal church, 1850, 1 in 7; 1890, 1 in 11; Reformed Dutch, 1811, 1 in 10; 1880, 1 in 20; Presbyterian, 1831, 1 in 15; 1880, 1 in 33; Methodist, 1857, 1 in 22; 1880, 1 in 29; Congregational, 1830, 1 in 50; 1880, 1 in 77.

As Japan is the latest country to receive Christianity it is worth asking whether infant baptism will commend itself to this wide awake nation. Sleeping babes take it but the Japanese have an idea that Christianity ought to correspond to the Book. The Presbyterians' seven bodies united into one body. Some missionaries did not like it but they had to yield. At the last meeting of the synod a few weeks ago, the Japanese preachers took the bit in their teeth, again throw away the Westminster Confession of Faith, taking the Apostles' Creed (as it is called) instead and abolished infant baptism. If the advocates of prim-

itive Christianity would spend as much on Japan as the Presbyterians do we could bring the Japanese church to the apostolic model or put influence at work that would probably bring about that result. The Japanese are impressed by numbers, by show, by evidence of strength. If we could pour into Japan men and means enough to show that we believe we have something of importance for them, we could impress the principles we profess, the practical way to Christian union, upon the entire body of Japanese Christians. There is a dim suspicion that this cannot be done by passing resolutions in the convention. We have had more of them than of anything else, but in seven years we have increased our number of male missionaries by one. If a few families can be sent out we will manage to worry along without those magnificent and sagacious resolutions for a year or two. If the Japan mission is forever to be doomed to feebleness, at least a determined effort should be made at Allegheny City, to make the resolutions, that now is the time to help Japan, a little stronger. They are becoming impaired by age.

Hongo Tokyo, Japan, Jan. 28, '91. —*Christian Evangelist*.

### The Twofold Rest.

The Saviour has said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matt. xi. 28-30. There seems to be a twofold rest mentioned in this passage. First, there is the rest from the burden of bondage, and the guilt of sin; the rest of the weary prodigal casting himself into his Father's arms, the rest of the lost child coming back to be embraced and sheltered in the Father's bosom. This rest is given. It is the instantaneous repose of the storm-tossed and troubled soul gliding into port, and dropping anchor, secure from all the storms and tempests of the deep.

But this is not all. There is yet conflict, yet trial, temptation, and the struggle of a will untrained, of a heart which has its evil proclivities. There are tempers which rise; there are faculties which are undisciplined, there is pride which rebels, and there is need not only of the converting, saving power of God, but also of the teaching of the wise and wonderful Counselor who is "meek and lowly in heart," and who will instruct us and teach us in the way in which we should go. And it is to those who have already found rest from the storm without, but who need this inward help and blessing, that the Saviour says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest unto your soul."

There is first peace with God, which comes when we cease our rebellion and surrender to the Lord. But there is beyond this "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," which comes into the hearts of those who take Christ's yoke and learn of Him. Let those who are wearied with the

burdens of sin and buffeted with the storms of temptation make haste and come to Jesus Christ. They shall find rest, sweet, pure, abundant and abounding. But this is not the whole. They have but entered upon the school of Christ. Let them now take His yoke upon them, and, becoming pupils in His school, learn of Him. He is meek and lowly of heart, and they will find that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and taking His yoke and following Him, they shall find rest to their souls; such rest as earth can never give; such peace as God alone imparts.

Let the redeemed of the Lord see to it that they know all the fulness that there is in Jesus for them. Let them not be contented with "peace with God," the end of warfare, the assurance of acquiescence with Him; let them see to it that they also have "the peace of God," the "great peace" which "passeth all understanding," which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Blessed are those who know this peace, and who dwell in love and dwell in God.—*The Common People*.

### Historical Queries.

A correspondent submits to us some questions in which as a Baptist she feels deeply interested. Quoting from *The Rev. W. W. Willoughby, D.D.*, the statement that if any could claim an unbroken succession from the apostles, Baptists could assert the claim, we are asked to state the facts as to the history of infant sprinkling and that of the succession of Baptist churches. We doubt whether we shall be able to satisfy the mind of our inquiring friend. Historical conclusions depend upon the evidence, and where satisfactory evidence is wanting, the conclusion is more or less conjectural. If we inquire what our Lord and the apostles instituted, we have full information in the New Testament. But inquiry into the beliefs and practices of men since that era may or may not be rewarded with success.

It is as certain as anything in history that sprinkling was never practised for baptism in the apostolic age. That is enough for its condemnation. No matter when it was introduced, whether in the third, the fifth, the ninth, or (as we suppose to be the fact) in the thirteenth century—in either case it is an unauthorized innovation upon the original Christian institution. It is an ancient practice, but not ancient enough by several centuries to demand any one's reverence.

We have never been able to feel much interest in the efforts to make out an unbroken succession of Baptist churches from the age of the apostles to the sixteenth century, since which time the history is tolerably clear. When we are told that the Novatians, Donatists, and other ancient heretics, were Baptists, we are compelled to think that they did us not much credit. Indeed, we are strongly of opinion that persons holding like views would find it no easy matter to enter the fellowship of Baptists at this day. It has been said that ecclesiastical writers give prejudiced testimony, and that the church after persecuting them to the

death calumniated their memory. But theirs is the only testimony extant. If that be rejected, there is left a blank; and we are asked to believe that certain unknown people were Baptists.

Infant baptism began to be practised in the third century, but it was in the fifth century that the rite first came to be generally observed. Still the form of the ordinance was unchanged. Affusion and sprinkling came into use first in case of the sick (baptism being deemed indispensable to salvation), and in the thirteenth century began to be more generally practised. Yet immersion continued to be the general rule down to the sixteenth century. Froude relates that after the birth of James VI., of Scotland, Queen Elizabeth sent a golden font for his christening, but before it reached Edinburgh the royal infant had grown so big he could not be got into it. And to this day the rubric of the Church of England Baptismal Office for Infants requires the infant, "if he be well able to bear it," to be "discreetly and warily dipped." But if not able, "it shall suffice to pour water upon him."

The Baptist denomination as it exists in Europe and America is one of the children of the Reformation. When the yoke of Rome was broken attempts were made to rid the churches of the human inventions by which Christianity had become so obscured and distorted. Some removed less and some more of these accretions. The Baptists originated in a purposed rejection of all doctrines and rites that lacked the authority of Holy Scripture, while other reformed bodies retained more or less of them. Thus arose "the variations of Protestantism," and the separate attitude of the Baptists.—*The Watchman*.

The habit of faltering and distinguishing and concealing, and putting forward the edge of the truth instead of showing boldly the full face of it, at last leads men into an insincerity so habitual that they really do not know whether they speak the truth or not.

If you want to spoil all that God gives you, if you want to be miserable yourself, and a maker of misery to others, the way is easy enough. Only be selfish, and it is done at once. Think about yourself, what respect people ought to pay you, what people think of you, and then nothing to you will be pure.—*Charles Kingsley*.

An every-day religion—one that loves the duties of your common walk; one that makes an honest man; one that accomplishes an intellectual and moral growth in the subject; one that works in all weather and improves all opportunities will best and most healthily promote the growth of a church and the power of the gospel.—*Bushnell*.

Our imagination magnifies so strongly the present by making continual reflections on it, and contracts eternity to so narrow a point by banishing it from our minds, that we make a nothing of eternity, and an eternity of nothing; and thus has its roots so firmly fixed in our mental constitution, that no power of reason can get the better of it.