

# ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

"Go . . . speak . . . to the people ALL the words of this Life."

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## POETRY.

### WINDING UP TIME

A wee brown maid on the door steps sat,  
Her small face hid beneath a wide brimmed hat,  
A broken clock on her busy knee  
She wound with an ancient, rusty key,  
"What are you doing, my pretty one?  
Playing in time?" I asked in fun.  
Large and wise were the soft, dark eyes  
Lifted to mine in great surprise.  
"I'm winding up to make him go,  
For he's so dreadful poky and slow."  
Winding up time? Ah, baby mine,  
How crawl these lengthened moments of thine,  
How sadly slow goes the staid old man,  
But he has not changed since the world began.  
He does not change, but in after years,  
When he mingles our cup of joy and tears,  
And duties are many, and pleasures are fleet,  
And the way grows rough 'neath our tired feet,  
When the day is too short for its crowd of cares,  
And at night surprises us unawares,  
We do not wish to hurry his feet,  
But find his going all too fleet.  
Ah, baby mine, some future day,  
You will throw that rusted key away  
And to Phœbus' car will madly cling,  
As it whirls along, like a winged thing,  
And wonder how, years and years ago,  
You could have ever thought that time was slow.

—The Current.

## ORIGINAL.

### "ONCE FOR ALL."

Jude, verse 3, N. V.

"To contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Divine words, few in number, but rich in meaning. If rightly understood, and duly obeyed, these words would put an end to all modern controversies, and restore peace to the Church. Do we desire to know what the true faith is? St. Jude here tells us—that which was *once, and once for all, delivered to the saints.* Every doctrine, which can be shown to be posterior to that faith is *new*; and every doctrine that is *new* is *false*. [Casaubon]. Now while all this is strictly true and appropriate in regard to the innovations of Roman Catholicism, it is equally appropriate for the condemnation of every innovation of Protestant Sectarianism. These words written by the great scholar of Geneva three hundred years ago contain the germs of the great principles which we, as a people, are contending for in the present century—a full return to the faith "once for all" delivered to the saints, in order to put an end to all divisions and controversies.

Of course the word "faith" is used here objectively and is that system of truths which was delivered by God through the ministry of inspired apostles for the enlightenment and salvation of our race—"Which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." And is it not marvellous that any man professing to be guided by the Holy Scriptures, professing to contend for the faith of the gospel, should omit the answer given, by the apostle who wrote these words, to enquiring sinners when anxiously seeking to know what they shall do to obey and honor the Saviour?

This omission of a sacred duty was made recently by a preacher of great popularity at a union revival meeting in this locality. He quoted the words of the convicted Jews, "What shall we do?" but had not the faithfulness or courage to give Peter's answer, or perhaps for the reason that he was about to tell the convicted of his hearers to do something entirely different. Was Peter's language delivered by direct and unmistakable inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Once for all?" If, as a German writer justly says, "Once for all, so that it continues thus for ever, that it is liable to no changes and that no new revelation is to be looked for"—how dare men who pose as the servants of Christ omit the Divine teachings and apostolic sanctions, and presumptuously supersede what Christ has commanded, by their own traditions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men! We know of no appointment more solemnly auspicious or more distinctly designated by Heaven for the delivery, "once for all," of the faith which Christ

had finished, than that made by the Saviour for his disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high; not to attempt the execution of the great commission until they were fully illuminated by the Holy Spirit and had the miraculous power of tongues given unto them, in order that all men should know in after generations that what was spoken and done that day was most assuredly by Divine guidance, that then the Spirit took of the deep things of Christ and showed them unto his saints; that then Christ was glorified, not only by the attestation that he was made both Lord and Christ, but also glorified in the offer of pardon to his penitent enemies, for as the glory of God announced to Moses was, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." So also Christ was glorified by the Holy Spirit announcing pardon by the agency of him who spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." If this is not the deliverance of Christ's message to penitent sinners, "once for all" where, in the whole scheme of "the faith," can we find any thing that is? Full well we know that it is unpopular with the great majority of the professed followers of Christ, and to quote it in a "union" revival meeting would be deemed unchristian and ungentlemanly, even if given without a single word of comment. With a heavy heart we write these last words, for it would be a source of unspeakable pleasure to unite in every effort to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ, to lead sinners to repentance, to stem the swelling tide of infidelity, to make society better and happier, and to enjoy more largely reciprocating love and confidence; but it is forbidden by loyalty to Christ, by faithfulness to his commandments, and by a determination to heed, without any compromise, the words of Jude, "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." N. V.

E. SHEPPARD.

Ridgetown.

### BIBLE READING.

It is a fact much to be deplored, that among the people who profess to be disciples of the great Teacher there prevails a dearth of careful and prayerful study of the Holy Oracles. Paul told Timothy "To study to show himself approved unto God." Jesus himself said "Learn of me." With these strong and authoritative injunctions before us, we should calmly and considerably ask ourselves the question, am I doing my duty to my never-dying soul in supplying it with that food, which it requires from the life-giving word of God? Are we saying with Paul "Though our outward man perish, our inward man (the soul) is renewed day by day." Let us contrast this matter, how often do we as a rule supply the outward man (the body) with food? Why daily, of course; very well, if we attend to the physical wants that often, oh! how absolutely necessary that we obtain food for that soul within us, which is of more value than the world with all its riches and splendor. We read that the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily" to learn the truth, a grand example for the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to-day. A daily reading of some portions of Scripture should be followed by all truth seekers, not less than a chapter morning and evening, and by this course some 730 chapters are read in one year; and of this rest assured dear brethren that God's blessing will most decidedly follow those so engaged, His word will be sweeter than honey or the honey-comb to them; with heaven at last to all who not only read but walk accordingly.

W. J. CANN.

Euphrasia, Nov. 14th, 1887.

### CHINA LETTER.

#### THE DI DSANG FESTIVAL.

The 14th, 15th and 16th of September were the great days of the Di Dsang Puh Sah Festival. Di Dsang was Prince of Siam and from a child

believed in Buddha. He left his throne and country and came to China, entered a monastery not far from Wuhu, and fifty or sixty miles from Nankin, and died and entered into Buddhahood, and is now worshipped as a Puh Sah or Buddhist god. His business is to protect or act as advocate for souls going down to Purgatory. For a month before the main days of the festival beggars were lying or settling along the path leading to the shrine to allow worshippers a chance to gain a little merit by giving them a little money. When the feast is fully started streams of people, mainly women, many of them well-dressed and intelligent looking, pass along to the shrine which is only a short walk from our house. They take with them bundles of incense and rest occasionally along the road in tea houses, which are decorated with flowers and pictures; opposite the door there is a picture of Di Dsang, before which devotees prostrate themselves, while the less serious minded drink tea, eat fruit, melon seeds, etc., and play cards, dominos, and gamble.

As the visitor passes on he sees stages erected on which actors (men and women) are playing and singing. At the hill on which is the shrine the crowd is dense and beggars plentiful. The visitor climbs the brick path leading up to the temple, which is a plain affair, enters with the crowd, and bides his turn to offer incense and prostrate himself before the mean-looking, mud-modelled, paint-bedaubed idol. The temple is suffocating with the fumes of burning incense. Servants of the temple are busy carrying away the half-burned incense to make room for that freshly offered. The priests are actively engaged directing the ceremonies and receiving the offerings of money and provisions.

Only a small portion of the people are in earnest in this matter; the others, if you ask them, say they are only out for pleasure. Some, however, are really sincere and going to the temple to pray for near relatives—slowly pass along the road taking one step and then a prostration, or two, three, four or more steps between each prostration, according to their vow. For most of the crowd it is a day of pleasure and they have no more regard for the god than boys at home have for the Queen when they shoot off fire-crackers on her birthday. I went into a tea house and preached the gospel, and spoke against their idols of wood and mud without causing any offence. Indeed they seemed quite indifferent. I tried to sell some portions of Scripture near the shrine, but the crowd was too dense, and some roughs snatched the few books I had in my hand from me, not in rage however, but just in sport. I desisted, and came away feeling that on the day of a heathen festival the hearts of the people are not seriously enough inclined to listen to religious truth. Eating, drinking, gambling, etc., are the order of the day. "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

W. E. MACKLIN.

Nankin, Sept. 28th, 1887.

### NEW YEAR'S CUSTOMS.

Friend! Where are you going? Oh! just going to the southern part of the city to buy a few things. Are your New Year's affairs all arranged? How can that be? Our rule here, New Year's time having arrived, every one must buy a few of the necessary things, which you call responding to the custom. That rich man is extravagant killing pigs, sheep, setting out lanterns, hanging out festoons, and inviting friends to rejoice with him. Gongs and drums make a great din. That poor man only wants to pay all his debts and adorn himself and family with a few extra clean and untorn cotton clothes, not being able to afford satins and silks. If money is plentiful he buys extra cabbages, but if scarce he ought to be and is saving. This sort of man is compared with the rich deficient, but with the very poor has plenty. Just so! I would ask you what is the meaning of firing off numberless fire-crackers at front and back doors, in the streets and alleys, all of last night. That is dismissing Dso Ye, the kitchen god, to report to Shang ti the God of heaven. According to our Chinese custom the kitchen god is the god of the house from the palace to the hut. On the arrival of the 23rd and 24th of the last month, at evening

the household light candles, burn incense and before the kitchen stove bow with head to floor. There is an excavation in the brick stove which is the shrine and in which is an image of the god painted on paper, but no wood-carved or mud-modelled one. At the sides of the shrine are pasted paper strips on which are characters meaning he (the god) ascends to heaven to announce men's good deeds and returns to earth to protect and give peace. Well! What month is it? It is no the twelfth month in common parlance "Lah Yueh" or sacrificial, also "happy and peaceful month." The end of the month is called the "30th evening" (New Year's Eve). The merchants on the streets and in the markets who have constantly sold on credit, at the end of the year desire to settle accounts. A few days before the end of the year those who have money immediately pay up and the account is struck off. Those who are slippery set to borrowing here and paying there, they have not the money early and compel the accounts to be discounted, the business men not being able to abuse them on the "30th evening." Accounts are collected from the dismissing the kitchen god up to the New Year's Eve. On the 30th evening crowds are on the streets carrying torches and lanterns and finishing up the accounts; usually very few people on the streets at night. Besides the collecting of accounts, rich people have their servants on the streets secretly giving the poor tickets which are orders for rice. Some others who have not changed the scrolls at the doors for new ones are doing so now. Above the door are being carved and scoloped red and yellow papers with the character *shih*, happiness, in gilt paper attached. The portico is also swept to welcome expected visitors. The scrolls at the door have lucky and congratulatory words, but some have not time to trouble with these and merely buy a pair of door gods painted on paper and paste them on the door. That is all right so far, but what do you do on New Year's Eve? The 30th eve they call *chu shih* or deduct eve, and the people lighting candles, incense and burning paper money, place cabbages before the ancestral shrine, and large and small bow with head to floor and worship. They call this worship, "burn the bundle", from the burning of paper money to supply their ancestors with money to use. After this ceremony they place a large iron or copper fire dish in the middle of the floor and build in it a little frame work, heap of charcoal, and light it. This they call "cage fire" or "lucky fire." The family rejoicing assemble together and after supper chat away, not one sleeping, watching the fire. This is called translating freely watching "old year out, new year in." When the morn begins to break the paterfamilias opens the front door and if he meets the right and left neighbors, says, "Gung hi, Gung hi," "Wish you a happy New Year." They call it the "first morning," and men and boys consult the almanac and in whatever direction the lucky god is, go that way to make calls, wearing fine clothes, fur if possible. Some go in Sedan chairs, some on horses, mules and donkeys, the servants following bearing the cards. Visitors enter and to an elder bow with head to floor, to an equal in age bow and clasping their own hands move them up and down. Afterwards they sit and a servant brings in tea and places the fruit box on the table, saying, "Happy New Year, sir," and the visitor says, "Same to you." Then mine host opens the fruit box and passes it and the tea around. The visitor sits and eats melon and squash seeds and converses using but lucky and congratulatory expressions, merchants inquiring about the profits of the year, etc. The visitor then leaves, after placing a few cash wrapped up in red paper for the servant. This is called "wish you luck parcel." If the master of the house is not at home and it is not the house of a relative, the wife (not mistress) dare not appear, but a card is left. Visiting lasts four, five or more days. The official business is stopped and all stores closed and the officials visit each other. There is a general festival right on till the 15th, which is the great day of the feast, and all is over by the 18th. This feast is called the lantern festival, and on the streets are sleight-of-hand actors, playing monkeys, theatricals, balancing of poles and ladders, lanterns of all kinds, tops, toys and fire-crackers, for the children. Common talk says, "at the end of the month every body seeks out." This is about the greatest feast in China. December is believed New Year's calling *Chun* aunt, Mrs. John through the Dutch who got and, Malcolm C. Campbell and Robina Munro.