

Duncan Robertson

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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.

Now!

R. SHREFFARD.

In some things delays are embarrassing; in other matters they are dangerous; while, in transactions of vital importance, they are often fatal. It has been said that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and if any present safety or advantage depends upon prompt action, the sooner it is done the better. Common sense and universal experience teach us that this is both wise and expedient in regard to all that pertains to the duties and privileges of the present life.

In all things that are connected with our eternal destiny it is not only wise and expedient to do all that is required of us as well as we can and as soon as we can; but, in view of the uncertainty of life, absolutely essential for our present peace and joy in having the answer of a good conscience towards God, and to our being ready for death, the judgment and eternity.

We should always bear in mind that though we are saved by the grace of God, yet the manifestations of that grace are not only in what our loving Father has done for us through Christ, but also in teaching us what we must do in order to obtain the blessings provided for us and offered to us by Him who is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to Him and live.

Nor is the Almighty, whose name is Love, indifferent or unsolicitous in knowing our delay, for He knows how short and uncertain our life is. "Now is the accepted time." "To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." And He knows it may be now or never.

While these remarks have a general application to all the duties and privileges connected with our acceptance with God, it is the writer's special object to refer them to the subject of Christian baptism. In his experience of many years' preaching he has met with so many cases of neglect, through procrastination, of this specific and solemn ordinance of Christ involving a tortured conscience and an awful dread, in impending death, of meeting Him who said: "If ye love me keep my commandments;" for, notwithstanding, so many professing Christians make

light of this holy institution, yet, to the unprejudiced believer, it has a sacred importance, as it stands commanded by Christ in the great commission as an unchangeable decree; as enjoined by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost and as obeyed by others whose conversion is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles—as well as sanctified by the illustrious example of the Saviour Himself.

Not giving any cases where the dying applicant has begged to be baptized but when it was too late, death interposing before it could be attended to, the writer will give one which was his earliest experience when a youth of about seventeen years of age was immersed by him a short time before death. He lived with his father, who was a Disciple of Christ, in the township of Norwich. There was no congregation of our brethren there, many of the residents being Quakers. The lad was of a lovely disposition and believing in the Saviour he had made up his mind to obey Him as directed in the Word of God, but, for some reason or other, had put it off. One day he was out in the field logging. In assisting to move a log his hand-spike slipped and he fell backwards and (singular accident) a dry mullen stalk, without making an external wound, penetrated his body, inflicting a most agonizing and fatal injury. A rude bier was at once constructed on which he was borne to the house. There being not the slightest hope of his recovery, his father came thirty miles for the writer to go and assist the sufferer in the ordinance of baptism for he did not wish to die in disobedience. Of course he went. He will never forget the night preceding the appointment. The screams of intense agony could be heard for a mile; screams that grew fainter and fainter till the sufferer was unconscious in a swoon—and this throughout that long wakeful night. Think, reader, how a young, inexperienced preacher, though anxious to comply with this request of a dying believer, quaked in view of the responsibilities of the approaching morning. Though his friends were afraid he would not survive throughout the night, his youthful energies sustained him. It was a beautiful Lord's day morning. A small, but beautiful stream, a mile or so from the house, had been deepened for the occasion. Four brethren carried him on the bier he had never left since he was carried from the field. It was a funeral procession; not of the dead for a grave of earth, but of the living for burial with Christ in the waters of baptism. The writer suggested, in view of the great prostration of the candidate, that the four brethren should carry him on the bier into the stream after the services and the administrator, standing over him, would pronounce the sacred words of the ordinance. To this he objected, saying the Saviour would give him strength to be baptized in the usual way. And this exercise of faith and trust was realized, for when raised out of the water in which he had been solemnly buried, amidst the death-like silence and tears of the large congregation assembled, instead of groans of

distress or screams of agony, he raised his beautiful, peaceful countenance, dripping with water, to heaven, exclaiming with fervor and pathos: "Glory to God! Glory to God!"—evidently the words coming from the heart of one deeply grateful that he had been allowed to ease his conscience and to glorify his Saviour in loving obedience to His name.

He was replaced on the bier, carried back to his home where a few brethren and the young disciple partook of the Lord's Supper in loving remembrance of Him who will, finally, gather all His people together for an everlasting union with Himself and each other in the realms of light and joy.

Letter From Japan.

BRO. MUNRO.—Some good meaning friend, by sending me a marked copy of the neat, precise CANADIAN EVANGELIST, reminds me that I owe you a letter in fulfillment of a promise. I had not forgotten the promise, but had been waiting for a time when I could sit down and write you a letter more worthy of a place in your excellent paper. But such a time never came. And if you ever are called in the providence of God to labor in foreign mission fields, you will find Old Tim less inclined to linger than you than when we besought his stay for lesson preparation in Kentucky University. We are pressed on all sides here. And the days go swiftly by with life's duties unperformed.

We are now "out in the field," you and I. Instead of the paternal guiding which directed our untaught steps, we meet on all sides an opposing enemy of all righteousness which we are pledged to combat to the end of life. We are engaged in a holy warfare. It rejoices my soul to read of the good work my college mates are doing. And I see none of this work more prosperous than your own work in Canada. I know, however, that you are not alone; for I remember with the most pleasant recollections many other Canadian brethren who, I am sure, will not hide their lights under a bushel. May God continue to bless your labors.

I shall only be able in this first letter to give you the briefest outline of my work in Tokyo. Our work was begun in Tokyo last month one year ago. Up to that time for a little more than a year we were at Shonan in the north, where our time was mostly spent in study. We came from Shonan to Tokyo last October one year ago, and on the first Sunday of January following began the first work of our mission in Tokyo, probably the largest and most important city in all the East. We began preaching in a small rented house with doors and windows of paper and floor of straw mats. When we enter we must remove our shoes; and not using chairs we sit on the floor. Try to imagine fifty or seventy-five persons sitting on the floor with their feet doubled under them; if winter, huddled around *Aibachi* (a small brazier holding live charcoal). Then imagine some one standing up before them preaching, and you have a typical Japanese meeting, if you will include all the noise

and prattle a dozen or more small children can possibly make.

Most of the precious seed falls here by the wayside. But our efforts are not in vain. We have now two preaching places opened, and not enough help to tend them even as they should be. Sister Wirick is the only helper I have. She came last summer, sent out by the church in Des Moines, Iowa. Though not working under the Missionary Board, she is working with us here, and doing splendid service through her teacher and interpreter. This suggests two thoughts: 1st. We are in great need of co-workers. 2nd. Individual congregations might send out more laborers.

One of our preaching places is located in the most central districts of the city. At this place we have four services a week: Sunday school, The Lord's Supper, prayer meeting, and a lecture meeting. However, besides these meetings Sister Wirick holds a woman's meeting here every other week. Also we have had an English evening school four times a week. The Japanese brethren number only six at this place, one having moved away, and one having fallen away from the faith.

Our other preaching place which is in an outer district of the city has five regular services a week: Sunday school, the Lord's Supper, Ayō lectures meetings and prayer meeting. Also Sister Wirick has her woman's meeting here every other week. At this place also we have a Y.M.C.A. The membership is eight.

But how about the attendance at our meetings in the absence of a comfortable house, organs, horns and so forth, to draw? The Sunday schools have an attendance ranging from twenty to one hundred. The lecture meetings average about the same. The members attend regularly, better than they do in America. And as to contributing to the Lord's work, they seldom neglect to throw in their mites. And it is only mites that they can throw in; for we have no rich brethren among us here.

These meetings, however, are not all the work we are carrying along. In the midst of this purely evangelistic work, we are doing a little towards giving these people our literature. *The Christian Journal*, at my own expense, has been published now for one year. I have also distributed it free, sending it to all the native pastors of the various denominations in Tokyo. The result of this kind of work cannot be immediately estimated. Thoughts are put on paper, and hence made more convenient for future use. Let me also mention here that Bro. Tanaka, who was my teacher when I first came to Japan, and who is now in the Colloge of the Bible, preparing for the ministry of the word, is translating the *Memoirs of A. Campbell*, and his translation is being published in *The Christian Journal*. Let me say, too, that I set many hopes upon this young Japanese brother. Educated in the learning of the East, he is seeking the wisdom and knowledge of the West. He is now well enough versed in the use of the English language to deliver lectures, and as he hopes to pay for his education by speaking during

vacations, should you Canada brethren be inclined to thus help him, I can assure you that his coming among you and his lectures will do you all good. The men who are guiding the destiny of Japan are those who have been educated in Europe and America. I think, also, the same can be correctly spoken concerning the leading women of Japan. Avoiding all discussion on the question of sending young men and women away from Japan to be educated when there are many good schools and a University here, it is clear that we must have some educated men to help in a special kind of work which moderately educated men cannot do. As it is now with us, no school in Japan is competent to educate thoroughly men who are to be our leaders, hence we must send them to America.

I hope, Bro. Munro, to write you frequently, that the Canada brethren may know what we are doing for the Lord in Japan. If it be not too late I should like to wish you a happy and prosperous year. A beautiful Japanese verse reminds us of each yearly mile-stone as we pass it. I give you the original text, and also the *pony*—

Kado matai wa
Meldo no tabi no
Ichirizuka
Medeto mo ari
Medeto mo nashi.

The pines we use to decorate
Our outer gates, and New Year's trees,
Are but as milestones, warning us
How swiftly life doth ebb away.

They tell us how, as time flies on,
The unknown world approacheth near,
Making some sad while some are gay,
Some to rejoice, and some to fear.

The verse, not original with us, contains a beautiful and solemn thought, illustrated only too well yesterday when we laid to rest the wife of our native evangelist, Bro. Takoshita. But this is the fate of all.

E. SNODGRASS.

Tokyo, Japan, Feb. 5, 1891.

Could we know that we were certainly making the entire character of a single individual, and that we alone must bear the responsibility, how great a trust we should deem it, and how careful should we be! Yet, in truth, we are doing far more than that. Every one who approaches us owes something of his character to our influence; and the effect does not stop there. Like a magnetic current, it passes on from one person to another, and no human power of computation can ever measure its strength or its extent.

There are three things, three weapons, says the Archbishop of Canterbury, necessary to people in setting to work to cultivate themselves by means of a library. The first is to have a supply of books, the second is attention, and the third is to look out upon the great world and see how the phenomena described in books correspond with the phenomena they see going on outside. Unless they do these things they will neither understand the world in which they live nor the books themselves. He recommends such people always to have one study, one thing they really work at, and each man must make up his mind for himself what it shall be. If they take history they ought to fix upon a certain period and study it thoroughly.