

# The Canadian Evangelist.

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"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.

### Of What Shall We Think?

PETER ANDERSON.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

I once heard a sermon in which the speaker said that the things which we say and the things which we do are those that of all others chiefly affect our characters and have the greatest influence in moulding them for good or ill. This is, I am satisfied, a very superficial view of the matter. A little reflection will be sufficient to show that what we say and do are the direct result of what we think. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

But it may be thought that, although the words which are deliberately spoken and the actions that are deliberately performed, flow from preceding thoughts, as effects from a cause, still the words and actions which are known as unpremeditated cannot be regarded as having the same origin. I am convinced that they have, and that they are a safer index to the predominating habits of thought of the individual than those that are more deliberately spoken or taken.

The man who on a sudden temptation will lie or steal, is always the man who has allowed his thoughts to dwell on untruth or dishonesty with some degree of allowance, and not he who has dismissed all suggestions of doing an untrue or dishonest thing with the loathing which they merit. On the other hand the words and actions of a man who has got upon the down grade way, for some time, indicate nothing wrong, although he is allowing untrue, dishonest or impure thoughts to find a lodgement in his mind and to honey-comb his whole moral nature. These are the cases in which some one having a long record of truth and morality behind him suddenly shocks the community in which he lives by doing some thing which shows that his whole moral and spiritual nature is thoroughly corrupt and abandoned. We see then what an all-important thing it is to

watch our thoughts, to think about the right thing. And Paul has here given us a very comprehensive list of things upon which we may profitably think—whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report—if there be any virtue or praise, *think on these things.*

He commences the list with truth. It seems to be an invitation to seek for truth in all things, to make that the foundation upon which you build, the very first qualification a thing must possess to be worthy of thought. And he is right. Truth, absolute truth, is the only thing that will endure, that can be eternal. The man who honestly mistakes error for truth is making a blunder that will ruin his life work in so far as it is practically influenced by his mistaken beliefs. Still, he may have a truthful and honorable character and be a man of pure and good intentions. But he who deliberately chooses error, or who refuses or neglects to seek for truth in every matter that comes up for his consideration, is destroying that integrity of soul upon which alone a worthy character can be built. We may trust and have a degree of respect for the passionate man, or even for the man who has acquired the habit of profane swearing, or who sometimes gets drunk, but the man whose word you cannot trust, whose actions are intended to deceive, who "needs watching," is of all men the one with whom you must have nothing to do. There is scarcely a moment of our waking lives in which our minds are not active, in which some thought is not flitting across our mental vision. I believe that most of us allow our thoughts to wander from one subject to another in a most haphazard way and without taking care to see that they are dwelling upon proper or profitable matters. This is a bad habit, a kind of mental dissipation. By a simple effort of the will, which any one can make, and which by practice becomes more and more easily made, we can at any moment lift our thoughts off the trivial, unprofitable or injurious things upon which we may find them employed and fix them upon what is true, pure, honorable and lovely. The whole field is open and free of all that is known below the stars and all beyond them. Thought, and not hope, is the true "angel of life," whose glittering wings explore earth's farthest bounds and ocean's loneliest shore.

The man or woman whose education has proceeded no farther than to enable him or her to read the English language intelligently, never need be at a loss for subjects upon which to think. What an inexhaustible supply of material for thought there is in the books that may be had almost for the asking. We are in this respect literally "the heirs of all the ages." What an infinite pity it is that so few of us have ever claimed any considerable part of our inheritance. There is of course some discrimination necessary in the selection of books. The best and brightest thought of all the ages is preserved to us in them, and it is pitiable to see the eagerness with which average humanity will drop the best book—containing the grandest thought, clothed in the best language—as a weariness, and solace

themselves with the silliest sentimentalism or mere gossip.

We cannot always choose our associates amongst living men. We seem to be held by inexorable circumstances in companionship or association with a certain limited number of people, amongst whom there may be a few—how few—with whom we have anything with which we really value in common. To me it seems to be a priceless privilege to be able to form the acquaintance of so many grand men who have passed to the other shore. In entering into fellowship with their thoughts and lives we feel that we have added to our list of dear personal friends and that we shall recognize them when we meet beside the river of life.

Prof. Drummond tells us that every man can, to some extent, choose his environments, but he does not tell us just how we are to do it. For many of us the only way is to create an environment of our own by filling our minds with thoughts of the true, the just and pure.

Mrs. Hemans says:

"In our daily paths lie cares  
Which ofttimes bind us fast,  
While from their narrow round we see  
The golden day fleet past."

But what if our daily work does confine us to one little spot, we have access to all the accumulated stores of knowledge to be had from books, and our thought has the freedom of all the universe of God. I have spoken of forming friendships with some of the authors of the pure and beautiful thoughts bequeathed to us by such men as Tennyson, Whittier and Oliver Wendell Holmes; but the one friendship above all others that we cannot afford to miss making, without a fatal loss, is the friendship of Jesus, the world's Redeemer. Of whom shall we think—of what shall we think?—"Whatsoever things are true." No guile was ever found in Him. His harshest word of stern rebuke was always for the untrue.—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"—"Whatsoever things are honorable and just." All the best and highest ideas of honor and justice in the world to-day are derived from Him, and no man can give surer proof of being no friend or follower of His than by doing what is unjust or dishonorable. Whatsoever things are pure and lovely. Not the faintest accusation of impurity was ever attached to His name by His worst enemy. He remains forever our spotless ideal—the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, the fairest and purest this world ever knew, and yet the last to cast a stone. "And of good report." Men who have been classed as His enemies, as infidels, have, all through the ages, vied with each other in reporting good of Him—in pronouncing the most glowing eulogies on His character—"If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise." Who, like Him, the incarnation of every virtue, and to whom the strongest terms of praise which we can employ, the most glowing words we can utter, are poor, inadequate and beggarly.

"O could I speak the matchless worth,  
O could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Saviour shine,

I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost divine."

I am afraid many of us have been putting Jesus too far away from us to be all to us that He ought to be, that He desires to be; that we have been looking too much at His divinity, which we are incapable of fully comprehending, and too little at His spotless, loveable humanity, which, in many points, is yet so like our own that it goes straight to our hearts. "Looking unto Jesus," the patient, gentle, loving and pitying Son of Man, whose compassion compassed the whole human race, and whose patience never failed save in the presence of dishonesty, untruth and self-righteousness. It is through the Man Christ Jesus that we feel our hearts glow with love to God. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

### Manitoba Public Schools.

DEAR EVANGELIST: Your issue of the 15th inst. to hand this morning, containing a marked item asking me as to the stock yarns of some members of parliament that the "schools of Manitoba are Protestant schools." The statement is a pure fiction. I believe there is only one journal in Manitoba which keeps repeating the false charge, and it is the paid organ of the hierarchy.

It was not "Catholic" schools that were abolished, but sectarian schools of every kind. Heretofore Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, or any other body of people could, and most of the above-mentioned did, establish schools and receive state aid. The law simply abolished, not the schools, but the principle and practice of paying for sectarian teaching, either Catholic or Protestant or Pagan, with public money. Any party is yet at full liberty to establish all the schools it sees fit, but it need not look to the public treasury for financial aid. They separated "church and state" and said, "we will pay for secular education, but not sectarian."

Nothing Protestant about the schools has as yet been pointed out. No religious doctrine is allowed to be taught in the public schools, and the religious exercises which may be used at the option of the school board are entirely non-sectarian. They consist of the same prayers, and of practically the same Scripture readings used in Ontario schools, and which have been sanctioned by the Archbishop of Toronto. These Scriptures teach no doctrine held by Protestants and not by Catholics, and teachers are not allowed to make any comments thereon.

To bear out the above, I refer you to the Presbyterian assembly, which has distinctly pronounced that the schools are purely non-sectarian. So also has the Methodist conference expressed itself. And the Bishop of Rupert's Land has gone so far as to state it as his opinion "that the schools were asserted to be Protestant, not because those who asserted this really believed it, but because they desired to create prejudice against the schools and the government."

The Privy Council is particularly clear on this point. They say: "They cannot assent to the view, which seems to be indicated by one of the members of the Supreme Court, that public schools under the act of 1890 are in reality Protestant schools. The legislature has declared in so many words that the public schools shall be non-sectarian and this is carried out throughout the act." (Italics ours.)

Here is the only semblance of a peg on which such a charge can be hung. For many years past we have had non-sectarian schools, and these were called Protestant of late simply to distinguish them from Catholic separate schools, which had been almost the only ones so conducted for years, the others having merged into the public system. But because these non-sectarian schools "were nominally Protestant," "therefore" we are told with all solemnity "unless the present national schools are entirely different, they are Protestant in reality." Such nonsense is too silly for serious attention. We only laugh at it in Manitoba, and it is only in Ottawa that any one has the brazen effrontery to repeat it. They will tell us next that as we taught the "rule of three and the multiplication tables" in the old nominally Protestant schools, "the teaching of them now makes our national schools Protestant in reality." Hoping the above answers your query,

I am yours faithfully,

A. H. FINCH.

Portage la Prairie, March, 20, 1893.

### Essentials and Non-Essentials.

There are certain things which Christian people call "non-essential," there are others they call "essential." What these essentials and non-essentials are, is a matter concerning which they differ. Many things which are counted essential are doubtless "trifles light as air," while others which may be regarded as non-essential are the mountain peaks which rise from eternal depths, and are only seen as a hidden rock is seen breaking the surface of the rippling waters: a raft of slabs may be a hundred times as imposing in appearance, but on that rocky peak around which only a few ripples play, the navies of the world might be dashed to ruin, and leave it unmoved and unshaken.

The true distinction between the "essential" and the "non-essential" things seems to be this: what God commands is essential, what man commands is non-essential. God's requirements are essential, man's interpretations are non-essential. Man's vast heap of wood, hay and stubble will be blown away by hurricanes or consumed by flames; but though the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, yet "the Word of our God shall stand forever;" and though heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of that Word shall pass till all be fulfilled.—*The Armory.*

Opportunity is the flower of time; and as the stalk may remain when the flower is cut off, so time may remain with us when opportunity is gone.—*Bond.*