

# The Canadian Evangelist.

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"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

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## [EDITORIAL.] A Curious Family.

An isolated brother, upon reading the article "A Good Example," in the March number of the *Evangelist*, was moved to write to us in the following strain:—

"It will be two years next October since I left my home, and in that time I have not even seen the Lord's table so. I have been in—, Ontario, nearly six months, and while all that know me here are willing to own me as a brother in Christ, yet none have invited me to break bread with them in memory of the Saviour. Now, brother, what would you think of a family, composed of brothers and sisters, who would associate together in all respects save in that of eating at the same table, which they would not be persuaded to do on any consideration? What would you think of their going the length of holding that, though they were brothers and sisters, it would be a *sin* for them to eat at the same table?"

Well, brother, we would think that a very curious kind of a family indeed. We would think it was about time for them to stop calling one another brothers and sisters. Let us put another case. Suppose a family is gathered together for a re-union. They have a happy time speaking of their absent father and older brother whom they all dearly love. By-and-by dinner is prepared, when all are assigned to places at the table, save one; for him no place is provided; he is allowed to sit in a corner while the others are eating, or mayhap requested to go away before the feast begins. Would not such a person feel that he was not treated as a brother ought to be? He would and with the very best of reason.

We are reminded of what a leading Toronto minister is reported to have said at a public meeting not very long ago. He stated that upon one occasion he preached in a certain church. It happened to be the day on which the church observed the Lord's supper. He was not invited to remain and partake with them. He put on his coat and hat and went away home. We are not much surprised to learn that he does not want to preach in that kind of a church again. Just think of it, it was all right for him to sing spiritual songs with them, to read the scriptures to them, to lead them in that most solemn exercise of prayer, to preach to them; but it would have been all wrong—a dreadful sin, for him to have sat at the Lord's table with them! No wonder he used great plainness of speech in expressing his feelings on the subject.

Yes, brother, we think it is an exceedingly curious family that will not eat together.

## The World Unsaved.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

T. B. KNOWLES.

It requires neither the wisdom of a philosopher, the profound research of the scholar, nor the patience of the scientist, to discover the fact that the church of the nineteenth century

differs in many respects from the church of the first century, in both teaching and practice.

Denominational names and human creeds, as bands of fellowship, which have been, and are, sources of division and strife, were things unknown in the primitive church. These alone are sufficient to show that there exists a marked difference between the so-called church of to-day and the Apostolic Church.

The earnest prayer of the Lord, "that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" has been treated with great disregard for centuries by the professed Church of Christ, nor is it saying too much to aver that sectarianism with its selfish spirits and zeal is a stumbling block in the way of the world's salvation. Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers, "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." But the advocates of denominationalism oppose this prayer by sustaining divisions

instead of union among the people of God, and thereby the world is led to disbelieve, rather than accept, Jesus as the Son of God. When the party spirit first began to take root in the Church at Corinth, "Every one" saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." The Apostle said to them, "Ye are yet carnal," and commanded them, "By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you." What would he say to the Church to-day, were he present beholding sectarian confession and selfishness? He would "come with a rod," and his reproof would not be less sharp, I opine. Denominationalism fosters an unholy ambition. The old question, "Who shall be the greatest party," rather than, "How shall we make the Kingdom of Messiah great among men," is its untiring effort, though it costs a waste

of the Lord's money, and gives an opportunity for infidelity to vilify the Word of God, and the name of Jesus Christ. Some offer the weak apology, that "it gives a chance for all to be suited, each one according to his religious taste." The Kingdom of Christ was established on earth for no such purpose as that, but to bring all men to submit their wills to the will of God. And any other spirit than that of a full and complete submission to the will of God in the Gospel of Christ is a spirit of disobedience to the Divine will. The plea that the various denominations are "branches of the one Church" is without New Testament authority or sanction. Christ's language, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," was addressed to, and includes only, the individual disciples. Each disciple is a "branch" of Himself the vine. But to apply His language to denominations which had no existence in the early Church, is purely a misapplication of the Master's words as an excuse for sustaining sectarian divisions and discord among God's people, and that in the face of the dear Lord's prayer, "that they all may be one." He prayed for the unity—oneness of His follow-

ers in teaching and practice, and Christian sympathy, as declared by Paul; "One body," "One spirit," "One hope," "One Lord," "One faith," "One immersion," "One God and Father of all." The church kept this "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" from its founding on the day of Pentecost for many years when denominationalism was unknown. Why not return to, and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints? The religious world is largely united on the great matters of faith; divisions exist over matters of opinion, and these opinions are made a test of Christian fellowship.

Let the churches seek common ground for unity and fellowship, and let opinions be kept as personal property. All accept the all-sufficiency of the Word of God as a rule of faith and practice. Then abandon all human creeds and unite upon the Bible, with its one divinely authorized article of faith. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Matt., xvi. 16, and Acts, viii. 37). The hearty acceptance of this sublime truth, and public profession of Jesus before men constituted the one and only condition and qualification necessary to immersion into Christ and to church fellowship, in the days of the apostles, and this is the only New Testament requirement of sinners to-day. Let the religious world go back to this grand confession and practice of believers' baptism, or show a sufficient reason, one as strong as divine authority, for the practice of humanisms in place of the teaching of the New Testament. Again, all accept the immersion of a penitent believer as scriptural baptism, while a very large number cannot conscientiously accept anything else as of New Testament authority. Leave, then, the doubtful and unite upon that about which there is no question. This is safe and common ground. The same argument holds with respect to sectarian names and everything that is unwarranted by God's word.

Where, then, rests the responsibility of the Church's failure to convert the world to Christ? And who must meet in the judgment day the fearful charge of a long and obstinate opposition to the prayer of Jesus, and its grand fulfilment, not the disciples of Christ, at least, along the line of Christian union.

St. Thomas.

## The Religion of Japan

ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

BY TOUJI SHINO, OF TOKIO, JAPAN.

No. 2.—Its Present.

Old Japan has passed away, and become a thing of by-gone days, and its description would read like a fable to the Japanese boys and girls of the present time. Such is the rapid progress of this kingdom toward civilization.

In 1865 a Protestant missionary landed in Japan to preach the Gospel; this was the first. There were many hindrances to preaching the Gospel. No missionary knew the Japanese language, and there were many difficulties in translating the Bible into Japanese, but in process of time the missionaries became familiar with the natives, learning their language, and

studying their customs. They then met with success, much beyond their expectations. In 1872 there were 1,000 Christians. By the year 1880 there had been opened 100 churches, and over 8,000 souls were saved. Some one has said that Japan is a white harvest field, and is ripe for the Christian religion. The growth of Christianity has been more rapid than was anticipated. In 1874, the late Mr. Nishina returned from America to his native land, bringing back the truth of the Gospel. After he arrived in Japan he established a Christian school and began to preach the Gospel throughout Japan. He had spent nine years in America, during which he studied at Amherst College and Andover Seminary, from which he was graduated with highest honors, by the help of Mr. and Mrs. Alpheus Hardy, of Boston, whom he called his American father and mother. When he returned to Japan the American Board sent many missionaries with him to help in his Christian work. He was an earnest and steadfast Christian. After several years his personal influence contributed in a great measure to the rapid progress which Christianity made in Japan. His sermons and addresses were most effective. He was, indeed, an apostle to his native land. The latest Christian statistics show that there are nearly 600 churches, and 700 native preachers, and nearly 450 Protestant missionaries; 15,000 attend Sunday school, and the number of Christians is growing yearly. The American Board missionaries are connected with Mr. Nishina's school or Christian college, and they are working with great success throughout the middle provinces. The American Episcopal Methodist Missionary Society is organizing a large school at Tokio, and there are many churches connected with that denomination.

The American Presbyterian Board has also its own schools and a theological school. The Canadian Methodist Missionary Society has many good workers, and a school in which many Christian students are studying. These four societies are the largest and most powerful throughout the empire. Of course there are many missionaries who were sent out by several societies from America and Europe. The Japanese Christianity is growing daily as well as modern civilization. In April of 1872, a notification was issued to the effect that the government took all rank from the Buddhist priests which they had for many years, and from that time their titles have been abolished, and their power has been altogether taken away from them. This is one of the signs proving that Japan is advancing in civilization. Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism are going to ruin and decay. The temples of Buddhism are being used for the public schools. The decay of Buddhism is shown by recent statistics. In 1870, in the Province of Yamashiro, which is a centre of Buddhism, there were once 3,787 temples; five years later there were 3,506, and ten years later 3,207 temples. The classical books of Confucius are not published

any more now. Shintoism is a story of an old decayed religion. The Japanese constitution shows that the people of Japan are free to accept any religion.

## "I Believe Not."

Among the various inquiries that arose at a prayer-meeting lately was one like this, "Supposing a person to whom you are talking says he 'does not believe in the Bible,'—what are you going to do with him?" The talk had been about "bringing in the 'highwayman,'" and various questions had been propounded of how to reply to doubts and inquiries from these people; all the questions being founded, however, on a certain degree of belief, until this one arose. To this question a venerable minister replied that in this case there was no common ground between the parties, and there was simply nothing to do but leave the man to God's own time.

Now I never could "speak in meeting" but I have had a peculiar experience, and I will tell it, for the sake of just such people as ask questions like the above. A woman who had long been a sceptic, and whose mind was brilliant, was made to go through deep waters of trouble, largely brought on by her own willfulness. She was rebellious and unsoftened until she came under the influence of a saintly soul who bore heavy trials with serene faith.

The non-Christian woman was impressed; and her own troubles weighing her down almost to despair, she one day wrote to me, asking "what she must do to be saved," distinctly telling me she wanted no stereotyped answer about "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ," for she knew that formula; and what she wanted to know was simply how she could get help to bear her troubles, for she could not do it alone.

She then made a statement of non-belief, preceding each clause of the Apostles' Creed with "I believe not," making a single exception in favor of a possible God. It certainly was not an encouraging field in which to work, and argument was hopeless. She had no Bible, so I bought one with good print, and sent it to her; and then, asking God's help, I answered her letter.

I begged her to begin the New Testament as if it were an unknown book, and read it impartially and carefully. I asked her to pray every day, even if she could say no more than "Lord, help me;" and I told her not to force her belief, and never to give up.

In about a month I had a letter from her, pitiful in its simple statement. She said she was reading and praying every day; but the struggle was a hard one, for she did not believe in the divinity of Christ, and never should, and under all her petitions ran the sad refrain, "Prayer without faith availeth nothing;" but she promised to keep on trying. Within six months that woman was writing to me in triumphant strain, professing her faith in Christ, and anxious to confess it before men, and she is now a devout Christian.

Shall we, then, leave those who believe not to God's own time, or shall we work to bring them in? *Miriam Sterling in the Congregationalist*