

# THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

## AND CANADIAN EVANGELIST.

"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples."—JESUS the Christ.

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### The Disciple of Christ

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.

This paper, while not claiming to be what is styled an "organ," may be taken as fairly representing the people known as Disciples of Christ in this country.

### Editorial Notes.

The discussion of the Sunday street car question has brought prominently before the public the fact that the Disciples of Christ favor a quiet, orderly, restful, religious observance of the Lord's day. Perhaps no religious body in the country would more generally disapprove of Sunday becoming a mere holiday.

The editor of this paper is quite in accord with his brethren in this regard. His ideal of Sunday observance is that fine saying of John the Apostle concerning himself: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." And he believes in working towards that ideal in every lawful way.

We have sometimes put the matter in this way: That the way the Saviour kept the Sabbath would be a good way for His disciple to keep the Lord's day. We suggest to our readers, if they have not already done so, to study the Gospels with that point in mind. They will probably receive a surprise.

Many good people think their thoughts are adjusted to Scripture, when in reality their ideas are entirely unfounded, so far as the Bible is concerned. This is notably the case in respect to the manner in which the Israelites kept the Sabbath and the early Christians kept Sunday. If some of

our critics would take the trouble to investigate these points, they might not be so hard on us. In another column will be found an article on the topic, "How Primitive Christians Observed Sunday." A reading of that may open the eyes of some.

Our private correspondence bears testimony to the interest taken in the observance of the Lord's day. Many of our best friends do not see as we do on the question of Sunday street cars in large cities. One brother is so indignant that he orders his paper stopped. He says a Christian paper might as well advocate intemperance as Sunday street cars. What a confusion of ideas he is afflicted with! The New Testament says no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. If the New Testament said that to run or to ride upon the street cars on Sunday would exclude one from the kingdom of God, the cases would then be parallel. A little light on the first principles of the Gospel would help the brother.

A notable circumstance is that Disciples living on farms are greatly exercised because the editor of the DISCIPLE has been bold to express the opinion that in a city the size of Toronto he honestly believed the Sunday street car is a necessity. Yet these same good people regularly hitch up their horses and drive to church, some three, four, five, six, eight, ten miles, and even more. Wherein do the cases differ? In this, that where, in the city, the electric cars are in operation, the horse is free, can rest; whereas in the country the horse must work. The city brother can, if necessary, ride in the electric car to church on a hot day, no poor sweltering horse drawing him; the country brother drives the horse which very likely worked six days without rest. Which is the more humane, the more Christian? But it is said, if we have electric cars to accommodate the church-goers, the non-church-goers will use them too. Well, do not the non-church-goers drive horses on Sunday, go their own way, drive their own gait, and do pretty much as they please?

A public meeting was held in the Y. M. C. A. Hall, this city, on the evening of May 9th, to protest against unclean exhibitions at the Opera House and the unclean advertising thereof; against gambling in general, and especially in connection with wholesome and manly games, and also against all brutality in field sports. Strong words were also used with reference to "trials of skill" in "the manly art of self-defence," which are very thinly disguised "slugging matches." It was a well-attended meeting, and leading ministers and laymen spoke. The moderation of speech, which was nevertheless exceeding plain and uncompromising, we feel sure, will bear fruit in these parts in the line of decency, honesty and true manliness.

A notable and proper emphasis is being placed by an increasing number of preachers upon the scriptural truth that "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come." It is being more clearly seen that while Jesus said in His day, "The poor ye have always with you, and when ye will ye may do them good," it will be no offense against Jesus to do our utmost to do away with poverty. Particularly is there a growing feeling that it hardly comports with the spirit of the Gospel for those, who are themselves living well, if not luxuriously, to be exhorting those who are hard up to be patient now, to grin and bear poverty here, for by so doing they will secure to themselves plenty in the next world.

### How Primitive Christians Observed Sunday.

The following extract from the sixth of a series of historical studies, entitled "Sketches From the Life of the Primitive Church," by the renowned Professor Zahn, of the University of Erlangen, Bavaria, is of interest in view of current discussions:

"If we ask the Christians of the earliest centuries, the oldest witnesses as to the idea of Sunday, for the reason which they had in making this one day above all the rest, they will with one voice declare, 'We celebrate this day because Christ on this day arose from the dead.' The Sunday was for them a weekly recurrence of the Easter festival. Throughout Sunday was regarded as a day of joy. While the Christians were accustomed on other days to pray kneeling, the resurrection of Christ of which this day was the memorial gave them courage to stand upright on their feet before their God, and to forget their

unworthiness, which had been buried by Christ in death, the memory of which had been celebrated on the preceding days on their knees. On Sunday the early Christians prayed standing. Already at a very early day the custom of celebrating Wednesday and Friday in addition to Sunday had been introduced into the Church, and this brought out all the more sharply the characteristic idea of the Sunday worship. Those other days were days of fasting and humiliation; Sunday was a day of joyful and glad worship. On this day only did the services culminate in the memorial feast of the Saviour, the Last Supper, which belonged exclusively to the 'Day of the Lord.' To fast on Sunday was regarded as unseemly and later even as a sin. And even apart from the services the Sunday was regarded as a day of rejoicing. Even the rigoristic Tertullian, at the close of the Second Century, again and again emphasizes this. . . .

"That on this day the ordinary business and work of life were laid aside as much as possible was regarded as a matter of course; but it is characteristic of the original character of Sunday observance that in the oldest Christian literature there is practically not a word about this matter. The negative idea of rest from daily labor did not enter as a prime factor into the conception of proper observance of this day. Christians are indeed rebuked for allowing their business to keep them away from the services; but not Sunday work itself, but the over-estimation of worldly work and indifference therein shown to God's Word and services, is pronounced a grievous sin. Even as late as the Fourth Century, when writers warn against the celebration of the [Jewish] Sabbath by abstaining from work, a similar demand is not made as conditional for the Sunday. . . .

"We see that this original conception of Sunday observance departs widely from that idea which zealous friends of Sunday observance are apt to emphasize in our day. It has not been my purpose to present a theory of the Sunday or to oppose false ideas. But history is a great teacher, and by repeating what she teaches erroneous views of themselves fall to the ground."—Translated for "The Literary Digest."

The foregoing carries with it simply the weight attached to a statement by one of the leading German specialists in the department of early Christian research of what his researches lead him to believe to be the simple historical fact. Professor Zahn's conclusions give no support to the Sabbatarian view, as he holds that there is nothing in the earliest Christian literature to support that view.—Canadian Baptist.