

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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PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

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.

"What Doest Thou Here, Elijah?"

One of the most striking characters in the Old Testament is Elijah. He stands out clearly on the page of inspiration as a man of mark, of zeal for God. The incident in his life which this text brings before us is worthy of study, and contains for us some useful lessons. It is proposed to use it here to point a moral, if not to adorn a tale. We need not wonder that the good old man was depressed at the time when these words were addressed to him. We become disheartened when we have little in comparison to discourage us.

I propose to make a general and then a special application of the incident.

I.—GENERAL.

"Here" means Ontario. "Thou"—The Disciples.

The Province of Ontario is a large country. Its area is 181,800 square miles, and the last census gives it a population of 2,112,959. That population will compare favorably with any people in the world, whether we consider their moral, social, financial or spiritual condition. The Province is capable of supporting well vastly more people than it now contains. It has

*This paper was read at the Annual Meeting at London last June. It was then urged that it should be published in the Disciple. The writer appreciated the compliment, but deferred publication, mainly through lack of space. It is now given in the hope that it may aid in stimulating the Disciples to heartily support the Home Mission work of the Co-operation Society.

immense undeveloped resources. It is a good country to live in.

Looking at Ontario specially from a religious standpoint we might say, after the manner of the great apostle at Athens, "Ontario is a very religious land."

The last Dominion census informs us that in the Province of Ontario the Roman Catholic population numbers 358,300; the Church of England, 385,999; the Presbyterian, 452,712; the Methodist, 647,518; the Brethren, 9,343; the Lutherans, 15,029; the Regular Baptists, 96,969; the Congregationalists, 16,879; the Disciples, 9,106; the Salvation Army, 10,320; the Bible Christians (we presume the Christian Church is meant here), 7,183.

In Canada the Disciples are credited with 12,763.

What are the Disciples doing in Ontario? What are they trying to do? What right have they to do religious work here? What are they among so many? Why should they not withdraw from this field?

These questions arise, and it is well that they should receive some consideration, even at this convention.

Who are the Disciples of Christ, anyway? What do they stand for? What important truth do they maintain which no other body in the country maintains? Can we draw a clear, broad line between them and all others?

The Disciples claim to stand for the undiluted Gospel of Christ. They make a plea for the union of all who believe in Jesus as the Son of God. They object to all human creeds as tests of fellowship. They claim to act consistently with their principles in this respect. But do not other bodies stand for the same principles? It is certain that others make a similar claim. Disciples say that others do not act in harmony with this claim.

In drawing the lines, we are first confronted with the Paedo-baptist portion of our population. We make an issue with the whole family of P.-B.'s on the question of infant baptism. (Need not take other points.) As we are sure that Jesus never ordained this, we are sure we should do all we can to oppose it, and to do so we must keep ourselves from them so far as full religious fel-

lowship is concerned. We respect them as citizens, and may be glad to engage with them in philanthropic work, but we cannot have church fellowship with them. That would be to give countenance to what we know to be contrary to the will of God. We need not here and now spend much time in discussing this point. Intelligent Disciples see it. Conscientious Disciples regard it.

How is it when we come to the Baptist family? Can we not find a basis of fellowship with some of those who believe in and practice believers' immersion for baptism? Why in particular not join the Baptists of the Regular order? The answer may be given in these words, because we could not join them without putting our necks under the yoke of a man-made creed. Do you doubt it? Then enquire, as I have done, into the constitution of Regular Baptist Churches, and you will find that under them all lies (virtually) the New Hampshire Confession of Faith. Examine the title-deeds of Baptist Church property and you will learn that the Baptists are a creed-bound people with all their profession of N. T. Christianity. It matters little that the creeds are not brought to the front as formerly; they are there all the same. Scratch a Baptist and you will find a Baptist still.

And in like manner of other immersionist bodies. An examination of their doctrines and practices reveals the fact that by excess, or by lack, they violate the N. T. order. They add to or take from the scripture conditions. And so we may say that the Disciples are here, and by the help of the Lord intend to stay, because the demands of a good conscience require it. When we know the will of Christ, we are not only to do it, but to TEACH it. We could not teach the will of Christ fully in the Baptist Churches. The teaching which is accepted and enjoyed among Disciples would stampede a Baptist Church. If our preachers could not have liberty to speak freely in the Baptist Churches, our brethren cannot become members of Baptist Churches without disloyalty to Christ. This is the point, brethren.

So then we are needed here for the

advocacy of pure apostolic Christianity. That our principles are sound and Scriptural, we are sure. If any one should say that we are not faithful to our principles, let us hear him attentively, and if we find him right, correct ourselves.

How should union talk and union sentiment affect us? Should we relax our efforts? Good soldiers do not lay their armor down because of the prospect of victory. A great deal of the union talk is mere talk. Press the matter and you will soon find that union on Scriptural principles is far away. We are sure that those who expected most from the Christian Endeavor movement in the line of Christian union must be getting disappointed. See how the leaders in the Methodist Church are heading off the Christian Endeavor international, interdenominational work!

One has to get a little on the inside track to understand how strong is the feeling against the C. E. Union on the part of those who direct the policy of the Methodist Church in Canada. And what is most significant is, that it is not the old men only who are working for the Epworth League, but active and energetic young men as well. And there is not the slightest doubt but that for C. E. pure and simple in the Methodist Church in Canada, the temperature is falling all the time.

Then look at the Baptist Young People's Union, what does that mean? It means that the leaders among the Baptists fear the effects of the C. E. Union upon their young people. For our part we find it impossible to believe that there is a future for the C. E. Union in Canada. It has almost run its course. It has served its purpose, perhaps, in the providence of God. It has demonstrated that Christian union to be stable must be on a solid basis of New Testament truth, and not on the shaky basis of sentiment. Truth is not furthered by ignoring truth, but by resolutely affirming it.

So we repeat that the Disciples are here in Ontario to stand for the religion of the New Testament pure and simple; to protest against all popery in Catholicism or in Protestantism, to say, to urge, and to maintain, that Christ and