

# What Did Canadians Believe

## 100 Years Ago



1867 | 1967

BEREAN BIBLE COLLEGE

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## WHAT DID CANADIANS BELIEVE 100 YEARS AGO

Canada in her Centennial Year! Surely every loyal heart rejoices as we celebrate 100 years of Confederation. This is no time to bemoan the past but to boldly face the future. The true Christian can rejoice that the past is put into the hands of God, its failures and sins under the cleansing blood of Christ, blotted out forever. We press on to ever better things.

Yet, in another sense, we ought to take time to remember the past. The Bible has been written that we might learn from the experiences of those who have gone before. These things are written for our examples, for our admonition. So, as we look on to greater days, it is well to look back also, asking the question, "What did Canadians believe 100 years ago?"

### THE WORLD VIEW

Before looking at Canada particularly, take a wide view of the state of mankind a century ago. What was it like then? Who was living? What were they doing? What did men generally believe then? Were they really different from people today? History gives the answers. In many ways there was very little difference. Men were born, lived, laughed, wept, reproduced, ate, slept, died as they do today. Of course, in other ways life was different. One hundred years ago it was wonderfully quiet. There were no telephones to jangle, no radios to blare, no television to glare. Electric lights, cars, planes, were unknown. People travelled like Abraham; on a beast, in a cart, or on foot. Steam power had just begun.

But we are concerned with human hearts and with spiritual conditions. History tells us that a very remarkable thing was happening just 100 years ago. An old Bible principle was in full and vigorous operation, even as it is today. It was this: whenever there is a stirring for God, there will always be a vigorous counterattack from hell. In other words, there was a war on -- an unceasing, implacable conflict between the powers of God and the Devil. In too many churches today people are being given a dose of sweet soothing syrup, instead of a call to arms. Some are lulled to sleep by the totally unrealistic idea that everything is basically all right, that there is no

hell, no judgment, that we are all the children of God, all going to heaven somehow. The Devil is declared to be a myth, a leftover from the Dark Ages. But the Word of God still declares that Satan is not the product of any age, light or dark, nor of the mind of man. He is declared throughout Scripture to be a malignant personality, the sworn enemy of God and man, powerful, active, pervasive and persuasive. He likes to hide himself in the denials of men. As God is the great "I AM" of Scripture, Satan likes to be the great "I am not." But he is very real, and ready to counter attack every work of God.

The Bible is full of countless examples of this. God created a perfect man. And at once Satan went to work, to drag that man down, to destroy the work of God. Later in the Book we read the story of Job, and how Satan brought his utmost powers to bear on him, that he might turn against God, and give up his faith. That godly man stood the test, but any man who stands high for God will be a special target of Satan. Zechariah 3:1 tells of Joshua, the high priest, standing before God and pleading for his people, while Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. As our Lord began His ministry He was immediately tempted of the Devil. The fight was on for the integrity of the Saviour. When He faced Calvary, for the accomplishment of the final, complete act of man's redemption through the shedding of His own innocent blood as the sin price for all men, we read, "The Devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him...And after the sop Satan entered into him..." Satan was there! There was that mighty struggle between great spiritual powers 1900 years ago!

#### SPIRITUAL THRUST A CENTURY AGO

And what was going on 100 years ago? Had God quit? Had the Devil retired? A century ago God was mightily at work. David Hedegard calls it, "The great era of missionary expansion in the nineteenth century...the great missionary revival." There was a mighty outburst of missionary activity. Those were the days of mighty men of God. A hundred years ago David Livingstone was in Africa. Hudson Taylor was in China, building the China Inland Mission. Judson had already given his life for Burma. Mary Slessor was preparing to go to Calabar. Chalmers

was in New Guinea, where he would soon lay down his life for Christ. In Canada the great Hamilton Revival of 1857-59 had left its mighty impact on society. God had moved men out in great, spreading missionary movements. What glorious days they were!

#### COUNTER ATTACK

At once, the vindictive rage of Satan was stirred to frenzied activity, as he gathered his sinister forces together. It was a time when science was busy investigating many new areas, gathering the beginnings of knowledge. Bound down by its premises to concentrate wholly on material phenomena, it began to refuse all else, and to deny anything supernatural that could not be proven in the test tube. Then came Charles Darwin. With his woefully limited scientific knowledge, he wrote in 1859 his book entitled, "The Origin of Species by Natural Selection." He was strongly backed by Thomas Henry Huxley, who prophesied that Darwin would be attacked and opposed, and wrote to him in these words: "And as to the curs which will bark and yelp...some of your friends are endowed with a measure of combativeness which may stand you in good stead. I am sharpening my claws and beak in readiness." Later he said, "I am Darwin's bulldog." In 1866 Huxley wrote, "Lessons in Elementary Physiology." He was aided by Spencer, who wrote in 1867, "Principles of Ecology." These men banded together to deny that they had a Creator God, and to replace Him with the theory of evolution, the Devil's lie! Huxley himself wrote that he considered men fools for "believing in the myths in Genesis. My sole point is to get the people who persist in regarding them as statements of fact to understand they are fools." A hundred years ago the attack came from the infidels. Is the attacker today any less than an infidel, even though he is "sanctified" by being in a church pulpit? On August 8th, 1860, Charles Darwin wrote to Huxley in these words: "My good and kind agent for the propagation of the Gospel, i.e. the Devil's Gospel." And all this was done despite what Darwin said in a letter to Asa Gray on November 26th, 1860, "I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of Design...Again I say I am, and shall ever

remain, in a hopeless muddle."

And in another realm there arose another man, Karl Marx, the founder of the Communistic ideology, and JUST ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, in 1867, he wrote, "Das Kapital." He was so delighted with Darwin's ideas that could seemingly banish God, that he wanted to dedicate his book to him. It is at least to Darwin's credit that he refused this dubious honour. But it is evident that communism and evolution are twin evils, united to damn the souls of men. Satan roused up mighty forces to stem the missionary tide one hundred years ago. He forged sharp tools that have served him well ever since. The battle was hard joined!

#### AND TODAY?

There is no armistice. Satanic pressure and power still at work. In II Timothy 3:1 we read, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." This is today! Every good thing, every standard of right and decency, every clear preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, every missionary effort to preach Christ crucified and to win the lost to Him, every upholding of the Bible as God's infallible Word, as His Divine, supernatural revelation to men, all these are being assailed by force, by boycott, by ridicule, by denial in the name of spurious scholarship and by every Satanic means that can be brought to bear. This is the battle of 1967 in the world at large, and in Canada. The battle of one hundred years ago is the same today as then. And so we Christians are called to be "good soldiers of Jesus Christ," to endure hardness, to "please him" who has chosen us to be His soldiers. God stir all of us!

#### CANADA ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

What of our own land? Are there heroic deeds to recall? What did men in this land believe a century ago? Were there mighty men in our own good land? It was so wild, new and largely unsettled, through its vast tracts of land that it is not easy to describe it. William H. Gunn, in the book, His Dominion, says that the Fathers of Confederation looked on the map of Canada, thought of the prophecy "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and then chose the name, "Dominion of Canada." It was a godly view, and a

prayer that this land might truly become a place that belonged to Christ.

White men came from the east bringing the evil and the good: greed, disease, debauchery, oppression, religion and the Gospel of Christ with its resultant blessings. The story of eastern Canada seems to be one of much religion and little Gospel. Historians say that Jacques Cartier in 1535 did his best by reciting part of the Gospel of John to the Indians, and the story of the Passion of our Lord, thus bringing what was perhaps the first Gospel message to this land.

The Huguenots came as the first Protestant group, after being driven from France by wicked persecutions. But from Cardinal Richelieu came orders to root them out of this land and his orders were so well obeyed that they virtually disappeared. They joined those named in Hebrews 11, who were "tempted, slain with the sword, destitute, afflicted, tormented: (of whom the world was not worthy.)" Religious prejudice held sway. The story of the Family Compacts and the use of Clergy Reserves is a sad story. True religious liberty did not appear until 1831. Before that time only Roman Catholics in Quebec and Anglicans in Ontario could own land on which to build a chapel, or give their dead Christian burial, or perform marriage ceremonies. Then under British rule many Protestant bodies came into being, the Anglicans first, then the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptist, and so on. And, thank God, the Gospel was preached. It was the Baptist who sent out the first foreign missionaries from Canada, to Burma, in 1845.

A real life story from those days illustrates what went on in eastern Canada. A little French lady told of how the first Bible colporteur called, and left a Bible in their home. Her father read it by night with the stout, solid wood shutters fastened tightly. Eventually, as the light of the Book shone into his heart, he trusted Christ as his Saviour, and soon the whole family was saved. This lady told, "It meant freedom from the fear of purgatory, when we found out that salvation was the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, without penances or ceremonies or any so-called good works. It meant for us a personal access to God with no other mediator than Christ Himself. It meant for us an open Bible, with the Holy Spirit to en-



lighten its truths. It meant a new elevation of character, a new moral outlook, an inner change, as we were all born again." There were vibrant Christians in eastern Canada a hundred years ago, believing the Bible and trusting Christ alone.

#### WHAT OF THE CANADIAN WEST?

It was the "wild west" indeed. The plains were still black with buffalo. Calgary was uninhabited prairie still seven years away on Confederation day. Fort Whoop-Up, south west of present Lethbridge, was the fort built a century ago, in 1867, and lived up to its name. Out in British Columbia, the wild Cariboo gold rush was at its zenith, but the City of Vancouver was not incorporated until 1886, with a population of 1,000 people. There were early explorers through the west, but what they believed we do not know for they seem to have left little testimony, except to a general belief in God. David Thompson passed through 150 years ago; Sir George Simpson in 1841; James Hector, in 1857. Hector named a striking piece of the Rockies, "Castle Mountain," now renamed Mount Eisenhower. The Roman Catholic missionary, Pierre-Jean de Smet was here in 1845 and acted as a bold peacemaker, going into the camp of Chief Sitting Bull when he was planning a massacre of the whites.

#### THE TESTIMONY OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE

There is a record of those days, chiefly found among the records of the Indian people and the missionaries who came to minister to them. Rev. George Young, the Methodist, came to Fort Carry, now known as Winnipeg, some 99 years ago. In the same year Rev. George McDougall came west, travelling on horseback, and by boat, with his meagre wardrobe, hymnbook and Bible, The Authorized Version. Rev. Rundle came to Alberta and left his name perpetuated in Mount Rundle at Banff. We learn that the Indians were taught fine hymns from the hymnbooks in Cree Syllabic written by hand and still extant. Seemingly the Gospel message sang its way into the hearts of Rundle's Indians.

The most famous of the Indian chiefs touched by Rundle's ministry was the Cree Maskepetoon, or Broken Arm. The United Church's book, Rundle in Alberta, tells us that when

Rundle first met this chief he was a renowned warrior with many scalps to his bridle. Then into his life came a great change. His father and his friends were murdered by the Blackfeet, but Broken Arm refused to go to war. Later the Blackfeet asked for a truce and then consternation reigned as the murderer of the chief's father came before him. As he stood in great fear, Maskepetoon said, "You killed my father. The time was when I would have gloried in taking your life, and drinking your blood: but that is past. You need not fear. You must now ride my horse, and wear my clothes. You must be a father to me." Then the Blackfoot cried, "You have killed me, my son." This deed lives on in the name "Wetaskiwin," which means, "The hills of peace." This is what faith in Christ did for this great Indian chief.

And for others also. In the camp of the Stonies one evening in 1867, a group was kneeling in prayer. The Crees attacked and were driven off, but the Stonies returned to their lodges to find that, although the bullets had gone high over the kneeling people, one old man had been killed as he knelt there. As his sons looked on him, they said that, since he died as a Christian, they must not take revenge on the Crees. Think of that old man, like Livingstone, dying on his knees!

In the Hand Hills camp of the Crees in 1871 many suffered because of a great blizzard that raged through that area. And there was the missionary, helping with cayenne pepper, rubbing frozen limbs, giving warm drinks to patients, and offering a short prayer, which was a new evangel to the hearts and ears of those who listened round the lodge fires that night. There was John McDougall in the camp that was growing hostile to the whites, speaking for the Government until the hostility changed to friendship. The message to the Indians there was the same great story of the love of God, and the redemption which is through Jesus Christ our Lord. On the death of the chief's child, McDougall said, "I know where the little children have gone," and got a hearing for the glad news of the Resurrection.

Out on the Pacific Coast, the first convert among the Ankomenums was Amos Cushan. When tempted by an unbeliever concerning the reality of his conversion, he said, "I pointed him to that place in the mission garden on the spring

morning when I was working, where God spoke peace to my soul, and made me, O so happy. For a long time before this I had had two hearts, but now Jesus became Chief in my heart. Only one Chief now; Jesus is my great Chief."

Chieh Weah testified in these words, "At first when I heard the words of the Great Father, the Chief of Heaven, it did not reach my heart. Then it seemed to lay hold of me, and whether in the forest or on the ocean, I could not forget it. The wind in the trees sounded His Word; the waves on the shore re-echoed it; I could not sleep at night, thinking of the evil deeds I had wrought in the past. But then when you told of His mercy and of His love, in sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, to lift our heavy load from us, and bear it Himself, I saw and believed it, and now I am glad both day and night. I am no longer under the shadow of the mountain, but I live in the sunshine on the summit."

At a camp meeting in Chilliwack, David Sallosalton said in broken English, "My dear white friends, you look at our Indian people here, you hear them cry very much, and you say, 'What they make all that noise for? What make them feel so bad?' Well, I tell you; my dear people just heard about Jesus now, and they all want to find Him and love Him. It all same as steamboat on this river. When she going to start she whistle one whistle; then she whistle another; and if you don't get your things very quick and run, she whistles last time, and she go off and leave you behind, and you very sorry because you too late. Now Jesus like that. He whistle, He call, He whistle and whistle and if you don't get on board Jesus' salvation ship, you too late. I think some of my people get on board before some of you, because they not afraid to repent and come on board. Now my white friends, you hurry up, have all your things packed up, be quick and get on board or you be too late. I think some of this poor Indian people go into heaven and you left out. Oh, come on board quick, come on board, come to Jesus now! This a very good ship, room for all you people, and Indian people too, black and white, come now and all come." Many a heart, both white and Indian heard that call that day, and "got on board."

#### WHAT SHALL WE BELIEVE TODAY?

A century ago there was much unbelief. History tells us so. But there were those who read and accepted the Bible as God's Word, placed their faith in Jesus Christ, and lived to contribute much godly influence in early Canadian life. We cannot believe less today, for the eternal truth stands, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things..." Acts 13:38-39.

And the invitation remains the same, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." David Sallosalton would say to us today, "Come on board, come to Jesus now."