

apparent in the language of the day. This movement is spoken of in the manner here indicated because it originated with Mr. Theodore F. Seward, a member of the Presbyterian Church, but not a preacher. Mr. Seward is a teacher of music. The movement seems to be all the more popular because a man is at the head of it who is not a clergyman. The local habitation of *The Brotherhood of Christian Unity* is No. 19 Park Place, New York City. A paper is issued four times a year called, "*Christian Unity—A Laymen's Journal, Organ of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity.*" The price is forty cents a year. Only two numbers have been issued.

Mr. Seward is "agreeably surprised" to find that he is working along the lines along which the Disciples of Christ have been moving for a number of years. He is more than "agreeably surprised;" he is *delighted*. He does not see baptism, for instance, and many other things as we see them, but he sees that the only basis of Christian union is Christ Jesus, our Lord. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Mr. Seward is now engaged in a study of the historic "Declaration and address" issued by the "Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania" in 1809, and prepared by the devout Thomas Campbell.

It would be easy to criticise the verbiage of the "Pledge" given above. It is not the work of a man skilled in drawing up religious and theological statements, but the meaning of the consecrated author must be apparent to all. He intends to make the Christ the centre. *Jesus first; doctrine afterward.*

The explanation of what is meant by accepting Christ is well presented in the last words of the "Pledge." "Promising to accept Jesus Christ as my leader means that I intend to study His character with a desire to be imbued with His Spirit, to imitate His example and to be guided by His precepts." This is only a beginning, but can you think of a better.

There is reason for joy and rejoicing in such a movement as "The Brotherhood of Christian Unity."

N. S., N. B. AND P. E. I. BUILDING FUND.

I have thought over matters concerning the work of our blessed Master in these provinces, and how we might, by united efforts, build up Christ's Kingdom in desolate places where the gospel has not as yet been preached in its fullness. Now, I don't want to be tedious in giving you my idea how this may be accomplished, but will come to the point at once. Let every reader of *THE CHRISTIAN*, or every member of the Church of Christ in these three provinces, give one dollar yearly to this fund, as named above, "Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Building Fund." You will understand this fund will be to erect new houses of worship, and to help pay off old debts on houses already erected. You all understand how hard it is for a few poor Disciples struggling along in this life to bear the burden of hundreds of dollars, when all giving a little would make things pleasant. Now, I would put it in this way: Say a Church was about building a house costing two thousand dollars. Having two thousand Christians in the provinces, and giving one dollar each, you see the house would be paid for. It is not likely that we will be building a house every year for some time yet, but if we start this fund this year we will be gathering in and paying off some old debts on buildings. Now brethren, let us consider this matter carefully.

It is not right that some should be burdened while others are at ease. If you will carefully look into this matter you will see the importance of this

work. While a few in poor places are not able to build, we, by our united efforts in giving every year the small amount of one dollar, can accomplish great things. Brethren, I don't propose to have the money loaned to any Church wanting to build. The money is to be put into a fund, at interest in some government savings bank, until some one calls for a certain amount to build. We will also have to limit the amount. Five thousand dollars will be the highest. It is right that we should have a limit, for some, in these fast times, would not know where to stop. However, I might say I have been talking to a few of our brethren, and they approve of the idea, and think it a good one. I would like to hear from a goodly number on this subject in our next *CHRISTIAN*, giving their ideas on this important work.

W. J. MESSERVEY.

LIBERAL RELIGION.

A good deal is written to-day on what is called "Liberal Religion." In the March number of the "*New World*" appears two essays of considerable length bearing upon the subject. One is written by Lyman Abbot on the "Evolution of Christianity," and the other by J. G. Schurman on the "Future of Liberal Religion in America." Both endeavor to apply the theory of evolution to Christianity, but Mr. Abbot more particularly. While both seem to recognize the decadence of Christianity into mere dogmatism, yet they do not appear to admit that departure to be an abnormal growth, but consider it as one of the stages of spiritual development. It is certainly true that the Church of Christ is not dogmatic in its teaching. It lays before its disciples one fundamental truth upon which the whole fabric is built, viz., "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." It does not present for acceptance to any one, either the Episcopal thirty-nine articles, the Methodist Episcopal twenty-four, or the Westminster Confession of Faith of thirty-three chapters. It asks no one to accept as infallible truth the metaphysical speculations of a herd of fallible theologians. There can be no evolution of the fundamental truth of Christianity. By no law or power resident in itself can it evolve. It is the same truth to-day as it was when Peter made the confession over eighteen hundred years ago and can never change. There can be no evolution then in the basis of Christianity. It cannot evolve up from the simple confession of faith. Thou art the Christ etc., through the Episcopal thirty-nine articles to the thirty-three chapters of the Westminster Confession.

But what does Mr. Abbot mean by Christianity? He certainly cannot mean the Kingdom of Heaven as a great principle in the heart and in the world for he speaks chiefly of ritual and not of spirit, and this principle has nought to do with ritual. 'Tis true the Kingdom of Heaven has a larger dominion yet in future. It is destined to grow so that it will cover the whole earth. So Daniel the prophet prophesies. Dan. ii. 44. So our Saviour himself in the parable of the leaven intimates. This is the only sense in which the Kingdom of Heaven can be said to evolve. As a principle of love it will cover the earth but the principle remains the same as when exhibited by Christ himself at the grave of Lazarus. But to this Mr. Abbot does not refer. To the only other sense in which I can understand Christianity he must refer. He must certainly mean the Gospel. But what is the Gospel? Let Paul inform us in his master style. To the Corinthians, 1st Epistle, 15th chapter, he makes a full declaration of it in these terms: "Now I declare to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you which you also received and in which you stand; by which also ye are saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you have believed in vain; for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins

according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Here is the Gospel, the creed of the Christian, and common sense asks, "How can it evolve? How can this simple declaration of Paul become more complex as time advances?" Hear what the same apostle says to the Thessalonians iii: 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which ye received of us." Again in the 2nd chapter of the same epistle he says, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word or our epistle." Who can deduce a law of evolution from these statements of the Spirit by Paul? But hear what Mr. Abbot says in illustrating his argument that modern Christianity must be found more complex than primitive. Says Dr. Abbot, "I do not go back of Bethlehem." Then the confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' now the Episcopal Thirty-Nine Articles, the Methodist Episcopal Twenty-Four, or the Westminster Confession of Faith of thirty-three chapters with their numerous sub-sections. Then the simple supper talk with the twelve friends met in a fellowship sanctified by prayer and love; now an elaborate altar, jewelled vestments, pealing organ, kneeling and awe-stricken worshippers. Then meeting from house to house for prayer, Christian praise and instruction in the simple facts of the Master's life and the fundamental principles of his Kingdom; now churches with preachers, elders, bishops, sessions, presbyters, councils, associations and missionary boards. Then a prayer breathing the common wants of universal humanity in a few simple petitions; now an elaborate ritual appealing to ear and eye and imagination, by all the accessories which art and music and historic associations combined can confer.

Will Dr. Abbot tell us that it was the law of evolution that gauged the transmission of the Gospel down through the first ten centuries of the present era? His argument would lead us to look for the Gospel evolving into the cast-iron decrees of the ecclesiastical Councils of the church of Rome. It would lead us to look for the establishment of the papal power with the infallibility of the pope. In the primitive days we see Christ himself sojourning forty days in the wilderness but in after ages we must expect by the evolving process an innumerable host of filthy monks peopling the desert and mountainous regions of Egypt, of Italy and of Palestine. In primitive times we find Paul living a life of celibacy, now we expect to find thousands of the race denying themselves the affections of mankind. In primitive times we find a few persons meeting together in perfect accord from house to house on one simple basis, now we expect to find millions of individuals meeting under different names and on different confessions of faith in different places, with a determined zeal for the propagation of their own peculiar doctrines to the exclusion of all the rest. Is not this the logical tendency of Dr. Abbot's arguments? We think so.

Again, if he makes the Gospel evolve from the simple confession of Peter to the Episcopal Thirty-Nine Articles and the Westminster confession of faith it must have also evolved into the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, which will be from this logic a normal growth of Christianity, as it is one of the evolutionary stages. But perhaps he may deny the Roman Catholic church to be a normal growth. If so then I ask by what right does he place the Episcopal Thirty-Nine Articles in the line of normal growth, if he does he assumes that Christianity, as he terms it, develops abnormally for the first sixteen centuries and then began to develop, to evolve, to progress. To what! the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Episcopal church and the Westminster confession which are productions