

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., - - NOVEMBER, 1898

EDITORIAL.

VOLUME XVI.

This number begins Volume XVI of *THE CHRISTIAN*. In it we desire to record our ardent thanks to a kind Father who has preserved and prospered in until this day. He knows that it was not started for the love of money or of fame, but in the humble hope of showing that Christianity is so perfect that men can be Christians without being sectarians, and that a church can be a true Church of Christ without being a sectarian church. That the gospel of Christ, as he gave it to all nations by his apostles, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

We are thankful to subscribers who have aided in the circulation of *THE CHRISTIAN*; also to those who have assisted by contributing articles and church news, or otherwise. We feel as if we were just beginning a life for eternity, and that whatever our hand finds to do for the usefulness of the paper, or any other good work, we are to do it with our might. May we all feel that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, and we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of those that believe to the saving of the soul.

Instead of the usual editorial, we copy for this month this article from the pen of J. J. Haley in the *Christian Evangelist*, believing it so good that even the readers of the original will be pleased to re-read it here:

IS THE WORLD GROWING WORSE?

According to such books as "Caesar's Column," and a more recent, but no less pessimistic production, entitled, "Christianity and Anti-Christianity," there is a gloomy future in the immediate front of the human race. One of these authors is a materialistic pessimist and the other is a spiritual pessimist, and while they go in at different holes they come out at the same place—a disastrous future for humanity. The world religious, the world social, the world industrial, the world political, and military, and cosmic, and all other worlds, are sadly out of joint and steadily growing worse. If one takes up a premillennialist journal he will find on a conspicuous page, in clear type, a miscellaneous collection of woes, calamities, accidents, crimes, such as earthquakes, cyclones, pestilences, famines, strikes, riots, insurrections, battles, murders, suicides, embezzlements, robberies, unsavory divorce suits and all other cosmic and human offences that can be gathered from the newspapers, bashed up in approved style, with this editorial interpretation appended or implied—"Didn't I tell you so? Don't you see that the world is going to the devil as fast as it can?" The infidel pessimist, with a materialistic and non-moral

conception of the universe, having no faith in God, in immortality, in moral responsibility, in the tribunal of conscience, in the eternal order that makes for righteousness, seeing manifestations of disorder in the world, and lawlessness in society, he is sure, in the absence of a moral brake, and moral direction, that the old machine is drifting helplessly toward the rocks.

Our distinguished editor, in conveying to me the request of a subscriber to write on the question that stands at the head of this paper, said it always reminded him of the other question, "Is God dead?" If there is a living God there is a living universe, an eternal Some-One, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, and for life everlasting. The unfailing optimism of Israel's prophets, under the gloomiest of present conditions, was based upon a conviction that nothing could shake, that a living and holy God meant the world's future for his glory. They looked with an unshaken hope to the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves, because they so clearly perceived the moral order of the world, and the immanence of God in all his works, that were the sure guarantees of the expected consummation. If God lives he must reign, and the reign of God means the ultimate triumph of righteousness.

It is highly probable that there is more wickedness in the world than there was a hundred years ago, and just as probable that there is more righteousness than at any previous time, but only for the reason, perhaps, that there are more people in the world than there used to be. It is true also that intensification and a bold aggression characterizes the activities of modern life, so that the wicked are more wicked and the righteous more righteous, than in our grandfathers' days. But this focalization of moral issues on burning centres, this mobilization of beast-power, and the armies of righteousness for the culminating conflict of the ages, is no proof that the world is growing worse. On the contrary it is a hopeful sign of the world's permanent betterment, unless God is weaker than the devil, the creed of a vile pessimism that no Christian can subscribe to. Last Sunday is the best the world ever saw, and next Sunday will be an improvement on last. There are more Bibles, more Christians, more churches, more missionaries, more Christian workers, more young people doing battle for the kingdom of God, a cleaner moral sentiment pervading public opinion than ever before. There has been more progress in science, art, education, religion, statecraft and in sociological appliances for the alleviation of poverty and the betterment of the masses, in the last fifty years, than in all the preceding centuries of the Christian era put together. As we look through the gate of the twentieth century, we can contemplate the dying century as a hundred years of amazing fruitfulness in facilities for the uplifting of mankind.

In studying the world's moral growth we

must not compare to-day with yesterday, nor this week with last, nor this decade with the one that preceded it. Long periods, centuries, cycles and millenniums must enter into the comparison. The mills of God grind slowly, if they do grind exceedingly fine. Compare the closing days of the nineteenth century with the days of bad eminence, when Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Compare this year of grace with two hundred years ago in the most civilized country of the world. Compare the reign of Queen Victoria with the reign of Henry the Eighth, or that of Queen Bess. They tortured heretics, burned martyrs and stuck the heads of men on iron pikes in the streets of London four centuries ago. To-day a man is fined or imprisoned for beating his horse in the streets of the English metropolis. Modern liberty has completely triumphed over the brutal despotism of the past. Look at the wars of Cromwell and Napoleon in contrast to the Hispano-American war, now happily brought to a close. Cromwell took off the head of Charles the First, and when the Royalists came into power they snatched the Protector's coffin from its tomb in Westminster Abbey, hung his mouldering body at Tyburn, flung it in a hole under the gallows, and stuck his head on a pole in Westminster Hall in London. Napoleon, after Waterloo, narrowly escaped death at the hands of his captors. The Duke of Wellington voted for his execution. Cervera, while a prisoner of war, was offered a mansion in the United States for his personal safety and as an inducement to become a citizen of the land of the free and the home of the brave! Two centuries ago pirates swarmed the seas to prey on the merchant marines of the nations. When belated Spain threatened to fit out vessels for privateering and the destruction of our commerce, civilization frowned it down. On our side the late war was the most humane and generous in the history of the planet. Such magnanimous treatment of a captured foe would have been impossible a hundred years ago. The next step will be disarmament and international arbitration as the method of settling disputes between civilized nations. Slavery is gone. Polygamy is going. The saloon is doomed. The agitation for the purification of politics is spreading. Temperance sentiment is growing. The kingdom of God and its righteousness is increasingly the theme of the pulpit. Applied Christianity is the goal toward which we are forging. The kingdoms of this world are destined to become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.—J. J. H.

J. W. Gates who is attending the College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky., spent the summer of 1897 acting as the agent of our Literature Committee. Last summer he spent in Kentucky, soliciting for *The Christian Guide*, which had offered board and tuition, for one year, to any student who would get one hundred and fifty new subscribers. Bro. Gates worked two months and sent in three hundred names.