

The Christian.

ST JOHN, N. B.

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EDITORIAL.

THE NEW YEAR.

As promised in last CHRISTIAN we proceed to notice additional reasons we have to praise God in beginning this year. And we will first consider the obstacles we meet in our work and how a merciful Father carries us over them. These obstacles are many, but the mention of one will for the present suffice. It is the emigration of our church members. This in many places in these provinces is so constant and so sweeping that it would almost appear as if the whole working force of the church would leave our shores. Who can tell how much this is calculated to cripple and paralyze the body? And yet in the face of it all the cause annually increases in strength and efficiency. This is seen in the greatly increased number and improvements of church houses. The old ones are replaced by new and better buildings, and new ones are springing up where there were none before. These are built by the voluntary contributions of Disciples who manifest a commendable determination to have them, as soon as possible, free from debt.

It is gratifying to observe how these houses are being built. While the builders gratefully receive the voluntary offerings of those who are without, they neither dun them for money nor get up tea-meetings nor socials of any kind to entice the crowd and get their money. Many wonder how a people so few and small can build churches without recourse to these popular amusements, and even this peculiarity is not without its influence on others. What abundant reason have we to praise him who is able to make all grace abound towards those who put their trust in him and will allow no obstacle to stop their work for him.

Home and Foreign Missions, especially the latter, are engaging the attention and sympathy of our brethren as never before, and we feel assured that as they learn more of the real need the heathen have of the gospel and the anxiety of many of them to hear it, they will rejoice in the privilege of helping to send the gospel to every creature. We never would have gone to seek the gospel and would have died in our sins without it but the friends of Jesus carried it to us, and how cheering to see His friends now carrying the gospel to those, who, like us, will never go after it themselves. May we all increase in the knowledge and love of Jesus and in rightly directed efforts to draw all men to him. The news from different foreign fields is most encouraging. One thing for which we should feel very thankful is this: many of the friendly heathen want only *One Book* and *One Church*. They cannot see the need for, nor the propriety of having different creeds and different churches. This seems to be a special opening for the Disciples of Christ. They have only *One Book* to offer them—the Bible; only *One Church*—the Church of Christ, as well as *One Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ, and what an inducement to go and possess the land!

There is no people to whom the last Commission of Jesus is dearer than to the Disciples. Jesus sent it to all men. They wish all men to believe and obey it just as Jesus commanded, and they declare that all men who believe and do as Jesus told them will enjoy the blessed promise he made in the commission. Who then should be so ready as they to go into all the world?

The success attending the gospel of Christ in the United States is most cheering. Thousands are being added to the churches every month. Many talented and pious young men are entering the field and yet the demand for preachers is much greater than the supply.

We confidently hope and pray that the time is not very distant when very many shall be added to the churches in the Provinces. Let the Lord be praised, for his mercy endureth forever.

Original Contributions.

WHAT IS OUR GREATEST NEED?

The Christian Evangelist calls upon a number of our prominent brethren to give what they consider are the subjects which require special emphasis from our press and pulpits the coming year. Several have already given their judgment. One subject has been given by nearly all who have yet spoken, that we will reproduce for the sake of our readers that they may know what importance our best minds place upon the subject.

Chas. Louis Loos says, "The great interest of the church is in its strong catholic fellowship and co-operation and its edification in intelligence, piety, numbers and life." Here is a brother of long experience and fine mind telling us that co-operation, edification, piety and life is needed and should be emphasized the coming year. Bro. W. W. Hopkins gives as one needed subject that should be emphasized, "a converted church membership." Bro. H. W. Everest says, "emphasize the need of the unity of our people, or our cause is lost." Bro. Wm. Bayard Craig says, "emphasis is needed on the great truth of human brotherhood as taught by Christ." Bro. N. S. Haynes lays stress upon the subject of "helping to make church membership equal to Christian life and character." W. F. Richardson emphasizes "a more thorough consecration of Christ's people to their holy mission, and their more perfect unity in worship and work." S. M. Jefferson gives both "private and public living and life-giving, practical applied christianity is the need of the individual and of society. It is the only life worth living or saving and the only life that will or should be eternal." B. C. Dewoese says, "practical godliness throughout our churches should be the chief concern of our preachers and editors." Bro. E. J. Gantz considers that one of the most important questions for consideration is "how can our churches be saved to us and be developed. We need to guard carefully our forces at home. Our forces are only partially under the control of the Gospel. We have many feeble congregations, many seldom meet, many are stolidly indifferent to the demands of the gospel. We must find some way to help these churches to remove their difficulties and bring them within the purpose of the gospel."

We find in the above quotations strong emphasis placed on the need of organized, systematic, co-operative, united labor of the churches. That this is the greatest need of the cause of Christ in our provinces must be apparent to all who are acquainted with the condition of the churches. An organized body of one hundred members more or less, with only a portion of them, and in many cases a very small portion, co-operating in the work of the body, can never build up the cause of Christ. It may possibly keep the body alive, like a man with one side of him paralyzed; he may live many years, or what we call living, but he can be but very little use to himself or to any one else, in a physical point of view. What manner of good is a church to the world that is simply keeping itself alive? But this is about all that can be done when only a part of its members are working together for its growth and prosperity. An evangelist may come and preach the first principles of the gospel, and perhaps add to the church a member, who will soon lapse into the same do-nothing condition as "like will always beget like." The report of the souls added to the Lord sounds well, but really are such souls saved unless they are workers in the kingdom of the Lord? Not unless it is true when "once saved always saved." The preacher who has had experience in holding meetings in churches that are simply keeping alive, knows how exceedingly difficult it is to reach the hearts of the unconverted and induce them to come into the church of Christ.

And what is still harder is to get them into a line of work after they have been in a lifeless church any length of time. We are perfectly safe in saying that this kind of work is not the great need of our cause just now. We admit that the salvation of souls is the great design of the church. But how is this to be successfully accomplished? Only through a well organized active church. When the church is alive and at work building itself up in the grace of God and in the knowledge of the truth, then we are as sure to see souls added to its number as we are to see the growth of our physical body when its members are fulfilling their functions. The soul is not saved that is simply added to the church. His call into the service of God is one thing and his call to the reward of a faithful service is another. His abundant intercourse into the everlasting kingdom depends upon his diligence in making his calling sure. The greatest need of our churches, therefore, is the need of organized, systematic work, all its members at work and all together. To undertake the increase of members before this work is accomplished is one hand working against the other. It is often the case that when the least good is supposed to be done, the very best work is being established. We have in our mind a church where the members are coming into line and putting on the armour of work, and could that work be kept moving on in like manner, the time would come when there would be an ingathering, and after gathered into the church they would be workers, "as like begets like." I heartily wish we could have a consensus of ideas on this subject. Speak out brethren, speaking may relieve you. Let us have your mind upon the subject of our greatest need in our provinces. We need not to be told that we need to do a greater work, as we know that already, but how can we do it? What is most needed to bring about the degree of prosperity that will be commensurate to our abilities and opportunities. Are we coming to another annual meeting without any improvement in our advancement? H. MURRAY.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

B. B. TYLER.

I was much interested and pleased as I read the editorial article in the January number of THE CHRISTIAN. The writer says that he is "Agreeably surprised to find the leaders of religious thought of to-day falling into line with the Disciples on apostolic teaching and practice." Any person who understands the trend of thought at the present time and among the best thinkers and writers in the Protestant denominations and is not gratified with the change for the better which is clearly manifest, is not a very thorough Disciple.

But my purpose at the present time is to call attention to a movement in behalf of union among the people of God known as "The Brotherhood of Christian Unity." The following is the pledge of the brotherhood:

"I hereby agree to accept the creed promulgated by the Founder of Christianity—love to God and love to man—as the rule of my life. I also agree to recognize as fellow-Christians and members of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity all who accept this creed and Jesus Christ as their leader.

I join this brotherhood with the hope that such a voluntary association and fellowship with Christians of every faith will deepen my spiritual life and bring me into more helpful relations with my fellow men.

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."

Sometimes this movement in behalf of union is spoken of as, "The Laymen's Movement." There ought to be no such distinctions, however, among the disciples of our Lord as clergymen and laymen; but such distinctions exist, and are continually