

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., - - - JANUARY, 1888

EDITORIAL.

THE NEW YEAR.

Anno Domini 1887, with all its changes, with its care and labor, gains and losses, has passed away as a tale that is told. A due consideration of God's goodness to us throughout the year, and the indications of His mercy for the future will make the dawn of 1888 one of the brightest and happiest of our life. For our readers, we wish such a happy New Year. This seems to be the time and place to mention

I. Some of the reasons we have for gratitude and praise.

II. Our efforts to advance the cause of Christ; their discouragements and encouragements.

I. Some of the reasons for gratitude and praise: To think of God's favors; they are more than can be numbered, hence, we only allude to some of them, and first, God's goodness in giving us rain from heaven, and a fruitful season amply rewarding the laborers' toil, and providing for the wants of man and beast. His hand guarded the growing crops from blight and frost, and when ripe, sent suitable weather for gathering them in. Without His providence in either case we would be left to pine in helpless want. It is the same power that rules the winds and waves, and the business of the world. All these considerations call for our warmest gratitude.

2nd. Our country has been preserved from contagious and wasting disease, and we enjoy a large measure of health. It is hard to forget God's goodness in this.

3rd. Instead of the horrors of war we have the blessings of peace. Besides this, the two most powerful nations on the globe, and the nations we call our own, are making efforts to beat their swords into plough-shares, and to learn war no more. Our own England, whom with all her faults we love so well, is the first to move in the matter. Late in the past year, a delegation from the British Parliament came to the United States to petition the President and Congress to take immediate steps for the negotiation of a treaty between Great Britain and the United States that shall provide for the settlement of all difficulties by international arbitration. The petition is signed by 233 members of the British Parliament, and was, two months ago, presented to President Cleveland.

No intelligent person who is deeply interested in the good news of peace on earth and good will to men, can look upon this movement with indifference. The mere fact that the two nations are earnestly considering such a scheme, which late experience in the settlement of the "Alabama Claims" proves to be feasible, is a cause of gratitude, and betokens the introduction of better days.

These nations are thus declaring to their neighbors that they cannot afford to settle their misunderstandings by dueling, and that that barbarity, with the senseless pride which upheld it, must be numbered with the mistakes of the past. That they have in view "a more excellent way" of settling disputes which arise mostly from the rashness of a few fiery and inconsiderate men, than by deluging nations in blood. Not to speak of the expense and horrors of actual warfare, (which battles description), but to remember that in times of peace, nearly half of England's revenue goes to support the army and navy will give us a faint idea of this terrible national scourge, we should therefore hail with gratitude even the distant appearance of its abolition. No wonder that the delegation has received a hearty welcome from all classes in America.

II. Our efforts to advance the cause of Christ. Although very imperfect in the Master's work, we can, in a measure, say with the Apostle, "Our rejoicing is this—the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world." (Cor. xi. 1-12)

Our work with the unsaved is to read and tell them of Christ and urge them to learn from himself, *Who He is, What He has done and suffered for them, and How He has promised to save them.* We plead with them to consider Jesus' death on the cross, and learn from it God's love to them and His hatred to their sins. When they believe with all their heart in Christ and in Him crucified, it leads them to repentance, or a purpose of heart to turn from their sins to the service of God. When they make this determination in God's strength, they have Jesus' words in His last commission, telling them plainly what they must do. They can also see His command and promise confirmed in the salvation of those who believed the Gospel which the Apostles preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. When they come in this way to Jesus they find rest to their souls. Some in hearing the plain plan of salvation, instead of searching the Scriptures to see if these things are so, appear to be alarmed at its simplicity and to regard the teaching as dangerous—making man his own Saviour and giving the glory due to the Holy Spirit to something the man does himself. They seem afraid even to hear, and they shun our meetings and induce others to do so, and to go where the multitudes go.

Others are careless and spend their precious time in worldly pursuits.

On the other hand, many listen attentively to the Gospel, treat the preachers kindly, and appear anxious to hear it again. This is at least encouraging.

Others, again, hear the Gospel gladly, and like the Corinthians, hearing, believe, and are baptized. Their joy and peace of mind, and the change in their life after they embrace the Saviour, swallow up our other disappointments, and our hearts are cheered with the hope that they will "hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end." During the past year, some in the different fields of labor have given themselves to Christ, and are rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Nor should we be discouraged that the number is not greater. Jesus prepares His followers, both by His example and His word, for this trial of their fidelity. He shows in His first parable three cases of failure for the one of success, when the word of God fell from the hand of the same sower. When the Apostles preached the Gospel with great power, some believed, and some believed not. Even the intrepid Paul became all things unto all men, that he might by all means save some. We have reason to rejoice when Jesus makes us instrumental in the salvation of others, and we should also rejoice when He keeps the fruits of our labors out of our sight. If faithful to Him and His gospel, whether we be sowers or reapers, at no very distant day we shall rejoice together.

Our great want in these provinces, perhaps the greatest, is the want of preachers. We continually see where much is lost, because promising fields cannot be attended to. In the past year, quite a number of pious young brethren among us have given themselves to the noble work of preaching the gospel of Christ. Some are already in the field, and more are earnestly studying for the work. Among the converts of 1887 are promising young men, who are anxious to spend and be spent in this service, and we think the churches are waking up more than ever to the importance of encouraging such. For these and other tokens of our Father's good-will we will praise His name. We feel like referring to many others but space will not admit

of it. We are prone to look at what appear to us discouragements, but it is a poor cause which cannot stand trials and disappointments. It seems hard to have our motives and work misrepresented by those from whom we expected better things, and to have those who might be saved prevented from hearing the gospel. But Jesus' approval is sweetest when we have no other. His hand is most precious when following Him through evil report. The treasures of Egypt were very light when the reproach of Christ was in the opposite scale. No fellowship on earth is like "the fellowship of His sufferings." What appear to us hardships are often God's richest blessings in disguise.

Although the plea of the Disciples is not acknowledged or understood, the light which God is enabling them to shed around is increasing, and will increase more and more. Let each and all take heed that the light that is in them be not darkness, remembering that though once darkness they now are light in the Lord. Let them strive and pray to walk as children of light. Let us for the present year "hope for great things from God, and attempt great things for God."

Original Contributions.

FULNESS OF JOY.

These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.—John xv. 11.

It is evident from this and many other parts of God's word that our Heavenly Father and our dear Saviour desire for us happiness—complete happiness—fulness of joy. God gave His only begotten Son that we might have everlasting life. Life means happiness. But my purpose is at this sitting to consider the words of Jesus in the preceding verses and try therein to find the source of our joy. The disciples, no doubt, understood that a good vine well cared for by a good husbandman, would gladden the heart of him for whom it was dressed. Its branches would be thrifty and full of fruit. Jesus, desirous of impressing their minds with this thought of Fulness of Joy, lays hold of this illustration. He assures us in the first place that He is the true vine, He had life in Himself which He could impart to others. John v. 26, 28 and xi. 43 and 44. As a teacher He was perfect. He was never at a loss. Every application to Him for help was granted. The deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame walked, the tempest was stilled, and the dead were raised up. We have, then, everything in the vine that is needed for success. "My Father is the husbandman." God cares for the vine. He watches over His Son and all connected with Him. He cuts off every unfruitful branch and cleanses those that bear fruit. The disciples, with whom He was conversing, the Father had cleansed by His word. God does wonderful things by His word.

"It is perfect, converting the soul." James says it is able to save the soul. He begets us by the word of truth; that is, by His word. If we are cleansed it has been done by the word of God. Hearing and doing it brings the blessing.

Now Christ is ready to make another declaration, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Connected with such a vine and cared for by such a husbandman, what has the disciple of Christ to fear? But as we are rational beings and not inanimate, like the branch of the vine, He cleanses us by His word and cuts us off by His word. How can we be cleansed if we take what others say instead of going to His word for ourselves. A complete union—"He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." As the branch is set in the vine, and the sap from the vine enters the branch and permeates every part, so we must be in Christ—new creatures, and He must be