

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. . . . . JANUARY, 1890

## EDITORIAL.

Wishing our readers A Happy New Year, it seems the proper time and place to show reasons why we should be happy, and, 1st, the thought of being spared through another year in which so many young and old have been cut off by death, when properly considered makes us happy. 2nd, We were created to be the happy companions of God forever, and although sin had made us the miserable enemies of God, He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have all the happiness of everlasting life. How happy should we be to remember that He so loved us. 3rd, A thoughtful mention of the year 1890 kindles the happiest emotions. It is 1890 years since God sent His beloved Son into the world. That was the year the wise men followed the star of Bethlehem till it stood over where the young child was, the year the angel brought to the shepherds glad tidings of great joy for all people, and announced the birth of Christ the Lord, and was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host in praising God and saying—

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace and good will towards men.

What is more cheering than the thoughtful mention of the year of our Lord? How many are continually reading and writing "THE YEAR OF OUR LORD." Without it we can neither write nor read an intelligent letter. Every newspaper we take up we first read its date. Without it every note or document is useless. We meet it everywhere, and it fills all the literature of civilization. How most cheering to learn that our Lord was born, and to read the time of His birth, and to have all people read it. God says by it to Satan and all his followers "Hands off." "Let all people hear of the birth of Christ the Lord." Thus all the efforts of bad men to remove Anno Domini from the literature of the world have signally failed, and all nations now read the year of our Lord. For this we are glad.

As Disciples of Christ we see much in the events of the past year to cheer us, both among ourselves and others. Our very disappointments and troubles are not among the least of our real blessings. Paul spoke advisedly in saying, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us," (Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.) A heart without the love of God will not glory in tribulation, but will rather repine and chafe under it, while those in union with Christ will rejoice to follow Him even through much tribulation, when He is telling them that it is the certain and only road to heaven, and he has taken it Himself. Such a course works a hope that "maketh not ashamed." The past year has not been without its troubles. It is cheering to witness the success that has attended the preaching of the gospel, and also the readiness of those who have been added to the churches to engage in active service. Many places are calling for the gospel, and some are "studying to show themselves approved unto God—workmen needing not to be ashamed in rightly dividing the word of truth." Others again manifest an interest in these and are ready to encourage and assist them. For all these things we thank God and take courage.

We were happy in past years to witness the question of Christian union stirring the religious world. The subject is still intensifying, and more—

a great and needless cause of division is slowly but surely being discovered. It has been a long and deeply settled impression that inasmuch as all men cannot interpret certain passages in the Bible alike that we are bound by God to receive and hold fast the interpretations given by certain men in past generations in formulated creeds. One denomination holds a creed in some respects the very opposite of the creed of another denomination, so that what one man believes to be the truth of God his neighbor holds to be positively false. Men now begin to see the utter impossibility of being united while each one holds his creed, and that the fact of their holding meetings together one week in the year will not be taken by thinking men as Christian union.

It is a distressing thought to a man that loves the Saviour that he cannot love another man who bears the image of Christ so as to unite with him in the worship of Him who has bought them both with His own blood. When he finds out that this is prevented by the creed written by men before He was born, men who had no more right to think for him than they have to judge him on the last day, it stirs him up to examine the creed and think for himself. Much of this examination is now going on by many great and good men, and no year in the century has been so remarkable for this as the past year. It is hoped that the searching work will go on until men clearly see that we will be judged according to our belief in what Jesus has said and not our belief in what other men thought Jesus meant. The creed which Jesus asked for Peter confessed, and Jesus called it a rock against which death would not prevail. He died confessing it and confirmed it in His resurrection, and is building His church upon it. It has in it the power of God to save those who believe it with all the heart, and while it unites men to Jesus it unites them through Him to each other. What believer in the Christ the son of the living God would ever want this creed revised? Paul was not ashamed in a Roman prison waiting for a martyr's death, "for he knew whom he had believed and was persuaded that He was able to keep what he had committed to Him against that day." It is cheering to see men approaching the divine creed.

A great and important event occurs with the close of 1889, the change of South America from an Empire to a Republic. The fact that this has been done as it were in a day, done quietly without the loss of a man, and with the consent of the Emperor, Dom Pedro, who had amicably and prosperously reigned for forty-seven years, may well take prominent rank among the wonders of "God in history." Whatever difficulties may arise before the new government is fully acknowledged by other powers and is under calm successful headway, and however the change may affect the politics of that and other nations, one thing seems clear, that is, that the cause of Christ will be favored by it. The way will be materially opened for the spread of the gospel. The oppressive union of church and state will be dissolved, and men will be allowed to worship God according to their conscience and support and spread what they believe to be the religion of Christ without the opposition of law or the restriction of government. Let the friends of Jesus work and wait in faith and hope and love.

From the *Sky-lark*, published in Milton, and edited by N. W. Morton, we learn that Bro. William Murray spent Christmas with his brother Howard, and that Bro. H. Murray goes to Westport for the Lord's day.

Bro. E. A. Cole, of the Third Church, Richmond, Va., has been assisting Bro. H. Minnick in a meeting at Norfolk, Va. The immediate results were twenty five added to the church. Bro. Cole in reporting the meeting has this to say: "Bro. Minnick is an indefatigable pastor and an earnest good preacher." Yes, and brother might have said more, without any fear of being charged with exaggeration.

## Original Contributions.

## PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods; and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one; to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey. Matthew xxv. 14

From this parable of the talents we may infer (and it is a fact) that every Christian has a certain amount of talents to make use of, and more, that he is expected to utilize them. Now, let every professor take these questions home to himself: Am I doing all in my power to advance the cause of Christ? Do I make a proper and liberal use of the talents given to me by my Father in heaven? If not, then what is the consequence? Christ has said it: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant unto outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

He also said: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." What a grand idea this is, if we would only think on it and act accordingly. God's promises never fail, and these are, both of them, positive promises; one to those who cultivate their talents—put them out at interest and increase them by so doing, and use them to the glory of God; the other to those who keep their talent laid up in a napkin, fearful of using it lest it be lost, not relying on the promise of God, that with use it shall grow and bring forth fruit; and who finally are taken away from the True Vine; or like the seed that fell on stony places, the ground not being cultivated, is taken away; and the unprofitable servant is cast away from the presence of God forever. Oh! how every Christian should buckle on the whole armor of God, and go forth in His vineyard and do his work with a whole heart, endeavoring to save sinners from eternal death, striving to point sinners to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, and in so doing become strengthened themselves to battle against the temptations of this present evil world; and when done bearing the cross for Jesus here below, to hear, from His own lips, the welcome: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The harvest truly is great and the laborers few. Then, why is not every professing Christian a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord—a laborer according to the talents given him? Almost every Christian is a laborer to a certain extent, but this is the question: "Are they each laboring according to their several ability?" The Lord will render to every man according as his work shall be, and this ought to be sufficient inducement to slothful Christians to exert themselves more to go forth to the work with a brave heart, trusting in Him who giveth the increase. But, says some one, "I have no talents that can be turned to much account in the service of God; I can't do anything worth while." Ah! but you have talents, my friend! Christ says that the Lord "delivered to every man according to his several ability;" and it is only according to the ability of the worker that he will be judged. The one with the two talents received the same plaudit as did the one with five. And the man to whom one was given would have heard the same blessed words if he had made the most of it, for what was it given to him if not to make use of? Again, the Lord will help those who work for Him. Hear what James says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. No, God does not upbraid men or women for their weakness, but He strengthens them with wisdom for the work they have to do "if they ask in faith."