

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN. N. B., JANUARY, 1900

## EDITORIAL.

ON THE CLOSE OF THE GREATEST CENTURY  
SINCE THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Many thoughts crowd the mind and memory as we enter upon a new year and a new century and conform to the necessary changes. It will be long before our pens refuse to date 1800, which they have been always doing from our earliest recollection. The pen follows the memory and the memory conforms to changing time. But although years and centuries pass away, ANNO DOMINI remains the same, and while all civilization are continually repeating "THE YEAR OF OUR LORD." Whether they so understand it or not, they are constantly proclaiming to mankind that at a given point in past time He was born who is "THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS" and a new era dawned upon our race which is never to grow old, but to increase in brightness until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

At the Saviour's birth, a multitude of the heavenly host descended, surrounded with the shining glory of the Lord, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." We are permitted to join in that wonderful song at the close of this the greatest century since the apostles' age and to enjoy that peace and good-will. Who has such abundant reason as man to praise God for his unspeakable gift.

Who can adequately contrast the advantages of the world to-day with those of a hundred years ago, or tell the benefits to men of advanced light on nearly every subject, on the blessings of freedom from slavery and from tyranny of every kind. Far above all the rest are the blessings to the world from the spread and triumphs of the gospel of Christ. A hundred years ago it was considered a crime to send the gospel to the heathen, and the few who attempted the like were denounced unsparingly by saint and sinner. It is not so to-day. The minds of true Christians are wonderfully changed on this subject, when they see that on his rising day Jesus asked of his Father and received the heathen as his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Ps. ii, 7, 8. Acts xiii, 33. After Jesus had by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and God had raised him from the dead and had made him this gift, he claimed every man and woman in all the world; and his last charge on earth to his people was to tell every person this, and on what terms he would save them. Mark xvi, 15, 16.

When this is understood, there is no work more important and precious to the Christian than to preach the gospel to every creature as far as he can, and this has been gloriously done by many in 1800. Where ten

are preached the gospel to the heathen at its beginning, thousands have preached to them at its close, and where hundreds of dollars have been annually spent to support such preachers, millions have been raised at its close, and the work is growing steadily every year. In every country where the gospel is preached, people are turning from idols to worship God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whole islands of degraded cannibals are converted to the love and worship of God.

God's manifold goodness in the past inspires hope for the future. We hope, because this is possible with God, that the new century will excel the past especially in the success and triumphs of the gospel both at home and abroad. Of this there are many favorable indications. Christian union and Christian labor were the closing cry of the century. Both the pulpit and the pew seem more concerned about Christ than creed. Preachers pray and preach together and seem willing to talk in friendly terms over their differences and the possibility if not the probability of a union in Christ. Both preachers and people appear more willing than formerly to examine their points of agreement as well as their differences and to realize that none can afford to be mistaken in their treatment of the truth of God, and above all that Christian union has even more to do with the heart than with the head. Christ's new commandment is all powerful in accomplishing such union, and the more it is cultivated the greater reason we have for hope. In Jesus' prayer for the oneness of his people is seen his ardent love for them and his compassionate desire for the world's salvation. "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." In proportion then as Christians are one will the world believe. Let us rejoice then at the favorable indications of Christian union and the world's salvation and do all we can for the advancement of both, so that our prayer may be in unison with that of the Great Intercessor recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John. When discouraged by our weakness and the strong opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil, let us remember the high priest of our confession who will not fail us in time of need. "This man because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii, 24, 25).

How blessed it is to come to God and to come to God by Christ. To be near God is man's happiness and glory, to be separated from him is man's deepest suffering and disgrace. Jesus in silence could endure the cross and despise the shame, but separation from God drew from his breaking heart the loud cry, "My God! my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" On account of us and our sins he was separated from God, and on account of Christ and his work we draw nigh to God.

This man has an unchangeable priesthood

and is able not only to save us from our past sins but also from every sin and from every foe until all danger is past and we enter the pearly gates.

Everything around us is changing and many things are fitted to disappoint and crush us. Our nearest and dearest friends pass from our sight, and all things seen are temporal. But the unseen God being near us turns all our losses into eternal gain. While in the charge of "this man" our very weakness is joyful because his strength is made perfect in weakness.

The Jews often suffered disappointment and loss by the death of their high priest, and as this was liable to occur at any time they were in continual uneasiness and fear. But this man because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood and his gentle voice ever says, "Because I live ye shall live also."

He was in the world and although the world hated him it did not overcome him. His love was stronger than the world's hatred. He cheers us with the fact that he has overcome the world. It is his by right of his Father's gift, on account of his death for it. He now claims the uttermost parts of the earth as his possession, and while he sends us out to cultivate it for him and gather into his fold the souls he has purchased by his blood, let us not be afraid or ashamed of a work so just, so glorious and good, but labor and sacrifice and, if needs be, suffer until with all our unworthiness we hear from his own mouth the glad "well done."

## Original Contributions.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE  
EARLY CHURCH.

## A GROWING BODY.

M. B. RYAN.

## No. II.

The infant church was small in numbers—about "a hundred and twenty names." There was not much of promise in this little company for the accomplishment of great things. Doubtless no great thing would ever have been done by them if left to their own strength.

But those humble ones, few in number and obscure, mostly from the somewhat despised province of Galilee, assembled in an upper room at Jerusalem, were the Lord's chosen. This was the nucleus of the Church. This was a seed, cast into the earth, and destined to bring forth an abundant harvest. It was waiting for power. When quickened by the gift of the Spirit on Pentecost, this infant Church began to be the most astonishing force which has ever entered human society.

One startling feature of the life of this early church was its rapid growth. The one hundred and twenty names of the upper room had three thousand added to them in a day. Pentecost was a tidal wave, bearing the infant church upon its bosom and carry