

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

OUR NEED OF PREACHERS.

What Jesus said when He was on earth will be true forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away. He said many things to His disciples which they did not then understand. When the Holy Spirit came upon them He brought all Jesus' words to their minds and qualified them to write them out with infallible certainty for the benefit of all coming generations, so that all who hear them hear Christ.

Jesus said unto His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." (Matt. ix. 37-38). He said this at a time when the multitudes fainted and were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. His heart went out in compassion for these multitudes. He wished His disciples to feel for them as He did, and thus pray to the Lord of the harvest for laborers.

Jesus never changes. What were His feelings for the people then are His feelings for the people now, and the harvest that was great then is great still, and still the laborers are comparatively few.

Our aim, as a people, is to be simply the disciples of Christ. Without waiting to ask what shall this or that man do, we should urge the necessity of ourselves being the true and accepted followers of the Lord. While we strive to preach the Gospel of Christ, and nothing else, and give to enquirers for salvation the very answer the apostles, with the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven, gave to their enquirers, we should also earnestly hear and heed what Jesus said to His disciples. We are encouraged to feel for the scattered people and pray as He directed to the Lord of the harvest. We therefore humbly submit the following.

I. Do we in these provinces need more Gospel preachers? The Disciples in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been for years striving to raise funds and obtain suitable men to preach the Gospel in these provinces. Though in a measure successful, they find it harder to get the men than to raise the money to support them. Where men have preached, the seed has fallen into honest hearts, and here and there some have turned to the Lord. The calls being many, and the laborers few, in many places they have not remained long enough to form the converts into churches, but they are left scattered like sheep without a shepherd. In other places little churches are formed who strive to keep up the public worship of the Lord's house. They struggle and succeed to build meeting-houses, but having no preachers these churches are not increased. When preachers leave their own fields and for a time labor with these churches, the people come to hear, and some are converted, the members are instructed, cheered and strengthened. So things are slowly moving on. It is found by experience that churches do not grow where there are not men devoting their time to the ministry of the word. It is true all the time that "it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Young converts, too, need the time and assistance of faithful men in their struggles for eternal life.

New fields are continually opening up, but there are not laborers to go and gather in the sheaves. Who but the Lord of the harvest knows all this and can furnish the supply?

When preachers are so few with us we feel the loss when a useful man has to leave the country for want of support, or want of health, and still more

when such are unexpectedly called away by death. How very sad has been the loss of John B. Wallace, particularly in his field of labor. He was so true and self-denied, and so beloved by his people. It becomes a serious question, Where will one be found to fill his place? Death will soon deprive us of others, and who are to take their places unless the Lord of the harvest send forth more?

These lines are written eighty miles from home, whither we have come at the invitation of the church at East Point, P. E. I. This church has severely suffered this spring from la grippe. Quite a number of its members, old and young, have passed away, others are sick. They have not seen the face of one of our preachers since October last. Not one to preach, visit the sick and dying, or attend the burial of the dead. The faithful and beloved John McDonald, who has long been a leader in the church, now in his 86th year, is sick and his recovery doubtful. This church is at the extreme end of the Island, far from any other church of disciples, and its members so scattered that it is difficult to meet for worship and enjoy the society of each other. While this is the case, young members have not the advantages of many other churches, and have greater temptations. How very much they need a faithful preacher, both to assist the members and gather others to Christ. Brethren who have visited East Point at "the annuals," and at other times, will not forget the Christianity manifested both at their homes and at their beautiful house of worship, free for the accommodation of all and free from debt. Especially will preachers remember their warm-hearted sympathy and Christian liberality. It would be among the last places to hear of "hirelings," or "men preaching for money." We sincerely hope that ere long a true man will be found laboring among them. Other places on this Island would greatly rejoice to have and assist true men.

II. The encouragement these words of Jesus gives His disciples:

1st. We learn the harvest is the Lord's. This is cheering news. We are so ready to think the harvest is *ours*, and worry because we do not see a greater gathering, and sometimes think it will be a failure. Jesus does not leave the matter in our hands. He will take care of that. What we are to be concerned about is *our own labor* in the harvest, and not about the harvest itself. Let the laborer work hard and wisely, sleep soundly. The Lord will take care of His harvest. David was very anxious to build the Lord's house. The Lord had appointed another to do it. David worked hard and faithfully providing materials. The house was built, and well built, by another, and the Lord accepted of David's good intentions and what he did do. We may not always know our part of the labor, but let us do wisely and well the part our hands find to do, and the Lord will make it all right at last.

2nd. We do not always know how to pray or what to pray for. Jesus here tells us both. He spreads before our minds the scattered multitude. Their souls are as valuable as ours. Jesus died for them as he died for us. He feels for them as He felt for us when we were scattered and perishing. He wishes us to feel for them too, and with this feeling pray to God to save them. His way of saving them is for faithful men to tell them over and over again of Jesus and His love. Thus Jesus tells us how to pray, and what to pray for.

No prayer can ever pass from man to God but through Christ the Mediator. But here is the Mediator telling us the right prayer to offer. The prayer that honors God. That God waits and delights to answer. Is there not encouragement in these words of Jesus.

Although much more remains to be said on this subject we must for the present close. It is vastly important that the Disciples of Christ pray as their

Lord here directs, and show their sincerity by finding out and encouraging the laborers whom God sends. These men need the sympathy of the church, and to be assisted in their labors for Christ, as well as to have their temporal wants supplied, and the church which faithfully attends to both may expect the Lord's blessing. They can also manifest their love for Christ and His cause by assisting and encouraging pious young men who are anxious to spend their lives in working in the Lord's harvest.

Original Contributions.

AN OPEN QUESTION.

"Why is it the Disciples have not increased faster in our provinces?" The writer has frequently heard this question, and undoubtedly others have heard the same. It is an important question, and well deserves a symposium of our best thought.

We admit that our growth is too slow. While we have been losing our numbers by the exodus to other countries, still we have not been growing commensurate with our plea and our abilities. The fact that we will be held responsible for any loss or seeming failure in the work of God, should stimulate us to meet this question squarely, and if possible find the answer and be benefited by the remedy. While we are not disposed to repine or despond over the past, we are intensely anxious for the future of our cause in these provinces, and think the time has surely come for a ringing cry from every lover of the truth, for a forward movement in all our churches. It is this burning desire in our heart that leads us to give a few things that seem, in our humble judgment, very necessary to secure prosperity. We submit what is known or at least ought to be known by every Disciple. 1st. That the cause cannot prosper, only in the hands of those who are loyal to the truth. Whatever may be our strength financially or socially, we cannot succeed without the truth. The success of the Apostolic Church was in the strict and constant attendance to the Word of God. "They continued *steadfastly* in the apostle's doctrine and the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts ii: 42. The early Disciples met on the first day of the week ostensibly for this purpose, to bring to the Lord their gifts, as they were prospered, and to remember him in his death and suffering. They were not limited to places or numbers, but wherever they could meet, whether in an upper room, or in a humble cottage, few or many, there they were found in memory of their blessed Lord. "Do this in memory of Me," says the Saviour. If we love Him we will attend to this because it is true; "If we love Him we will keep His commandments." When a Disciple of Christ will forsake this institution when it is possible for him to attend to it, he has either lost his love for Christ, or he is woefully ignorant of his Master's will. When we see Disciples who will not meet to remember their blessed Lord because they feel a little tired, or they are not pleased with some of their brethren, or they want to attend some other church, or because there are only a few to meet, etc., we may be assured they are not the material for building up the cause of Christ; and it can never prosper in their hands. To see the force of this we need only to look at the rise and progress of any successful church. We are well acquainted with the history of one church whose number was only seven. They met in the house of one of the brethren to attend to the Lord's Supper. They were scorned, and ridiculed, and abused by saints (?) and sinners, but none of these things moved them. They loved the Lord, and were therefore ready at all times at all cost, to do His will. They naturally and necessarily grew to be a large and strong church.