

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

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WHOLE No. 27.

To Our Patrons.

We wish to say that we are very thankful for the financial help; and many kind words we have received during the past year. And now that we begin the New Year may we not bespeak your continued help and encouragement for the future.

We have endeavoured to make THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL an interesting and religiously helpful paper; allowing nothing to appear in its columns of a secular, political, or advertising character. It is the only paper we know of that is published in the Dominion of Canada that has no advertisements in it, and the only religious one, the pages of which are not pointed with patent medicine falsehoods. We believe that a religious paper should be religious, and therefore it should be careful not to admit of any thing in its pages that is not known to be strictly true, and reliable. But a paper of this kind can not be published as cheaply as one that admits of advertising matter, especially of medicinal advertisements; for they pay far better than any other kind. Then again a paper the reading matter of which has to be made up especially for each issue can not be published as cheaply as a paper that is made up of the contents of a daily paper, because the cost of the type setting, which is the principle cost of a paper is already paid for by the daily, before it is transferred to the weekly. It is therefore almost clear gain to the publisher who has a weekly paper to fill up with the news articles, and advertisements, and other items of his daily. So friends you must not think we are making money out of this little sheet because its price is somewhat higher than others of its size that come to you from large printing offices who issue a number of papers and make up the small ones out of some of the matter of the large ones, which is the case with most all non-denominational religious papers.

It will be our purpose to keep our readers informed of all the doings of our ministers and churches; to report the marriages, and deaths of our people in this province. And as in the past we shall endeavour to select from high priced religious papers the best articles they contain, giving you the ripest modern thoughts of men of scholarship, talent, and graces. We do not intend to canvass, nor run against any other religious paper; but hope to do as we wish others to do by us. We hope that all who have been on our subscription list last year will continue to favour us with their names for the year now opening upon us, and that any of them who have not yet paid in for the last year will soon remit the fifty cents, the price of the paper and trust that many of those to whom it has been sent as a sample will favour as with their subscription also. We have labeled the paper to all those whose subscription closed at the beginning of this year, and advise them to take care of the label as their receipt of payment. In the future we will label others as their time expires; so that every subscriber will know when their time of payment ended. If any mistake should be made on these labels, let us know and we will rectify it.

There have been many complaints come to us from subscribers that they do not get their papers regularly; we assure all such that their paper is mailed to them every time it is issued from the press, we have no scarcity of papers. There are always more struck off than there are subscriptions for them; and the surplus ones we have sent out as sample copies. We hope that in the future any subscriber who does not get the paper will let us know at once, and we will look after it.

All communications with money must be addressed to Rev. J. H. Hughes, St. John, West End, and all correspondence for insertion in the paper, and notices that the paper does not come, etc., must be addressed to The Home Mission Journal Office, 36 Dock Street, St. John, N. B. We hope for a prosperous New Year. Now

brethren send us all items of news that are of interest to our people, and send us as many new subscribers as possible, and help to make our little paper a welcome sheet wherever it goes.

* The Influence of the Church.

A church by upholding the Christian ideals of life exerts an influence that far transcends the borders of its own membership, but it will only succeed in profoundly affecting the life of the surrounding community when its precepts are exemplified in the lives of its members. We are all ready to apply this truth to individuals and say that the lives of Christians should conform to the principles they profess to accept. But a Christian church, though made of individuals, is distinct from them just as the State is distinct from its citizens. Not only is the individual Christian to seek to realize the divine ideal, but the church is to do so. It is a common saying that half a dozen high-minded gentlemen, acting as a society or corporation, will do things that no one of them would do in his separate capacity. Something of the same kind is true of churches. We have all known of churches, composed of excellent people, which did not as churches have a thoroughly wholesome influence. The corporate life and tone were not what they ought to be. Even the church at Sardis, which the Lord sternly condemned, had some members who had not defiled their garments, and were counted worthy of walking with the Lord in white.

It will surprise any one who has not given the matter special attention to discover how many precepts of the Gospels and the Epistles relate exclusively to this corporate life of the church. In the New Testament Christians are not thought of exclusively as isolated units, they are thought of as banded together in church relations. The members are to be kindly affectioned one toward another; they are not to go to law with each other; they are to have a care for each other's temporal and spiritual welfare; they are to make the church to which they belong a present illustration of a divine society. The Epistles were written to churches not to individuals. The messages of the Risen Lord recorded in the Revelation are to churches, not to individuals; the churches and not individuals are the body of Christ; it is churches and not individuals to whom the promise is given that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them; it is churches and not individuals who are to spread the gospel through the world.

The simple statement of this fact suggests a good many trains of reflection. For one thing it certainly shows the importance of being jealous for the good name and influence of the churches to which we belong. The sacrifices that we are to make for the church are not altogether those of time or money or effort. We are called upon to make sacrifices of our feelings, our preferences, our prejudices, and even to hold our convictions under the leash of love and forbearance lest we should injure the church. What a different record and a different influence many a church might have had, if this plain dictate of New Testament principles had been observed!

Then, too, it is useless for the church to be preaching to the world how human society should be reconstructed unless it illustrates its principles in the circle of its own membership. Most of the problems that are involved in bringing about the ideal relations of the members of a church to each other, let a church in its own circle give the world a practical example of how people should live together and help each other, and unite for the good of others, and that will be far more effective toward ushering in social reforms than the declaration from pulpits as to what a city or a State should be, when the church within its own circle does not do those things.

Many religious people are beginning to realize profoundly the need of a revival of religion. In

spite of what may be presented from statistics, and from the great congregations of a few churches, we all know that things are in a perilous state. The land, throughout its length and breadth, has seldom stood in greater need of a revival of religion. We do not know of any new way to promote a revival; but something more is needed than that individuals should feel this; churches must feel it, and the best work that pastors and individuals can do is to seek to awaken in the churches the hunger and thirst after God's power and blessing upon the institutions of religion. It is through the churches that the blessing will come.

A Touchstone of Sacramentalism.

A plain question is this. Is a holy life possible without priestly and sacramental aid? It is a test question, and those who hold to the sacraments as essential to salvation evade an honest answer. Romanists and High Churchmen are slow in acknowledging saintliness outside their sacerdotal fraternity. Not long ago one of them admitted that Protestants might attain to the natural virtues, but said that sanctity was the consequence of sacramental grace. In a general way it is admitted there are good people among the sects, but it is qualified and safeguarded lest the admission might tend to minimize the difference between them and others belonging to the true church. Now, it should be asked whether moral and spiritual character produced by a system of belief and order of worship, is not a safe criterion of their value. A sacerdotal clergyman has said, "Whatever the excellencies of Presbyterianism no one ever finds in it the peculiar note of sanctity." It might be readily admitted that a Presbyterian type of character is very different from that produced by ceremonial and priestly worship, but saintliness must not be judged by fictitious rules which ecclesiastics lay down. Who is a saint? Who is like Christ? Who follows in his steps? The same thing has been said of evangelical Christianity—it does not make saints. Not the saints of the cloister type, indeed. Not the saint who adores a crucifix, and stands in awe in the presence of the uplifted Host, but if by saint is meant a person who does the will of God in daily life, who keeps his heart tender and warm towards heavenly things and yields the fruit of righteousness and love, then we may challenge sacerdotalism on this ground. Does it excel evangelicalism in making saints? Is the Christianity of the so-called sects inferior to that of the "Church"? Are the evidences of the indwelling spirit more manifest among papal and ritualistic Christians than among others who worship God without mediating priest, and claim the privileges of God's children? The first Christians had no altar, no sacrifice, no priest, no ritual, no human absolution, no confessional, no sacramental customs, and yet they had fellowship with the Father through Jesus Christ, and possessed much joy in the Holy Ghost and were saints of the heavenly pattern.

The Inevitable Solution.

The problem that confronted the pious Jews in the days of Malachi was essentially the problem that underlies a portion of the book of Job, and that is fully outlined in the seventy-third Psalm. The Psalmist was confused and overwhelmed at the prosperity of the wicked: "There are no bands in their death, . . . their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish." It was not until Asaph "went into the sanctuary of God and considered their end" that his doubts were resolved. In the Book of Malachi the devout Jews are represented as saying that it has been "a vain thing to serve the Lord." The proud are deemed happy, and they that tempt