

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY, 1897.

## EDITORIAL.

## THE YEARS 1896 AND 1897.

As the year of our Lord, 1896, has passed, and we have fully entered upon 1897, it appears profitable and pleasant to mark the development of the past and the encouraging prospects of the present year.

Ours is an agricultural country; and the abundant crops of 1897 have rewarded and cheered the laborers and enabled men largely to avert the financial depressions of these years. While perishing famines assail other countries, we have bread enough and to spare. These favors come from a kind Father.

In other places men are cruelly massacred for no crime but worshipping God according to their consciences, while we are permitted to worship him as under our own vine and fig tree, none daring to make us afraid.

Who can sufficiently estimate these blessings?

A year ago, our Canada was agitated with a political question, viz.: How shall the schools of one of its provinces be regulated? This question which threatened long and sore trouble is about amicably settled. Men have apparently learned to bear and forbear with each other to meet the ends of good government and promote general peace and prosperity. This calls for gratitude to him who does his pleasure among the inhabitants of the earth.

About the close of 1895 the two English speaking nations threatened to plunge into deadly conflict—the nations who had united in general civilization in giving the Bible to all other nations, preaching the gospel to every creature—because those at the helm of affairs failed to see themselves as others see them. Brother was to rise against brother and with the improved facilities of destruction and death, these nations were to meet each other in a strife which clothes imagination with horror. If this came to pass, how would infidelity rejoice, and that arch-enemy exult who was a murderer from the beginning. But the Lord heard the earnest prayers of his people on both sides of the Atlantic, pitied the nations and made of the threatening cloud a prelude of increasing brightness. A peaceful settlement was effected, and the two nations are making an agreement never to go to war with each other, but to leave any question which they cannot settle themselves to the decision of friendly arbitration. What a privilege to live at such a time, and by faith behold him who sitteth in the heavens holding the counsel of men in derision and prompting the very nations that were about to cast his cords from them, to take the initiative in that course which shall never cease till the nations shall learn war no more. Well may we exclaim, "What hath God wrought?"

The success attending the preaching of the Cross in turning men to righteousness, the growing desire for Christian union among the religious denominations, and the respect that the Word of God is gaining instead of human creeds, are cheering indications of better days.

There is no other reason for the existence of the disciples as a distinct people than their claim to hold and teach Christianity, and nothing else. They, therefore, are anxious at all times to have their teaching tried by the word of God, and if young or old can show one thing they teach or hold different from the divine book, they are bound by their allegiance to Christ to abandon that one thing. When they address God's children they urge them to read, believe and obey from the heart the "all things" which Christ has commanded his apostles to teach them. When they address the unsaved they urge them to read for themselves what God has testified of his son Jesus the Christ, to believe in him with all the heart, and to do the very things which Jesus has commanded them to do, and thus come to him and accept his offered salvation. They thus assure them that believing and obeying him with all their heart, their faith rests, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Our papers, every week, gives account of hundreds, if not thousands, who believe in Christ, and turn from their sins to God, by the clear preaching of the gospel as Jesus sent it to all nations for the obedience of faith. For this we rejoice! Yea! and will rejoice.

Very, very often we read of *preachers* who examine the standing and preaching of the disciples, and are so thoroughly satisfied with the simple and powerful gospel that they leave their own people and join with the disciples to preach the same gospel. In this we should rejoice; not in boasting of anything in us, but in humility of mind giving thanks to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where much is given much will be required; and if God has been pleased to show us the light so that we can use the very words of Jesus and his apostles in directing sinners to Christ, and can refer them to the examples of those recorded in the Acts of Apostles who came to Christ, our responsibility to be faithful in all things is thereby largely increased. If the religious life of disciples corresponds with the truth they hold and teach, success must inevitably attend their preaching. Hence the necessity of constant watchfulness and earnest prayer to God for his Holy Spirit to lead us aright, and work in us all that is well-pleasing to God through Christ Jesus.

In the United States alone the membership of the disciples has increased to over one million; and should they increase in the next ten years as they have in the past decade, the number will be over two million.

When we are out of sympathy with the young, then I think our work in this world is over.—*Geo. McDonald.*

## Original Contributions.

## A TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIANITY.

M. B. RYAN.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto myself."—John xii. 32.

The religion of Jesus is destined to triumph in the earth. But what type of it? The text suggest the answer to this question. This statement was evidently spoken with primary reference to the manner of Christ's death on the cross. But it applies as well to the methods of his conquest. The triumphant Christianity will be a Christianity that will lift Christ up before men. There are three respects at least in which this must be done.

## I. IN ITS TEACHING AND ITS FORMS.

The burden of its message must be Christ. It must return to Paul's position, determined to know nothing else among men than Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is a simple message—the story of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, Nain, Sychar, Jerusalem: the story of the baptism, the temptation, the ministry, the last supper, the garden of Gethsemane, the judgment hall, the hill of Calvary, the new tomb; the story of the resurrection, the forty days, the ascension, the coronation, the first Pentecost. It must be simple if it is to win the world. Profound theological systems will be ruled out of the triumphant Christianity. The dogmas of the creeds will find no place there. The story of Christ will be told as Peter and Paul told it in their sermons. The church must get back to this, the simple proclamation of Christ, holding *him* up before the world, before it can carry his cause to victory.

Then the institutions of the gospel must be observed in their primitive simplicity and integrity. Popish ritual must be abandoned. Protestant perversions of the ordinances must be laid aside. There must be a return to the ordinances as Christ gave them. They are *monuments*. They commemorate great and vital facts in *Christ's history*. Observed in their integrity they *hold Christ up* before men. Baptism is a burial and a resurrection of the one who submits to it, and implies his death to sin. In all of which there is a testimony, publicly given, to the death, and burial, and resurrection, of Christ, for sin and for justification; facts which the individual has accepted, and upon the strength of which he acts. The Lord's Supper is a memorial feast, to be observed in loving remembrance of *Christ whose body was broken, and whose blood was shed, on the cross, for the remission of sins and the salvation of men*. To substitute another form for the impressive burial and resurrection of Christian baptism; or to turn the joyful memorial supper into a sacrificial feast; this is to destroy the significance of these institutions and hide their testimony from the world. It is imperative that the church return to the original form and design of the Christian ordinances. For they are intended to lift Christ up before the world, and they do this only when they are observed as intended. The