

PALM ✻ BRANCH.

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH.

ST. JOHN, N. B.

S. E. SMITH, EDITOR.
 SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, 20 CENTS A YEAR.
 FOR CLUBS OF TEN OR MORE TO ONE ADDRESS, 10c. EACH A YEAR.

All Band reports and notes must be sent through the Branch
 Band Corresponding Secretaries.

All other articles intended for publication, all subscription
 orders with the money, must now be sent to

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

A. D. 1900.

What will the New Year bring of gain or loss,
 What dark Gethsemane, what Star-lit Cross?

Our position is unique this year. We not only stand on the threshold of a new year, but on the threshold of a new century. How solemn the thought. What a sense of responsibility it brings with it! The words "Heirs of all the ages" take a new meaning for us as we look back and consider the century that has gone from us. What a wonderful century! What progress, what development, what a history! And yet how sad that it should go out amid the sounds of war and carnage; how sad that intemperance and kindred evils should stain the mantle of the new year; that "covetous hindrances to Christianity" should still abound. We cannot but ask ourselves if all this would be possible if the Church of God had been faithful to its high trust? It should be a solemn thought to the children and young people of to-day that this century will be given into their hands to make or to mar it. To keep in motion the train of good influences which shall hasten the happy day when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" or to retard that train and set the world on a downward grade.

And we who are older, what have we done with our example and influence? "Is this new century going to be better than the last because we have left the impress of our faith, and hope, and love, and right doing upon the children of this generation?" It is a solemn question that we have to face. Regrets will not redeem the past, but good resolutions will do much for the future.

Study carefully the Leaflet prepared by our Society on the Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Fund.

Many thanks to the kind friends who have helped so liberally with their contributions this month.

Now is the time to subscribe for Palm Branch, if you have not already done so—also to renew subscriptions.

A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Last October one of our Sunday-school lessons was about Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. In that lesson the great man Ezra tells us that he and his company of travellers prayed God to show them a right way for themselves, and for their little ones, and for all their substance.

Ezra was a good man, and accomplished a great work; but the secret of his success may be found in Ezra 7: 10. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Ezra prepared his heart, or purposed in his heart, to seek and to do the law of the Lord.

I wonder how much we would accomplish this year if we, like Ezra, really purposed in our heart to do faithfully and well the work we are asked to do in connection with our Mission Band. If President, always to be on time, and have a programme well prepared. If Secretary, always to have the books kept in good order, and the reports sent in at the proper time. If a member without office, always to lend a helping hand whenever it is needed. Surely then the work would prove to be a blessing to ourselves, as well as to others.

A good resolution is sometimes easily broken; but I am sure Ezra did not try to carry out his resolution in a half-hearted way. His character would have been weak had he acted thus; but no! he must have been a man who was determined to "find a way or make it."

Every day we are doing those things which form character, and character is the only thing that lasts forever. We carry nothing else with us to the next world. Let us then watch carefully our every day acts. Some one has said: "Sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Let us strive to build up Christ-like characters. We must watch our thoughts that they be pure, our lips that they speak the truth, our motives that they be not selfish.

Charlotte Murray says:—

"Just scattering seeds of kindness,
 Just living like Christ down here;
 This, this be our high endeavour
 Whilst journeying home this year."

Toronto.

M. H.