

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

ANOTHER YEAR.

Gone! yes, another year has passed away, and now, with former years, lies forever in the vaults of eternity. On its pages are indelibly written the thoughts, words and deeds of all who lived during its stay with us on earth. We are now on the threshold of another year. What a time for reflection! A time for solemn sober thought! The time to renew, with a strong determination, that, aided by God, we will carry out our oft-repeated but broken vows. This is the projected time of reform, not only of the living but, sad to think, of many now in that country from whose bourne no traveller returns.

Pitiable, indeed, is the state of that man in whose heart does not beat, at this time of the year at least, a desire to improve on the past. Past redemption is that one, I was going to say, and so near the truth is it that I need not recall it, who, having carefully surveyed the past and the present, is satisfied with the efforts put forth, his moral and religious standing, that he feels no need nor cares to see a chance wherein to improve. But I indulge in the hope that few, but very few, of our readers belong to this class of high flown perfectionists, and that we all realize that a change, either for the better or the worst, has taken place in our character during the past year.

Change—did I say? Yes! Have we been laboring under the idea that no change has taken place; that we are just the same to-day as a year ago? Oh! let us be careful lest we make a mistake, the evil consequences of which will not be known until it is *too late*. Remember, every year, every day, yea, every hour, is borne down with privileges and opportunities for doing good. The more faithful we are in utilizing them the happier we are; our characters will be strengthened and ennobled; our associates will be blessed; God's name will be honored; and our reward in heaven increased. But if we spurn them and cast them behind our backs as unworthy of notice, or because they cross our path of convenience, or interfere with some anticipated pleasure, we are then doing wrong, and rest assured that the evil results will be felt, not only in time, but throughout eternity; for these duties never leave us as they found us. These things being so, should we not, as the merchant calls it, "Take stock," or, as the mariner would say, "Take our bearings." For while our frail bark has sailed over many a shoal, and passed safely rocks unseen, and weathered many a cape, the voyage is not finished, and there are shoals and breakers ahead. Now let us ask ourselves a few practical questions and be profited thereby.

(1) What have I done during the year for the cause of Christ, the best of all causes?

(2) Am I sure that the past year is the best year of my life? If not, why not?

(3) When under the pressure of hard times, feeling that retrenchment was necessary, where did it commence and end?

(4) Do I feel satisfied with my year's labor, knowing that it would have required *quite an effort* on my part to have discharged more faithfully the responsibilities that were resting upon me?

(5) Have I done anything during the year for the support of the *Truth*?

(6) Has the missionary cry from home and abroad, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," met with no response from me?

(7) How often have I met with the people of God? And when thus privileged was my presence a blessing or a hinderance—a hinderance, either by finding fault, without suggesting a better order than the one complained of, or by advocating some preference and holding it up as a matter of conscience?

Some may reply, Well, I have not met with the

Church for some time. Why not? Too far away? Oh no! Well, we have no preacher—or—I don't like the preacher;—the brethren have not treated me very well;—the Sundays have been kind of wet;—the horses and I work so hard through the week we need rest and must have it, you know;—and it is the only time we have to visit and to entertain our friends.

Now, my beloved brethren, without saying one word as to the example you are setting your children and the evil influences you are thus throwing around them, a good illustration of which can be found in the November number under the heading "Why he dropped his Sunday paper," are you perfectly satisfied with these excuses? If so, we had better write them down on paper, or commit them thoroughly to memory, lest we should forget some of them when the Saviour asks, "Why did you forsake the assembling of yourselves together? Did you not know that those who waited upon the Lord renewed their strength? Did I not promise that were two or three were gathered together in my name there I would be in their midst?" Just imagine your coming up to the Saviour, who knoweth all things, the very thoughts and intents of the heart, and saying, "Yes, Lord, we understood all this and more, but here are our reasons for not doing what you required." This picture is not overdrawn, for we are told "that we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," and "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

But I must stop. This article is longer than intended, and may be too long for the size of our paper. It has been quite a task not to develop more fully many of the questions suggested and to keep back many others that crowded upon the mind while thus writing. I would say, however, in conclusion: Let each one of us strive not only to be "diligent in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." That in planning for future prosperity we take into account the cause of Christ. Hoping that we all may be profited by the consideration of these and kindred questions, and that the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.

T. H. C.

A PLEA FOR THE PREACHER.

I wish to say a few words to the brethren who read THE CHRISTIAN in behalf of those who "minister to them in holy things." Some—I might say many—have an idea that the preacher's position is a peculiarly pleasant and easy one; in fact, that he has very little real hard work to do, and that he lives upon the fat of the land. They see him, during the week, going about from house to house visiting the members of his congregation, and on the Lord's day they listen to the words of wisdom that fall from his lips; but they have very little idea of the large portion of his time taken up by the former, nor of the hours of patient and brain-wearying study required to produce the latter. Besides this, dear reader, you should take into consideration the many disappointments he meets with in his labor or love. He sees some of his finest pulpit efforts fall upon heedless ears, apparently producing no good effect whatever. His most fervent prayers on behalf of his people remain unanswered, and no doubt he often feels like giving up in despair of doing them any good, and leaving them to get to heaven as best they can. But he remembers that although Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is

God who giveth the increase, and he buckles on his armor afresh, determined to labor on, and pray on, if peradventure he may finally present them faultless before the throne of the heavenly grace.

Now what I desire to impress upon you is that you should show a greater appreciation of the faithful efforts of those who labor so lovingly in your behalf. There are many ways in which you can do this. Perhaps not the least important one is to see that your pastor's mind is not unnecessarily troubled as to what he shall eat, what he shall drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed. His mind being free from pecuniary cares, he will be in a better frame to study the Word, and to bring forth therefrom, for your benefit, things both new and old. There was considerable force in the remark once made by an English clergyman that he could always preach better when he had a sovereign in his pocket. You can also encourage your pastor by giving prayerful attention to what he says. If he sees that you appreciate his efforts in your behalf, he will be nerved to do his very best to interest and benefit you. Do not be afraid to let your pastor know that you appreciate his efforts. When, at the close of the services, he descends from the platform to take you by the hand and enquire after your welfare, whisper in his ear that you have enjoyed the sermon and that you intend to profit by it. You will be surprised how much good that will do yourself as well as the preacher; for it is a law of our nature that the giver is blessed as well as the receiver.

There are many other ways in which you can encourage your pastor; but I am encroaching on THE CHRISTIAN'S valuable space, and must therefore leave you, dear reader, to your own reflections, hoping that what I have written may not be without some slight influence upon you, and that His name may be glorified thereby.

St. John, N. B., Dec., 1883.

W. H. E.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

"Our knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And we shall be like Him."

We may be charmed with the beauties of nature and the glories of earth; we may experience much happiness in the exercise of Christian virtue and duty; we may take intense delight and comfort in the enjoyment of the many temporal and spiritual blessings kindly bestowed upon us here by an indulgent Providence,—yet the highest pinnacle of earthly happiness possible to attain is but a foretaste—a mere taste—of the future bliss for which the Christian hopes. Without this hope, where is the blessedness of existence? "Born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," like Job we might well curse the day of our birth. Constantly reminded on every side that this is not our home; seeing the transitory and fleeting nature of all things earthly—

"The wink of an eye, the draught of a breath,
From the full bloom of health to the paleness of death;"
We might wish to live here always; or that the dark night of oblivion had long ago covered us.

Having this hope we bless God for our existence. Created in His image; endowed with many attributes of His own glorious character, we thank Him that this is not our home. We wish not to live here always. "O! who would live always—away from his God—away from you heaven, that blissful abode?"

"The Bible reveals a glorious land,
Where angels and glorified spirits dwell;
Where pleasures ne'er end, at God's right hand,
And anthems of praise forever swell."

Though the storm of adversity howls, and the tempest of the dark night of death overtakes us; "let the hurricane roar;" let the jaws of the deep swallow us, or the clods of the valley cover us—we hope—that is, we expect and desire—these "vile