

# The Christian

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## STEPHEN'S DEATH.

In the luminous cloud of witnesses that adorn Old Testament history, Moses stands conspicuous for nearer resemblance to Christ, both in his disposition of mind and his fidelity to God in the numerous and important offices he filled. Among New Testament Saints we know of none who more faithfully followed in the foot-steps of the Saviour than His first martyr.

Jesus taught His disciples how to treat their enemies. 1. To utterly disregard their vengeance although armed with power to kill the body. 2. To love their enemies so as to pray for them even when enduring their hate and persecution. His own life was a beautiful illustration of such conduct. No mere man came nearer perfection on these points than Stephen. When he stood before the Sanhedrin he well knew the malice and power of that body, and awaited their worst vengeance with angelic equanimity. For Moses he cherished the highest respect as a faithful servant in the house of God, and on that occasion his face shone like that of the great prophet. He loved the God of Israel with supreme affection, but he is charged before a Jewish court with blaspheming both Moses and God; and the high priest, in mere pretence of justice, asks if these things were so. But Stephen makes no attempt at self-defence. Although these charges were most abhorrent to his soul, and manufactured to accomplish his death, like his Master "he answered never a word." His example is a most precious legacy to the children of God when called to suffer unjustly. It often happens that in proportion to their zeal and sacrifice for Christ, they are blamed even by inconsiderate brethren. Instead of brooding and chafing over his sufferings, Stephen seems completely oblivious to unjust treatment. Self is ignored in his burning anxiety to make known to others the truth and the love of Jesus. He counted not his own life dear unto himself so that he might testify the Gospel of the grace of God. In such a soul there is no place for the fear of man. In his speech it was his evident design to make from the Scripture a convincing argument for the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, which in all probability the shrewdness of his enemies anticipated, arousing their determination to stop, by a violent death, that voice which they felt utterly unable to gainsay or resist. And seeing he had only a few minutes to live he spent them: 1. In charging the council with their enormous guilt in crucifying the Lord of glory. 2. Kindly telling them what he saw in heaven—God's glory; and at His right hand standing the Son of Man, who not only felt for a dying brother, but possessed a love for all the race which would freely forgive the very chief of sinners who come to Him. 3. Calling on Jesus to receive his spirit as He on

the cross had called on His Father. 4. Pleading for his murderers as Jesus when dying had done for His.

The above reflections have led to the composition of the following poem:

The council gazed on Stephen's face,  
Now beaming with angelic grace,  
Though doomed, on charges false, to die,  
The high priest calls for his reply.

Nor life nor justice he demands,  
He asks no favor at their hands;  
His bribed accusers does not heed,  
But speaks the word of God instead.

From Abram's call to Solomon,  
He traces revelation down,  
To show what God did there record  
Was now fulfilled in Christ, the Lord.

But looking on his restless foes,  
He drew his subject to a close;  
In burning language brief and keen,  
He told them what their guilt had been.

"Your father's crimes you've far outdone,  
You've crucified the Holy One!  
The righteous law, by angels given,  
Have broken in the sight of heaven."

Fired with the spirit from beneath  
They rushed on him and gnashed their teeth,  
And stoning him they freely cry,  
Let Moses' vile blasphemer die!

For sympathy which earth denies  
He lifts to heaven imploring eyes;  
God's brightest glory brings to view  
A Saviour and a brother too.

"I see" he said "at God's right hand,  
The Son of MAN in glory stand."  
With outstretched hands he leaves his seat,  
Stands his first martyr's soul to meet.

But ere he sleeps in peaceful death,  
He kneels, and cries with parting breath—  
"O Lord, thy mercy's free and large,  
Lay not this murder to their charge!"

He who for chief of sinners died,  
Pardoned a robber at His side,  
For His own murderers pled with God,  
And gained their pardon by His blood,

Now heard His dying servant's prayer,  
Now did these heartless rebels spare,  
And thus to future ages prove  
How rich is God's forgiving love.

We know not all of that proud race,  
He made the trophies of His grace;  
But God was pleased to show us one—  
Young Saul, who urged the murderers on.

This monument to earth and heaven,  
Was freely by his Lord forgiven,  
Because the meek Apostle Paul  
Suffered and worked above them all.

He preached and gloried in the cross,  
All other gain he counted loss,  
Finished his course and kept the faith  
Like Stephen met a martyr's death.

When Paul and Stephen yet shall rove,  
Over the fields of light and love,  
Shall we, kind reader, with them swell  
The praise of our Emmanuel?

IF ANY of our readers have spare numbers of the April issue they would confer a great favor by returning them to this office.

WE WERE very much pleased in having a visit from Bros. John Smith and Thomas Ossinger, the two elders of the church in Tiverton, Digby Co., N. S. They spoke very encouragingly of the work in their locality, and of the good work done by Bro. Ford.

THE BROTHERS throughout these Provinces are anxiously waiting to learn the results of our efforts to obtain more laborers in this portion of God's vineyard. At the present we have nothing very encouraging to report, but in our next issue will have a few words to say about the difficulties in obtaining them.

A LETTER from Bro. J. B. Wallace informs us that he is improving in health, and that the coming summer (D. V.) will find him again fully into the work of preaching the gospel.

Bro. W. H. EATON, who was night foreman on the *Daily Sun* of this place, and known to our readers by his excellent articles in THE CHRISTIAN, has been compelled, through ill-health, to leave his present position for one, being day work however, in the office of the *Herald*, published in Montreal. He has kindly promised to continue as a contributor to the columns of our paper.

FROM THE *New England Evangelist* we learn that Bro. A. Martin who for awhile labored in Lubec, Maine, has been appointed by the Foreign Board, Missionary to England, and expects to sail about the first of the present month.

From what we have heard and know of Brother Martin, we feel confident this is a wise selection on the part of the Board, and that he will, by the blessing of God, do much good in his new field of labor.

ABOUT nine o'clock Good Friday night a ring came to the door-bell, and who should march upstairs but Bro. Joseph Gates. To say that we were pleased to see him would by no means express our feelings. We spent a very pleasant, and I trust a very profitable evening together. The next morning we escorted him to the boat going across the Bay. He says, and his appearance certainly does not contradict it, that he is now feeling quite well. He expects to labor in Digby County for a month or six weeks and then return to LeTete, N. B.

WE GLADLY welcome to our exchange list the *New England Evangelist*, a monthly paper, issued by our brethren in the New England States, edited and published by Bro. Frank O. Ellis, of Lynn, Mass. It is a very neat, spicy four-page paper, 16 by 12 inches, price 50 cts. per year.

In the March issue among the editorial notes we find a few words expressing so tersely the feelings, not only of professing Christians, but even outsiders, and at the same time the determination of the present managers of THE CHRISTIAN, that we clip the following:

Many of the best Christians of the day are thoroughly tired of the bickerings and the sectarian spirit which pervades most of the current religious literature. Those two features we propose to leave out of the *Evangelist*, and if it can't live without them, let it die. Nevertheless we propose to be a firm advocate and defender of the doctrine of Christ.

WE FEEL certain that we but express the feelings of hundreds and thousands of men and women, religious and irreligious, in saying that we have been disgusted and pained at the questionable methods of raising money under the name of religion. In reading some of the many advertisements, noticing their nature and the names given to the proposed methods, and then what was tolerated, we have been astonished and our noses have instinctively turned up in disgust. We feel sure that such methods are far beneath the dignity of the gospel; they have a withering effect upon the piety of those thus actively engaged; leave an impression on the man of the world that we are more interested in his money than his soul; and that in many cases the money thus sought is to meet expenses created by pride, but through the lack of interest and piety we fail to meet. If churches, as individuals are expected to do, would live within their means, and do their part of the work, God would furnish them with what is necessary to carry on successfully the grand work of Christ and leave no need of their resorting to such methods of raising money.