

THE CHRISTIAN.

FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.—Paul.

Vol. XII.—No. 5.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., MARCH, 1895.

Whole No. 137.

The Christian.

Published monthly by Barnes & Co under the auspices of the Home Mission Board of the Disciples of Christ of the Maritime Provinces.

TERMS: - 50 Cents Per Annum in Advance.

All communications, intended for publication, to be addressed:

"THE CHRISTIAN."
P. O. Box 56
St. JOHN, N. B.

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J. E. EDWARDS, - - - St. JOHN, N. B.

M. B. RYAN is holding meetings in Pennsylvania.

THE meeting at Halifax has closed with five added.

R. E. STEVENSON is preaching for the brethren at Montague, P. E. I.

THE brethren at Keswick, N. B., expect Bro. Blenus to hold them a meeting in the near future.

BRO. BLENUS is with the churches on Deer Island. He will commence a meeting at Letete in a few days.

LET us again remind you about sending your subscription for the CHRISTIAN. This is the time of year it is most needed.

THE brethren at Lord's Cove and Leonardville are negotiating for a preacher. We trust they may succeed in getting the right man.

OUR paper this month is largely a missionary number. We are glad to note that our interest in missionary work, at home and abroad, is increasing.

THE Woman's Missionary Aid Society of the Coburg Street Church, met on the 28th and carried out an interesting programme. Collection received, \$16.00.

WE regret to announce the death of Bro. George Leonard, of Leonardville, Deer Island, which occurred at his home last month. Will some good brother write an obituary for our next issue.

WE trust that our churches and brethren will not forget our Home Mission work. Please remember that we have an evangelist in the field doing good work. Send what you can to J. S. Flaglor, P. O., St. John, N. B.

Jesus was born in a manger, lived and died a poor man, and was buried in the tomb of a compassionate friend. The A SERIOUS QUESTION. they began to follow the Saviour, and when death found them they were rich only in faith and good works. While seeking to win men from sin they endured many hardships, suffered great privations, and practised much self-denial. When need cried out they always harkened, but they were ever deaf to the calls of luxury. They were not seeking an easy nor a pleasant time. To what extent should the Christians of to-day follow their example? The conditions of our being give rise to many imperious demands which must be heeded or life shall cease. God does not want us to pursue the lines of injurious self-denial. But none of us, probably, are in any great danger of doing that, so deeply implanted in man's nature is the instinct of self-preservation. We will not choose to live in a shed where the wind whistles through the cracks, and the rain-drops fall through the roof. We will not give of our substance to such an extreme that we shall be unable to buy fuel to keep a fire in our homes. We will not go out thinly clad to make our way against the piercing winter's blast. We will not starve ourselves nor seek to subsist on non-nutritious food. But granting all this, and much more of a similar nature, the question of unnecessary expenditure arises. This includes much that is not only unnecessary but unquestionably injurious; so that self-respect and self-preservation, rather than self-denial, leap to the front. Here it should not be difficult to catch the call of duty, and conscience should insist upon that call being obeyed. If it did, the Lord's treasury would overflow; none would be worse and thousands would be better. But there are many expenses that are neither necessary nor injurious; and it is in their presence that the most difficult, if not most serious, questions arise. It becomes more and more a question for the conscience when viewed in the light of the irrefutable facts, that many in Christian lands are suffering, and not a few dying, from cold and hunger, and in heathen lands thousands are perishing without Christ.

It is easy to press Christian obligations to what the world would regard as a fanatical extreme, but a prayerful investigation would perhaps, IN CLOSE QUARTERS. in many cases, demonstrate that the so-called extreme is the very centre and soul of Christliness. The Saviour's friends thought he was beside himself. Paul was set down as a mad man.

Nearly every great reformer was thought to be unbalanced. Perhaps anyone who would to-day give the proper emphasis to the scriptural idea of self-denial for the sake of Christ, would be similarly regarded. But some day the emphasis must be given. Enough is spent in luxuries, in one year, by Christian people, to build thousands of meeting houses and support as many ministers of the gospel. More is needlessly spent than is given for world-wide evangelization. We gratify our whims and fancies, and let the church languish. If conduct be any indication, we sometimes seem to be more concerned about satisfying an æsthetic taste than saving the souls of men. Go through a palatial residence and count up the expensive ornaments and works of art that almost impede your progress, and while you go, try to compute their cost and estimate the good which that sum might do if invested in the Lord's work. Go through an humbler home and on a smaller scale you see the same thing and a similar calculation is in order. Suppose you look at some fashionable congregation gathered in the Lord's house for his worship. Diamonds flash, jewels sparkle, and gold shines. There is every evidence of luxurious extravagance except in the collection plates. They tell a tale of woe. In poorer churches you read the same story in an abridged edition. It is said that Cromwell going into a cathedral saw a number of small silver statues and inquired what they were. Being told that they were the twelve apostles, he commanded that they be melted and coined, and sent out to do good as their Master commanded them to do. No doubt this principle may be carried to an extreme, but the practice of self-denial is not; and when a tender conscience, that has been touched by the needs of the world, comes into close quarters with this problem of unnecessary expenditure, a strange conflict of feelings goes on; and sometimes it is narrowed down to self or Christ. Sometimes Christ wins.

We pay much for faithful service, a great deal for comfort, and almost fabulous prices for appearances. There is no economy in buying cheap goods or machinery that soon becomes useless. It is cheaper to pay a higher price for more reliable, more durable articles. The self-denial that would banish furniture from our homes, and bring in the customs of the aborigines, would prove more a detriment than a blessing. If a business man should choose to walk from Halifax to St. John, rather than go on the train, he would find that he has not saved anything by his