

THE CHRISTIAN.

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

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SEE that you are a helper in the good work which is being done by the Home Mission Board. Churches are being built up and souls saved. Send what you can to J. S. Flaglor, Post Office, St. John.

FROM P. E. I. comes the good news that the Charlottetown church is growing stronger and better. Also that Bro. R. E. Stevenson is preaching for the churches on the eastern part of the Island.

Bro. T. H. Blenus, our evangelist for the provinces, has closed his meeting at Leonardville, Deer Island. Much good has been done in this meeting.

OUR St. John Mission in the North End have rented a larger and a better hall in which to hold Sunday-school and preaching services.

BRO. HARDING has consented to act as general agent for the CHRISTIAN for Hants County, N. S. Our subscribers in that section will please note this.

ALL who are interested in our Home Mission work should subscribe for the CHRISTIAN. It must be remembered that the prof's are for Home Missions and its circulation should be increased. All our churches should subscribe for it, so they will know how the cause of the Lord is prospering in these provinces. Only 50 cents a year. Subscribe now.

THE CHURCHES IN 1894—Under this head the Independent of New York has published statistical tables, giving the membership of all the different churches of the world. We regret that we have not space this month to copy the entire article. We notice the membership of the Disciples of Christ as given is 907,015, and the increase in the last four years, 229,966.

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS.—Religiously, the race is divided as follows:

Protestants	148,000,000
Romanists	205,000,000
Greeks	92,000,000
Jews	8,000,000
Mohammedans	187,000,000
Pagans and Heathens	352,000,000

—Standard.

The world has seen many great actors. They were great in proportion to their ability to deceive, to assume a part, to hide, to assume for the time being, their real characters and personate some one else. We have not to go to the theatre to find people laying aside their true selves and saying what they do not mean. We have a first-class actor in the Old Testament, in the person of Jacob. In this age with his mother to "make him up," he would, provided he continued wedded to his evil ways, be almost sure of a host of admirers among the light-headed portion of the human race. There were method and motive in his playing. His was studied, systematic deception. He did not wear Esau's old clothing because they fitted better than his own, but because they smelled of the fields and woods. They carried with them the atmosphere of the hunter. The fur upon his hands and neck was not for warmth or beauty. It was to make him feel like Esau, the hairy man. He wanted to play the part of Esau for the time being, in order that he might get the blessing intended for his brother. He told a lie and he acted it. His deception was successful, but he paid a heavy penalty in consequence of it, in his virtual banishment from home for many years, and in the repeated deception that Laban practised on him. The deceiver was himself deceived, and the keen-witted man outwitted. He learned that deception does not pay, and that as a man sows so shall he reap.

There are a good many professing Christians who might not inaptly take the unregenerate Jacob as their patron saint; for they seem to follow his example more closely than they do the Saviour's. Howbeit they are not

generally known as great religious actors. Probably if the Saviour were to name them, he would look for no more appropriate designation than that which he bestowed upon some noted characters of his own time—people who honored him with their lips, but whose hearts were far from him; who devoured widow's houses, and for a pretense made long prayers; who went with unkempt hair and unwashed face that they might seem to fast—hypocrites. Jesus did not condemn fasting, but the deception that made more of seeming to fast than of really practising self-denial; he did not condemn long prayers, but mock prayers; he did not seal the lips that would honor him, but the lips that would speak empty words. Hypocrisy is one of the blackest of sins. The actor may wear the most beautiful garments, but they cover an ugly heart. The jackdaw may dress in the peacock's feathers, but he remains a jackdaw still; and some unexpected event will occur and leave him in disgrace. A deliberate pretender is often a consummate villain, whether he lays claim to a country's throne, or assumes a righteousness that he does not possess.

It is worth while to sometimes analyze our actions to discover whether our professions be mere pretenses. Not that we are in need to find out whether we are Earnest? purposely playing a part, but whether there is creeping into our lives an unintentional, unconscious self-deception; whether our worship is not becoming mechani-

cal, our devotions formal, our prayers simply the employment of words with a religious coloring, and our singing nothing more than the making of pleasing sounds. Who has not heard people singing in a most indifferent, unfeeling way about the Saviour's death? The words drop lightly from their lips, but their thoughts are roaming the wide world over, or perchance engaged with some frivolous scene. How many have breathed in song the words of lofty adoration, of devout thanksgiving, of earnest petition, or of complete consecration, without thinking of the words! Do we mean what we sing? Do we pray in a perfunctory manner, thinking more about saying prayers than praying? It is to be feared that some people do. They may feel sure that if they do not mean what they say, God will not give it much heed except to condemn. Are well-sounding but soul-less exhortations never heard? Does it never happen that people give themselves verbally to the Lord who do so in no other way? They are acting a part. There is no sincerity behind the words and acts. When our worship becomes formal, the sleep of death is coming on as surely as it comes to the man freezing in the snow-drift. God is spirit and they that worship him must do so in spirit and in truth. With such worship he is well pleased.

The world has not crowned selfishness as one of the pre-eminent virtues. It scorns the man who lives sumptuously every day while the beggar starves at his door among the dogs. It brands with infamy the contemptible fellow, who when rescued from peril, has no thought for others as deserving, if not as fortunate, as himself. Shall Christianity present a lower standard than the world? Shall it dress in beauty, sins that the world condemns? What is the spirit of the religion of Jesus? What is it to be a disciple of Christ? Is it to be living in the selfish enjoyment of a heavenly hope? Is it to have our longings, aims and efforts centered in ourselves? Is it to close our eyes to the needs of the dying millions, and our ears to their cries, and hurry away to some secluded spot where we can spend our time in laborious attempts at self-culture? If so, the spirit of Christianity is the essence of selfishness, and our sphere of activity is measured by the distance from the head to the feet, and from finger tip to finger tip of the outstretched hands. But the disciples of Christ know, or ought to know, that their Master was most unselfish. He gave all, even his life, for the world's redemption. The true followers of Jesus will soon see that they are called not to a life of indolence and sentimentality, but to service and self-denial.

Of course, all Christians are interested in the salvation of the world. They talk about it, and sing about it, and pray about it, and that is as far as a great many of them ever get. They are much like the wealthy farmer who was praying that the hungry might be fed, but whose prayers never induced him to go to his well filled store-houses to find there the means of answering his own prayers. It is not hard to find men and women wearing the name of Christ, who have no objection to the salva-