

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., MARCH, 1899.

## EDITORIAL.

## A WORD FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

It may be that ere this reaches the reader's eye the first Lord's day of March shall have passed—the day appointed to take collections for Foreign Missions. We have greatly rejoiced, yea, and will rejoice in learning of the amounts raised on that day, and in every year's amount exceeding that of the past. But there are circumstances in which an opportunity is not afforded the friends of missions to contribute on that day, and we wish kindly to speak to such as are thus deprived. The cause you support is the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and your faithful support of it is carrying out Jesus' last command before he ascended to God. The gospel which has proved to be the power of God in saving you, he commands you to send or carry to others, that they too may be saved. If you are determined to send money to Foreign Missions, you "will find a way or make one." As you have determined in your heart so give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Don't, on any account, go back on your prayerful purpose to give. The Lord claimed that money before you purposed to give it, but doubly after. If you think it too little, add to it, but keep nothing back.

We rejoice in the fact that we have nothing else to offer men but what Christ and his apostles offered them for their enlightenment and salvation, and why should we hesitate to tell it to the heathen ere they die. We can use the last great commission from beginning to end without any alteration and can point all men to the great Redeemer who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, just as they read it in his own words. God is in a most remarkable way of late removing everything that keeps from the lost his glorious gospel, and we cannot afford to keep it from them or refuse to act in the matter.

O! brethren, send the gospel to the dying before they pass away, and God will increase the fruit of your righteousness and enable you to do more and more. Christ's last promise to his apostles was to be with them to the end of the world, but it was on condition that his great commission should be faithfully carried out. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Many a passage of scripture or beautiful hymn has been ruined for many a person by its association with an irreverent witticism, which depended for its point upon the destruction of the sacred power of some holy word. Let the words which are holy be treated as reverently as the ark of the covenant was by the priests to whose care it was entrusted, by both young and old, at all times, if they would please the Great Author of the Book.

## Correspondence.

## FROM THE SOUTH LAND.

In Valdosta, during the early part of February, bright, balmy days followed one another with a pleasing regularity. The shrubbery and rose bushes and peach trees apparently thought the winter was over, and began to array themselves in their beautiful garments. I feared they were a little premature, but they had been here longer than I had and ought to know best. This time, however, they were mistaken. A cold wave came and their beauty disappeared.

The cold came down upon us like an armed man. It entered the best protected houses and remained till it was ready to depart. The thermometer registered one degree below zero—the coldest on record here. There was great suffering among the poor. About two inches of snow fell, and remained with us for two days. Children and grown people enjoyed it as it was melting away. Every one within range seem to be a legitimate target, except one man who drew his pistol, and was going to return lead for snow.

The cold wave did not belong here. It seemingly lost its way, or it came to hunt up the northern people who have been fleeing from frost and snow. Summer weather has returned. On Washington's birthday, (Feb. 22nd) the mercury went up to 82°. But the sun cannot again put life into the oats and early vegetables which the frost king breathed upon. He cannot restore to life the dying rose bush, nor give to the peach tree a new dress of bloom.

We have religion here as well as weather. There is no Roman Catholic church. I hear no one mourning over its absence. The Episcopal church numbers perhaps fifteen members. Its house will seat about one hundred. It is provided with candles and other high church paraphernalia. The Bishop of Georgia was in town this week, and preached to a full house. He had no trouble in picking out his own, as only they knew when to stand or set or kneel. All the others remained seated throughout the service. The Baptist church has a large membership, and are completing a large and expensive house of worship. The Methodists are numerous and meet in an elegant new brick edifice. Numerically, the Disciples come next, and are followed by the Presbyterians.

The Primitive Baptists have lately organized a church in this place. They are said to be a very moral people, and they would need to have some good quality to make even partial atonement for their horrible doctrines. Not long since a pious man was excommunicated by one of their churches because he believed in a universal atonement—believed that Jesus tasted death for every man—believed that he was not willing that any should perish. Evidently to be in full fellowship and good standing with them, one has to deny some things which the Bible affirms.

I attended the meeting at which their church was organized. The letters that were read began about as follows: "The Primitive Baptist church at Some Where, believing in Predestination, Election, Foreordination and Effectual Calling, etc, hereby commands," etc. Their creed seems to be short, too short apparently to afford the Christ a place in it.

We have a church here of the "anti" order. They went out from the old church about twelve years ago. They present a striking disregard of Paul's admonition to the Corinthians. Let there be no divisions among you. They do not believe in having a paid preacher. I have met with them several times, but my calling stood in the way of my receiving a cordial reception. They did not say to me, If you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. They are opposed to missionary societies, regarding them as unscriptural; but strange to relate, they have an organized Sunday-school, about which we read nothing in the New Testament. True, the Bible tells us to *Teach* all nations, but it also tells us to *Go* into all the world. They will not use an organ in the worship, but I noticed one of the members standing in front and beating time with his hand, and I think I heard some of them keeping time with their feet. They might as well have had a pipe organ. The organist would touch the keys with his fingers instead of beating the air with his hand; he would press the pedal keys instead of thumping the floor; and he would try to keep the congregation not only in time but in tune. As I met one Sunday evening with this church, I was somewhat surprised to hear a solo and also a duet, both with choruses, instead of unvarying congregational singing. Here no contribution box comes to you; you must go to it. During the singing of the closing hymn the members of the church go quietly to the front, one by one, and deposit their offering in the receptacle provided. I do not see that the method is any more apostolic than putting the contribution in a box near the door, or even than passing around the collection plates.

I have not attended a prayer-meeting since I left St. John. The people think I have, but I think they are mistaken. I have heard a number of very excellent sermons or lectures on Wednesday evenings. They were delivered by the preacher, who also announced the hymns, read the lesson, and called for the two prayers, at each service. Christ-Endeavor methods would revolutionize this state of affairs by developing the latent talents of the younger members especially. They would then come to the rescue of the poor overburdened preacher. I attended one "prayermeeting" where there was no preacher to deliver a discourse. The leader made up the deficiency by reading the entire epistle of James.

So far during my visit in the South I have seen nothing in the order and method of the church services, or in the conduct and character of the prayermeetings that I think