

*The Christian.*

ST. JOHN, N. B. . . . NOVEMBER, 1890

This number begins the eighth volume of THE CHRISTIAN. Through a Father's favor it still lives and prospers. For His great goodness we thank Him and take courage.

Satisfied that THE CHRISTIAN was started from the best of motives, it is cheering to learn from different quarters that its friends understand this and are ready to help it in contributions to its columns, paying expenses and increasing its circulation. We hope this feeling may increase and abound as the years roll on that brings us nearer and nearer our final account.

Through THE CHRISTIAN we want to keep constantly before the unconverted, the facts that He who died for them is anxiously waiting to save them from their sins, and that He has made the way to come to Him as plain as possible to every one who wishes to forsake his sins and love and trust Him alone.

It aims to impress upon all Christians the blessedness both in work and reward of following Jesus and in spreading His gospel among the lost, and by every effort doing good unto all men, especially those who are of the house hold of faith.

It discusses interesting Bible themes that the reader may feel special interest in studying the book of books and may see and feel its beauty and power.

While the union of God's children is earnestly desired, THE CHRISTIAN endeavors to make it plain that it is not the things in the Bible which divides Christians, but it is the things that are not in the Bible — that Christianity unites God's people but sectarianism keeps them apart. That Christian union can be effected without the sacrifice of one Christian privilege or loss of one Christian virtue. It therefore advises all to hold fast the Bible and let all other creeds go; to hold fast the words of Jesus, and let the word of others go; to hold His spirit and His church, and let all other spirits and other churches go.

For the above purposes and all others which tend to unite, encourage and happy the children of God we labor and ardently pray. Who will approve and work with us till Jesus comes?

**EDITORIAL.****PRAYING FOR PREACHERS.**

Brethren pray for us. I Thes. v:25.

This is the earnest entreaty of the apostle Paul. On different occasions he urges his brethren to pray for him. With himself he now includes others, saying: "Pray for us."

He besought his brethren in Rome for the Lord Jesus' sake, and for the love of the Spirit, to strive together with him in prayers to God for him (Rom. v:30.) He asked the Ephesians to pray for him that utterance be given him to boldly declare the gospel mystery (Ep. vi:9.) He desired the Colossians and the Thessalonians to pray for him that a door might be opened to him, and that the word of God might have free course, etc.

All this shows the extreme anxiety of the apostle to have the prayers of the brethren mingle with his own at the throne of grace. He felt vastly more the need of their prayers than he did of their means for his temporal support, not because

he was entirely oblivious of the latter, but because he remembered the words of the Lord Jesus. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these shall be added unto you." He knew by experience "both to abound and suffer need," and felt how blessed it was to have kind friends from a distance sending to his necessities, because he desired fruit that might abound to their account even more than the supply of his own wants. He calls such fruits "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God; adding that God would supply all their wants from the riches of Jesus. Yet we seldom hear him alluding to his own support. When Jesus took him into his partnership he gave him a charge like this: Give the best energies of your heart and life to me and to my affairs, and I will direct the brethren to attend to your temporal wants; and although brethren sometimes were negligent in this matter, Paul still gave his best energies to his great work. To supply his own wants and that of others he could sometimes make tents, but could on no account give up the gospel ministry. The hardness he endured only fitted him the better for His service who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross. Having the promise and presence of Jesus he learned in whatever state he was therewith to be content.

But we might wonder why one with all the apostle's advantages should so urgently need the prayers of others. He was well acquainted with the Jewish scriptures and Jewish questions, and not ignorant of Greek philosophy. He had miracles to enforce his mission; could heal with a touch, and smite his enemies with blindness. Besides all this, he was confident of the divine power of the gospel to save every believer. Why then did he feel so much need of the brethren's prayers? The apostle still felt himself very inadequate for his great work and high responsibilities. At that time the New Testament was not published, and the people had not the gospel in their hands. Jesus had committed the gospel to the apostles, and they were to give it to the world. That treasure was in earthen vessels, and they were the stewards of the mysteries of God. We cannot conceive how numerous and how strong the temptations were for the apostles to alter, and thereby corrupt, the gospel so as to suit the tastes of men. The Greeks would plead with them to add some of their favorite philosophy, and promise them great success. O, said the Jews, just put in circumcision with the gospel, and behold the multitudes you would thereby bring to Christ. Those who now follow you from city to city like hungry, w. lves would eagerly follow as rejoicing disciples, and you would reach and save many Jews. Who, but God could at all times preserve the apostle from corrupting the gospel, and make him more than conqueror? Who else could put this song of triumph in his mouth when "ready to be offered": "I have kept the faith?" The extreme difficulty of keeping the gospel pure from human corruptions ever since it has been clearly written down in the Bible may suggest the hardship of keeping it pure before it was thus written. "Who is sufficient for these things? but our sufficiency is of God." They who were so entirely dependant on God needed the prayers of His children.

2. The apostle needed divine wisdom to choose his field of labor. He was once so anxious to preach the gospel in Jerusalem that even after the Lord had told him to leave as they would not receive it from him, he began to urge and argue the matter until he was peremptorily commanded to depart (Acts xxii:17-21) At another time he purposed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not (17:7.) When about to leave Corinth the Lord told him to remain, for he had much people in that city (Acts xviii: 9-10.) No doubt Paul wished to labor where it would be in vain for him

to preach, while others in the same place would be successful, and other fields waited for him to reap the harvest. He needed the Lord to guide him in this respect, and for such guidance he and others prayed. Other preachers also need the divine guidance in these matters, for while the Lord appeared to Paul and told him where to preach and where not, they have to watch the opening of his providence, and earnestly strive and pray to be guided according to his will.

3. The apostles, like other men, were liable to be overcome with trouble. This trouble was so intense at one time that they had the sentence of death in themselves that they should only trust in God, who raiseth the dead, and delivered them from so great a death, and they trusted he would yet deliver them, while the Corinthians helped them by their united prayers (II. Cor. i:8, 11.) In the second chapter he tells of his great grief in not meeting Titus at Troas. He expected to hear from Titus the fate of his first letter to the Corinthian church. But not meeting him he was so overcome that he left Troas, where a door was opened of the Lord for him to preach, and rushed with streaming eyes toward Macedonia (ii:12, 13, and vii:6, 7.) Amidst all these troubles it is not surprising that the apostle so earnestly sought the sympathy and prayers of his beloved brethren. It comforted him in the midst of all his grief to know that others felt and prayed to God for him.

4. Nothing is more natural than for those who have themselves understood the plan of salvation, and found forgiveness through the blood of the cross, to long for an opportunity to tell others of the love of God, and to expect others to come to the same Saviour, that they may rejoice together. But when they are disappointed in this, and find some entirely indifferent in the matter, and others through prejudice determinedly opposed to them, regarding them as dangerous deceivers, and spurning them as their worst enemies. How sad, indeed, is this disappointment! O, how they wish they could show them their mistake and convince of the love of Jesus! Who can bear them up under this trouble but the same kind friend who saved themselves? Who can give them wisdom but God?

Paul does not ask his brethren to pray that he might be relieved from any of the long list of intense hardships or cruel persecutions he enumerates in the 11th of II. Corinthians. No, indeed; for none of those things moved him. He only mentioned them to cut off occasion from false apostles, and to show that God honored him by these sufferings as highly as he did any apostle. He wished them to pray for an open door to preach the gospel — that utterance might be given him to preach, and that wicked men might fail to take his life until his grand work was done. He wanted to speak boldly and wisely, so that he might with more power prevail on men to embrace the Saviour, and that he might warn and teach every man in all wisdom, so that they might be perfect in Christ.

Brother, Paul has finished his course and kept the faith, and will certainly receive a crown of righteousness. You cannot pray for him. But others are laboring to hold before the dying the same gospel which was committed to his trust. Do they need an open door? Are there not as many adversaries as in Paul's day? Do they need utterance? Do they need wisdom? Do they need everything from God? Are you praying together with these brethren to God for them? You feel glad to hear of their success. You are helping to feed and clothe them and their families while they are preaching the gospel to the lost. But are you earnestly praying for them? Please don't lay this carelessly aside; but while the Judge is standing before the door ask yourself the question: Am I earnestly praying for those who are preaching the gospel?