

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 questions and communications, business or otherwise, intended for publication, to be addressed:

"THE CHRISTIAN,"

P. O. Box 106,
St. John, N. B.

EDITOR:

DONALD CRAWFORD, - - - NEW GLASGOW, P. E. I.

CO-EDITOR:

T. H. CAPP, - - - - - St. John, N. B.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER, 1885.

EDITORIAL.

ON THE OPENING OF THE HEART.

The heart of man was made to be filled and satisfied with the love of God, and nothing else can fill it. But sin has closed the heart against His love, and man is doomed to eternal dissatisfaction. Such is the testimony of the Bible, and this testimony is confirmed by the experience of all men in every age.

Prophets spoke of the stony heart, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and pronounced that man a fool who trusts to his own heart. They foretold how the Messiah would be treated by his own nation. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed; for I shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." (Isa. 53.)

How often have we wondered why those who saw the Saviour and His mighty works saw no beauty in Him, and that those who did not see Him, but believed on Him through the apostles' word, were so moved by His love as to willingly die for Him. Why He had so few followers before His death and so many after His resurrection! The death of other great men was the end of their greatness, but the death of Jesus began His triumphs. Death meets others to crush and conquer them, but it met Him to be crushed and conquered by Him. He felt all the power of death, but unstung this enemy and rose to die no more. He laid down His life, but it spread life to unnumbered millions. It was the life of the world. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) Hence it was by His death His followers were increased.

There was a veil over the hearts of the Jews which as much kept out the love of God as a thick veil keeps out the light from the eye. The Lord opens the heart by removing that veil, and letting in His love, which Paul thus describes: "For until this day remaineth the same veil, untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord the veil shall be taken away." (2 Cor. iii. 14-15.) While the Jews read Moses and looked to him as their only mediator and lawgiver, their hearts were hard and dark, the love of God was excluded, and they could not look to the end of that which is abolished. They read of their fathers pleading with Moses to stand between them and the Lord when He came down in awful majesty amidst thundering, lightnings and earthquakes on Mount

Sinai to deliver His law. They could not endure the sight, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart. "And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. xii. 21.) "Let not God speak to us lest we die," they pleaded with Moses. When the Jews read these things the veil was on their heart. God appeared to them as a consuming fire. Not as a God of infinite love, but a God of awful justice. They read on and find a man gathering sticks on the seventh day of the week. What did the people do with their erring brother? Do they tell him of God's love to sinners and join with him in pleading for mercy? No; there is no pardon for him. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." "Let the congregation stone him that he die," was Jehovah's mandate. Would the man feel the love of God while thus suffering? No; nor would the people who were neither to pity nor spare him, but stone him to death. It was not a display of God's love, but of His displeasure; and the reading of such left the veil upon their hearts.

Let the reading turn to Christ and what is displayed? We see a Being of infinite amiableness coming to a world for ages steeped in odious corruption and crime. His Father sending Him not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him should be saved. We see Him seeking out the suffering to heal and bless them. Mingling freely with the poor, Himself the poorest of them all. When weary and worn with other's burdens, He had not where to lay His head. In every word and action of His life, condemning sin, yet pitying the sinner and waiting to pardon every one who came to Him. As pure as the throne of God, yet meekly enduring the reproaches of those who charged Him with every crime. He revealed the Father's justice and mercy so clearly that every one who saw Him saw the Father. The study of the life and death of our Saviour removes the veil and causes God's love to flow into the heart. His death was painful, lingering and reproachful. It was the death men inflicted on the vilest slaves. It was a death accursed of God. He was made a curse for us. Divine justice appeared at the cross, not in the stoning of the transgressor, but in the crucifying of the Lord of glory that transgressors might be pardoned and purified and glorified in Heaven.

When Moses was preached every Sabbath day to the Jews the veil was on their heart. They looked no farther. When Christ was preached to His very murderers their hearts were pierced; the love of God entered and they were saved. Saul of Tarsus read Moses, and his heart was so veiled that he hunted to prison and to death the followers of Christ. When he read Christ and Him crucified that veil was taken away. So with all others who read and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the veil is taken away. What was Paul's determination is that of every true Christian: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

As the followers of Christ we are relieved from preaching Moses even when showing men their sins. God's inflexible justice shines clearer at Calvary than at Sinai. There we see the enormity of our sins when "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him," to "lay on Him the iniquity of us all." There is no other message so powerful to convince us of our sins as the Divine message sent by Jesus Himself in the Gospel, viz.: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 1-4.) And there is no other message to mankind so full of God's wondrous love to all. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, not because it was a power of God, but the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is the grand

work of the children of God to spread that Gospel, and by their Christ-like deportment to influence others to believe it to the saving of their souls. Oh! that all would earnestly inquire, What am I doing to forward the work? and be faithful.

Very many who desire to be Christians are discouraged because they do not love the Saviour. They see that none can be saved unless they love Him, and often think the more they strive and even pray for that love the harder grows their hearts. How wise and good was the Saviour in not making the sinner's love the condition on which he would save him. He knew that no man, by willing and resolving, can directly either produce or obtain that love in himself; hence, if that were the condition on which Christ would save him he must perish. No Christian is satisfied that he loves the Lord as he ought to, and hence talks about the love of Christ, and trusts more to it than to his own love to Christ. When Peter was asked, "Lovest thou me?" he felt his own love to be so very far below Jesus' love to him he could only say: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Though his love was so small, Jesus knew it, and could kindle and fan the spark until it became an ever-increasing flame. No wonder that the sinner would feel his love to be very very small when he thinks of Jesus' immense love to him.

But as Jesus will not save him who has no love for Him, what is the kind and degree of that love which He will accept? Jesus has answered this question clearly and positively: "Hear ye Him." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME," &c. And "If a man love Me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him; he that loveth Me not keepeth not my sayings." (John xiv. 21: xiv. 25.) No man could speak plainer than this. Jesus tells what He regards as love, or who it is that loves Him, and what will follow. He and His Father will love him and come unto him and make their abode with him. He has told the sinner in the commission what He is to do, and those whose hearts the Lord opened did those things as recorded in Acts of Apostles, and then had Jesus' promise. Jesus saved them, and He and His Father abode with them. This was not because they loved the Lord as much as they ought, but because He died for their sins and took a delight in saving them when they obeyed Him. Those who continued in His word and kept His commandments through life had the love that He accepts, and had the presence of Him and His Father increasing that love and shedding it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Such shall never perish, for no man is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand.

Reader, if you have not yet accepted of Christ, be wise and obey His Gospel, and He will forgive all your past sins and wrongs, even your want of love to Him. He waits to be gracious to take you into fellowship with Himself that He may give you His Spirit and strength and every thing you need. He is able to save you and keep you from falling, and to present you blameless before His throne. To Him be glory forever and ever. D. C.

About two years ago we wrote giving it as our firm conviction that the modern methods of raising money for church purposes are not only unscriptural, but that they exert a baneful influence over the people, religious or irreligious. Since that time we have been watching very closely the ingenuity displayed in what might be called church advertisements; and also to find out whether the final results were commensurate with the efforts put forth. Now, saying nothing as to the necessary expenses for beautifying the room; the cost of toilet for setting off to advantage the persons actively engaged in the proceedings; and leaving out of consideration the anxiety and worry, the toil and