

THE CHRISTIAN.

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

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ITEMS AND NEWS.

SPECIAL NOTICE—With this issue we are sending bills to all subscribers in arrears. This is a necessity on account of the large amounts due the paper. We wish our subscribers to remember that our expenses have to be met promptly every month, and in order to do this we depend entirely on our subscribers paying their subscriptions. After our expenses are met the balance will be used for preaching the Gospel in the Maritime Provinces.

BRO. H. MURRAY reports a good interest in Halifax, N. S. The brethren are looking for a site to build.

We learn that the brethren in Lubec have started their new church building. Ten have been added to the church recently.

BRO. COOKE has commenced a meeting at Southville, N. S., with encouraging prospects. Already three have been added.

We hope to announce next issue the decision of the committee appointed to decide the location of the annual meeting.

BRO. HIRAN WALLACE'S letter will be read with interest. We would be glad to hear some news from his locality every month. He reports two additions at West Gore.

THE June Quarterly meeting will be held with the church at Southville, Digby Co., N. S., commencing on Friday before the third Lord's day in June. The church at Southville extends a cordial invitation to all.

BONFIRES are plentiful in these days, and they were not unknown when our era was young. The Bible mentions a strange one in Ephesus—strange because books fed the flames and the books cost about \$8,000. That looks like a big loss, and it would have been if the books had been worth what they cost, but it was a big gain, because the books were bad. Morals are more valuable than money, and an evil book is almost as potent an agent for Satan as a wicked man. It would not be a bad plan at this season for households to see what success they could have with a similar conflagration. Most homes could have a small fire and be none the poorer.

THE MAXIMUM Christian is the one who is trying to do as much for God, for humanity and for himself as he can without thinking very much about the reward. He is not working because he must do so or lose his crown; but because he desires to see others happy too. The characteristic of the minimum Christian is that he wants to do just enough to be enrolled among the servants of Christ. His sole aim is to get to heaven. He does not care whether or not there is anyone waiting at the beautiful gate conducted to glory by him. His question in reference to a line of conduct is, "May I follow it and not be lost." He does not inquire whether good will result from an act, but whether harm will; not will it lift him closer to heaven, but will it drop him nearer to hell. While some very poor Christians may get into the great city, it is well to remember that our reward there is going to be according to our works here.

IN THE olden times clocks were put on the outside of meeting houses so that people would not stay too long at home and thus miss part of the services. In this age they are put inside so that we will not remain too long in the house of the Lord. The change does not indicate a growing spirituality on the part of church-going people. They are slow to come and prompt to leave. There are not many, comparatively, who can take David's words and with him say, "A day in thy courts are better than a thousand."

DUTY is a strong moving power, but it is not so strong as love. It comes behind and seizes us as an officer of the law might do, and compels us to act, or make a stubborn resistance. Love walks before and we follow on account of the magnetic influence she exerts over us. He who acts from a sense of duty has none of that pleasure in his labors which swell the breast of the man whose every act springs from love. Duty will do only what is demanded, but love will do that and as much more as she can. Duty should prompt every one to obey God's commands, but when duty and love go hand in hand how light the burden and how easy the yoke!

WE have been led to believe that there is only one Bible; but observation almost forces the conclusion that practically, at least, there are many. That portion of the Book which a man accepts and follows is his Bible; what he ignores or rejects cannot be so regarded. Men have come to the word of God with their preconceived notions and inherited tenets and they go through the volume seeking passages which seem to contain arguments to sustain their several positions, and persistently refuse to see those which have a bearing on the other side. They have selected what suited them and rejected what did not, and this compilation—this scrap book—is to all intents and purposes their only standard of truth. Hence we have conflicting doctrines and endless confusion. We are apt to test the Bible by our opinions and not our opinions by the Bible. If we spent more time in trying to conform our lives to the Bible and less in the fruitless task of endeavoring to make the Bible correspond with our lives, if we were less anxious to get it on our side and more anxious to get on its side, all this confusion, discord and strife would vanish and the most perfect harmony appear.

DO NOT PREACHERS and papers spend too much time in discussing questions which cannot be settled, and from which, if settled, no real good would arise? Some people are so anxious to convince mankind that the Flood extended even to America and covered the top of our highest mountain that they do not seem to have time to warn the world of the flood of iniquity that now covers the earth and threatens its ruin. Others have an idea that the heathen can be saved without hearing the gospel, and they would rather that Christians should believe this than obey the command to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." A few big theologians are so bent on proving that death does not end probation that they are willing to let souls die all around them while they are trying to get into the secret counsels of the Almighty. How much better to try and save souls when we know there is hope and leave such questions to the time when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly.

SOME BOYS are nearly always first at school and others are as uniformly last. Go to the house of the Lord and notice all who come and you will find the same to be true there. Happy heart must that one have who is so pleased to be in the place of worship that he is there long before the public service begins. He whose foot does not cross the threshold till the meeting is nearly over may be just as happy, but he does not show it. In this age of clocks and watches there is not much excuse for the late comer. Even if he has six miles to come he knows how long it takes him to go that distance and can start on time. Of course there may be times when circumstances will detain even the most punctual; but these remarks apply only to those who might have started in time if they had so desired. For every one to be in his place at the time the meeting begins contributes more than most people think to its solemnity and upbuilding power. But to see the larger part of the congregation coming in during the singing of the first hymn and the reading of a message from God's word, and to know that many more are at the door waiting to enter as soon as the "Amen" is heard, is not calculated to produce that quietness and reverence which should be found in a place of worship. Be on time.

GOOD PREACHING is very important, but so is good hearing; and where the one does not exist the other is not likely to be found. The one makes the other. It is easier to listen than it is to preach, and poor listeners are responsible for poor sermons oftener than is supposed. We have great respect for the man or woman who appears interested during the most tedious sermon. With them listening is a habit, and fifteen or twenty such scattered over a small congregation will sustain a speaker when otherwise he would be in danger of failing. But eyes closed, yet not in worship, and heads bowed, yet not in prayer, and a position of body that indicates that "nature's sweet restorer" is hovering round, are calculated to put a preacher to sleep too. A wide awake congregation will make a wide awake preacher as surely as a wide awake preacher will make a wide awake congregation. And if each is apt to put the other to sleep, both should make a change and endeavor to put brightness into the other's face.