

THE CHRISTIAN.

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

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BRO. COOKE'S meeting in Southville resulted in two being added to the church.

WE miss Bro. Harding's letter from this month's issue.

H. W. STEWART preached five evenings at Keswick, N. B. Two persons were baptized.

BRO WM. MURRAY is now settled in Portland, Me. His brother—Howard—expects to hold a meeting for him in the not distant future.

BRETHREN E. C. FORD AND HOWARD MURRAY are conducting a series of meetings with the church at Summerville, Queens Co., N. S. Two have been added, and the meeting still continues.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.—Look at the direction label on your paper and see if your subscription is now due. Send to J. E. Edwards, Box 56, St. John, N. B.

As this is the last issue before the holiday season, we take the opportunity of wishing our readers "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

BRO. C. H. DEVOE has returned to Salem, Ind. He is again hard at work and hopes to have the church in a new house before long. There were three additions the first Lord's day he was home.

It may not be generally known that some twelve of fifty of our brethren and sisters in Montreal are holding meetings regularly, and "breaking bread" on the first day of the week. It may be that there are other Disciples there who will join them in their work and worship. We hope the few coals may kindle a large fire.

BRO. H. A. DEVOE has begun a series of sermons at Tiverton, on the Authority of Christ as our King. He has already preached two and will probably extend the course until it embraces six or eight. The world needs to recognize that all authority was given to Jesus.

THE new meeting-house at Silver Falls is nearly completed. It will be ready for occupancy early this month. Our few brethren at this point have made great sacrifice to accomplish this work, and deserve the sympathy and aid of our brethren everywhere. Brethren, send a dollar or two to us to aid these brethren to finish their house free of debt. They deserve it.

Before the modern methods of producing fire were discovered, flint and steel occupied a very important place among the valuable possessions of our grandfathers, and their importance was accentuated by the approach of the long, cold nights of winter. The steel of itself would not produce the needed spark; an attempt to get it from the flint alone was equally futile; but when the two were employed little or no difficulty was encountered. May there not be a lesson here with a spiritual meaning? May it not be that men and women working with Satan, and not Satan alone, furnish the sparks which kindle the fires of eternal pain? Man has the flinty heart and the evil one has the steel, and every time he strikes us by a temptation he aims to produce a sin. If, however, the flinty heart has been changed into a heart of flesh, all Satan's attempts will be unavailing. He never yet produced a fire with which to burn up a man's hope until he found some flint in the heart. He does not demand, however, for the success of his effort, that the entire heart should be hard—all he needs is to have a hard spot. If it is there he will find it, and he will kindle his fire. Here is our danger: in being satisfied with a partial instead of a complete surrender to Christ, in holding on to some sinful practice or desire instead of untying every knot and letting the world go. Thousands of men and women whose characters and lives, so far as the world could see, were excellent, have, to their own surprise and the surprise of their friends, been brought low, because they, knowingly or unknowingly, afforded Satan one chance to overcome them. Taking David as a whole, he was a good man, but he failed here; and the one black spot in his life stands out with an awful prominence.

Flint and Steel.

We usually think that joy and sorrow are exclusive the one of the other. They are opposites, and when we possess the one we place the other at the antipodes. But there never was a night so dark, since God created the sun, that in it there were no rays of light; there never was a day so bright, that, even in its brightest moments, it did not contain some darkness. Night enfolds the streaks that linger after the sun has gone down—and we see them not. Day gilds the dregs of night and they are not observed, but science says they both are there—in different degrees, of course—and we accept the truth. So, perhaps, a God-directed sorrow never flew our way but a joy flew by its side. Has a darling child been taken away? Yes. There is sorrow. Is he safe in the arms of Jesus? Yes. There is joy. Even in the moments of our greatest earthly happiness may there not be atoms of sadness. Have we been adopted into the Divine family? Yes. Behold immeasurable happiness. Is some one whom we love still an orphan? Yes. Behold a degree of sadness. In heaven alone there will be no darkness, in hell alone there will be no light. On the darkest clouds of our life God may paint some of His most beautiful pictures—pictures which we could not have seen if it had not been for the cloud. If there were no clouds, there would be no rainbows. But clouds are not enough, the sun must shine. So it is Christ alone who is able to throw the bow of peace across the

Joy in Sorrow.

stormy scenes in our lives, and our tears may be the reflectors which He will use. Believing this, we can rejoice in tribulation as Paul did; we can even glory in it, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us."

May we reasonably conclude that in some cases God will take the will for the act? Christ has said that he who desires to commit a

A Willing Mind. sinful act is guilty of that act. He who is a murderer in heart, is by God regarded as a murderer. He is willing to do the deed, he wants to do it, and he would do it if the opportunity was afforded and the crime could be hidden. This principle brings into the category of sins many things which are often omitted. It makes many a man a greater sinner than he thought himself to be. The laws of the land do not take cognizance of evil desires until they are crystallized into acts. It must judge a tree by its fruit, not by its leaves, and not by its seed. God can see in the embryonic desire everything which with opportunities for development would be produced. But this distinction must be made: when a desire with sinful attributes worms itself into our minds, and at its appearance, antagonistic desires arise and determine upon its expulsion, our characters as viewed by God are infinitely different from what they would have been had we cuddled the viper and nursed it into vigor. But if God does infuse into an evil thought the full import of an evil act, how will he regard our sincere longings after holiness? Will he shift the centre of his balances or regard these aspirations as weightless? Surely not, for he is not unjust. Granting then that this principle obtains here, what a flood of hope and consolation it carries into the soul of the poorest and feeblest of God's children. It puts them on the same plain with the richest and the strongest. Have you but the widow's mite, but a heart that would give a million if you had it? Then God will place a million to your account. Are you a helpless invalid mourning unfeignedly because you are unable to do the grand work that others are doing in Christ's name? God will take the willing mind for the deed. Do you long to go to some heathen land and lead benighted souls to the Sun of Righteousness, and does no way appear? Will not He who knows the hearts of men put these as stars in your crown? But remember, if the door should be opened and you declined to go; if you should become strong and fail to do the work about which you fondly dream, if the millions for Christ should ever be put into your hands and you refuse to give it up, then there is no blessing attached to your desires. God knows now what their true character is, whether deep, heartfelt longings, or the fanciful pictures of a roving imagination. Run out this line of thought, remembering that the desire must be a God-approved one to insure the blessing, and a Satan-approved one to entail the curse; and that an unquestioned willingness to do the good or the evil must be present. Do not pronounce the position as unscriptural until you view it in the clear light which comes from God's holy word.

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