

THE CHRISTIAN.

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

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ALTHOUGH no official notice has been sent us, we believe that it has been definitely settled that the next Annual Meeting will be held with the church at Westport, N. S.

SOME additional attractions to THE CHRISTIAN are talked of. We hope to report more definitely next month.

It would be an attractive feature of the paper if all the churches would send reports every month. Brethren, help us!

THOSE in arrears will oblige us greatly by remitting to our Financial Secretary at an early date as possible. Send P. O. Order to J. E. Edwards, Box 106, St. John, N. B.

C. H. SPURGEON, the great London preacher, has a forcible way of presenting to his auditors his ideas of duty. On one occasion, when addressing his flock, he said: "Constantly keep up your confession. There are times when you will be inclined to put your flag away in the canvas case and hide your coat in the cellar. Then you may fitly judge that the devil is getting advantage over you, and that it is time that you ceased to be beguiled by his sorceries. Tear up the wrappings, throw the bag away, and nail your flag aloft where every eye can see it.

WHAT the world needs to-day is plain, practical preaching. The time is fast passing away when truths, like shuttle-cocks, by dexterous handling are to be tossed up and down for the amusement of lookers on — when contortions of body, facial expressions and sky-rockety kind of expressions will no longer be in demand. We need men like Nathan of old, that can say to the wrong doer: "Thou art the man." Men that will "hew to the line though the chips fly up into their own faces." Some one has said, and rightfully too: No sermons are quite so good as those the preacher aims at himself. The preacher who looks down into the lowest depths of his own heart and strikes at the meanness he finds there, will be very apt to furnish his auditors much food for thought. When the faithful preacher has laid bare these sins, he then gives them the Word of God as the only remedy for sin. Preaching should be extremely personal. A lady once remarked: He (certain preacher) always makes me feel my meanness. Let preachers get down off their stilts and preach directly at the sins of the day.

WHY I AM A DISCIPLE.

BY B. B. TYLER,

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New York City.

The religious life of the American people touched the lowest point at the close of the eighteenth century; but with the beginning of the nineteenth there came a deep and widespread spiritual interest.

This revival, which, humanly speaking, began with the efforts of two brethren, in the flesh, and in the Lord, named McKee, one a minister in the Presbyterian, and the other a minister in the Methodist Church, continued, almost without interruption, for about thirty years. By it all evangelical churches were enlarged in numbers, and much improved in spiritual life. The membership of the Presbyterian Church increased from 40,000 to 173,229; or, speaking in general terms, about fourfold. The Congregationalist churches increased their membership from 75,000 to 140,000, or nearly twofold. The Baptist churches increased the number of their communicants from 100,000 to 313,138, or more than threefold. The membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 64,000 became 476,153, or about sevenfold.

This, in our country, unparalleled spiritual awakening began in Tennessee and Kentucky, but its beneficent influence was felt in every part of the land. During this period the great missionary and other distinctively Christian benevolent organizations came into existence. At Old Cane Ridge, in Bourbon county, Ky., as many as 20,000 men, women and children came together in August, 1801, and remained in camp in the open air for days, giving attention to the things which were spoken concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Conversions were numerous, many of them of a most remarkable character. The general improvement in the moral life of the people approached the miraculous. Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists, the only denominations represented in considerable numbers in that portion of the country, united heartily in carrying forward the good work. Theologies were for the time forgotten. Doctrinal debates were neglected. The old gospel was clearly and earnestly preached. Men were exhorted with a tender pathos to turn and live. The message was full of power to save. But, in the midst of this work of grace, differences of a theological character, and concerning certain points of ecclesiastical and ministerial order, came up, creating, for a season, not a little disturbance of the previously existing harmony, greatly hindering, also, the progress of the well begun work. Out of a difference of opinion in the Presbyterian Church, as to the propriety of authorizing certain persons to preach the gospel, came the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination. Barton Warren Stone, an ordained clergyman in the regular Presbyterian Church, was the central ministerial figure in the Old Cane Ridge revival meeting. To avoid the unpleasant contentions which had been introduced, Mr. Stone, with four or five other clergymen, withdrew from the Transylvania Presbytery and organized the Springfield Presbytery. But after a year this was dissolved, as being of necessity schismatical in its nature and tendency, by the adoption of a singular

document entitled "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery." In the month of June, in the year 1804, Mr Stone organized an undenominational church, taking the Bible alone as the rule of faith and life, and the name Christian as its designation. The objects were a peaceable prosecution of the work of turning men to the Lord and the promotion of a visible union among those who believe in Jesus as a necessary condition precedent to the conversion of the world. This was the beginning of the Christian communion known as Disciples of Christ. But it was only a beginning. On the other side of the Atlantic men were being providentially prepared for an active and influential participation in this effort to bring peace to Zion and a reunion of the divided forces under the banner of the Captain of our salvation. Thomas Campbell was a minister in the Seceder branch of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. He was a gentleman of scholarly attainments and unquestioned piety. His spirit, also, was truly Christian and therefore genuinely catholic. He came to the United States in 1807 and began at once to work with his people in Pennsylvania. The population was limited and there was a scarcity of religious teachers. The ordinances of Christ's appointment were irregularly observed for these reasons. The infrequency with which the Lord's table was spread and the holy communion administered was, by many devout persons, felt to be a great deprivation. On one occasion Mr. Campbell, when presiding at the supper, invited other than Seceder Presbyterians to participate in this feast of love. For this breach of church order he was arraigned and tried. His prosecutors, however, failed to secure his condemnation. But this circumstance, taken in connection with certain other events with which he had been connected in his native land, had a tendency to loosen his denominational bonds.

Meantime, Thomas Campbell's son Alexander, a youth of some twenty summers, took passage with the family for the United States, but the ship on which he embarked was wrecked, so that he and the other members of the household were detained a year in Scotland. The time was pleasantly and profitably occupied by the young man with studies in the University of Glasgow. While in that city he became acquainted with some gentlemen of means, culture, piety and social standing, who, dissatisfied with the denominationalism and sectarianism of the time, were seeking a more excellent theory. An impression was thus made on his mind that continued to the end of his life, in 1866. In the autumn of 1809 Alexander Campbell, with his father's family, arrived in New York, and proceeded without delay to Pennsylvania, where the elder Campbell, to the surprise and delight of his son, was at work on an appeal to evangelical Christendom looking to a visible union of such as believed in Christ. An independent union church was, in a short time, organized. The mind of the Campbells at this time is stated in the words following:

"Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that rejecting human opinions and the inventions of men as of any authority, or as having any place in the Church of God, we might forever cease from further contentions about such things; returning to and holding fast by the original standard; taking the divine Word alone