

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. . . . AUGUST, 1893

EDITORIAL.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF OBEYING CHRIST.

Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city. Rev. xxii. 14.

It is well for our race that we are under a dispensation of favor—that blessing and not cursing is the key-note of our religion. Man-kind away from their Father and their home are so lost that “the poison of asps is under their lips and their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” The Son of Man who came to seek and to save the lost so effectually turns the current of life that he turns these very lips to praise the Creator and fills these very mouths with the blessings of heavenly love for each other. When the world he came to save was so sunk in crime and hardened in ingratitude as to give their kinsman and benefactor no reception, angels came from heaven to supply the delightful duty and angels sang “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

The Son of Man began his public life in imparting blessings and making happy the sons and daughters of affliction. His hands never opened but to impart blessings, his tears never flowed but to mingle with theirs who wept. He chose twelve men to be with him to learn his ways, to be impressed with his character so as to stamp that impression upon all who believe on him through their word. His intercourse with these men was most lovable. His first salutation in meeting them was “Peace be unto you,” and when leaving them at last to go unto the Father, he said, “My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. * * Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.”

What other teacher ever addressed his pupils as Jesus did his in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v.) when he opened his mouth and blessed “the poor in spirit,” “them that mourn,” “the meek,” etc., and blessed them when they should be falsely accused of evil for his sake. He told them when so treated to rejoice and be exceedingly glad for it was then they stood in the company of God’s noblest who had in the past suffered for his name sake. The blessed words of Jesus comfort his followers in all ages.

“When helpers fail and foes invade,
God is their all sufficient aid.”

How earnestly the Prince of Peace closes his last revelation to men in the words at the head of this article. The attentive reader will admire this beautiful chapter. Jesus seems to yearn in lingering compassion for the lost, and over and over to urge men to accept of the great salvation. Again and again he states the eternal difference of the last day, between those within the city, and all that are without. And before John writes the final amen, Jesus urges him again to declare in his name, that the Spirit and the bride say come, let him that heareth say come, “let him that is athirst come and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely.” Then John is to tell the awful consequence of altering the words of this book and to announce from the Lord his certain and sudden coming and the feelings of his heart to all readers. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.”

Before the revelation is finished the happy state of those who do the commandments of Christ is declared, and it is most important for us to know his commandments, that we may do them and finally enter through the gates into the city. Divine commands are of two classes. One is *Moral* the other is *Positive*. *Moral* commandments are right in themselves

and we can see them so and why they are commanded. They are right before they are commanded. To love God and serve him. To love our neighbor and do him good as we find opportunity. To pray to God, speak the truth, etc. These and such like are always moral obligations binding on men and always right. Jesus Christ taught all these in their highest perfection both in word and in all the actions of his life; those who receive his instructions and follow him may expect his blessings. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life, etc. To keep the moral commandments of Jesus, we must daily study his words to know them, and constantly pray for his Holy Spirit to enable us to follow Jesus and be like him. He has graciously promised his Holy Spirit to them who love and obey him.

But both Old and New Testament have positive institutions or commands as well as moral. Positive institutions derive all their virtue from him who appointed or commanded them, having nothing in themselves aside from his authority. The difference between *Moral* commands and *Positive* commands is this: the *Moral* is commanded because it is right. The *Positive* is right because it is commanded.

In moral commands we may seek the best means in our judgment to obey God, thus we may find out the best way in our power to do good to our neighbors, etc. But in positive commands we must do just as we are told and can’t seek out methods of our own.

God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac. He gave him no reason for the strange command. It was enough for Abraham that God told him to do it.

Circumcision was a positive command of God and death followed its transgression.

When the Israelites for their sins were bitten by flying serpents, God commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole and all who looked to it lived. All this belonged to positive commands. Building the Tabernacle was a positive institution. Every hook and knob and curtain must be made according to the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount. If he made any thing different he must pay the penalty with his life. So positive was this kind of law. The men of Beth-shemesh, contrary to God’s positive law, looked into the ark and over 50,000 were slain. (I Sam. vi. 19.)

Naaman, the Syrian leper, was commanded to wash seven times, and although it seemed to him too small a thing as first he did exactly as he was told and was cured, all showing us that God in ways which may appear to us small accomplishes his own glorious power. Both Old and New Testament have their *Positive* as well as their *Moral* laws. In Old Testament disobedience is for the most part speedily punished; in the New disobedience is for the most part reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished.

Jesus when on earth gave different positive commands. He told the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth. He did so and was healed. He told the blind man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. He did so and received his sight. We might ask if Jesus could not cure each of these without their doing anything but merely praying him to heal them and answer. He certainly could if he saw fit; but he did not but took a better way. He gave them an opportunity to manifest their faith in him and their love to him by simply doing a thing which he told them to do—a thing so simple that it could have no virtue in itself, but was a simple submission to divine authority. Jesus has given two positive commands to be observed by men till the end of time. One is inside the church, called the Lord’s Supper. Jesus commands his disciples to take bread and wine, and after his example to eat and drink in remembrance of him. This they are commanded to do till he comes. By so doing they show the Lord’s

death till he comes. He has also appointed that sinners that believe in him with all their heart and turn with all their heart from their sins shall be buried with him in baptism and rise to walk in newness of life. When he gave the gospel in charge to the Apostles he said, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. And he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark. xvi. 15-16.)

This last commission is a most solemn matter. It binds God’s children to send the gospel to all and commands all men to believe and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST ON P. E. I.

The principles which we hold and the platform upon which we stand have long been known on P. E. Island. Some of our churches date back nearly to the beginning of the present century. But our progress, while not discouraging, has not been all that could be desired. Considering our aim and plea, more should have been done; and more would have been, had there been, in the early days, a larger number of faithful workers like the late Dr. John Knox, whose early years were spent in earnest, arduous endeavors to sow the seeds of divine truth; and like that other holy man of God—Bro. D. Crawford—who still continues, as in years gone by, to lead sinners to Jesus. Perhaps the greatest wonder is that, with so few preachers in the pioneer days, so good a work has been done. There are eight churches on the Island, and during the past year they have sustained preaching as follows: Summerside, Tignish and Tryon, Bro. W. H. Harding; New Glasgow, Bro. D. Crawford; Charlottetown and Lot 48, Bro. O. B. Emery; Montague and East Point, Bro. G. D. Weaver. Besides the places named, each of the preachers has points to which he occasionally goes, and where in the future a harvest may be gathered from the seed which is now being sown.

Each year the Annual Meeting of the churches is held, commencing on Saturday before the second Lord’s day in July. This year the brethren met with the church at Montague. The attendance was large, nearly every church being represented, and some congregations having many of their members present. Now Glasgow probably enjoys the distinction—it is an honorable one—of having the largest number of representatives at the Association.

The church at Montague has long had the reputation of knowing how to entertain both royally and cheerfully, and their reputation has not suffered any on this occasion. Everything that a kind thoughtfulness would suggest to make the visitors enjoy a profitable meeting was done. Bro. Weaver—their pastor—who in the year now closed has done a splendid work and whose influence for good is expanding—was unremitting in his efforts to make the meeting a success; and he was one of the happiest men to be seen in the village.

To the endeavors of the church Providence lent a kindly aid. The weather throughout was all that even a captious critic could desire. Many said they could not suggest an improvement. The showers came just in time to settle the dust and at the same time not interfere with the meetings.

There was a welcome meeting at the church on Saturday evening. The devotional part was led by Bro. Harding, and the address of welcome was delivered by Bro. Weaver. When all the visitors were provided with homes the meeting was dismissed.

On Lord’s day morning at ten o’clock the brethren assembled for a prayer and social meeting. The