

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., . . . MAY, 1896

EDITORIAL.

THE CONTRAST.

Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. Matt. vi. 19, 20. R. V.

This, the greatest of sermons, was addressed to the disciples of Christ, and not to the multitudes, as is often supposed. (See chap. v. 1). Christians are not of this world, but are citizens of heaven passing through this world to their eternal home. What they really need of earth's treasure is enough to pay their heavenly expenses. This they should seek and labor for so as not to be an unjust burden upon others, or a reproach on the great cause of their Master in heaven. It is also their duty to provide for their own, and especially those of their own house, according to the directions of the word of God.

But in attending to these needful duties there is a great danger of making them the principal object of living, and of falling into the common mistake, so often and so emphatically condemned by the Saviour, of making a man's life consist of the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

The treasures laid up on earth, by men of those times and places, beside gold and silver, were large wardrobes of varied and costly clothing. Among their gifts to favorites were so many changes of raiment. On the prodigal's return the glad father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," etc.

Jesus shows the utter folly of laying up for themselves such treasure as moth and rust consume, and such as thieves break through and steal, sometimes not even sparing the lives of their possessors. This treasure we cannot retain, be it ever so dear to our hearts. We either leave it or it leaves us with nothing but unavailing heart-aches and bitterest disappointment.

But Jesus commands his disciples to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven where all will be secure and safe forevermore, where no thief can ever come, nor moth consume. This command is not grievous, but for his people it is safe. They are working for their own best interest while obeying him. Having minds so capacious that nothing earthly or perishable can fill them, he places within their reach the unfailing riches of eternity and bids them share its wealth,—“lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven.”

The treasures of heaven are the redeemed of all nations. God so loved them that he gave his only begotten Son to bring them to heaven. None are so dear to the Redeemer's

heart as those he brought nigh by his own blood. His richest treasures are the many sons he leads into glory. There is more joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repents than over the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance, because that one added to the saved augments the treasure of heaven—that treasure which the Holy Spirit calls “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” (Ep. i. 18).

When Jesus invites his people on earth to himself, he gives them the great privilege of increasing the unspeakable treasures of heaven, by leading the lost to him; and although they have never been in heaven, they can lay up treasure there. How this is done we learn from the following passages: Jesus said to them whom he found fishing, “Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men.” (Mark i. 17). “If he hear thee thou has guined thy brother.” (Matt. xviii. 15). To fish men and gain an offending brother was to lead them to Christ and through him to heaven. Jesus says to his disciples: “He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.” (John iv. 36). These reapers laid up treasure in heaven. “Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James v. 20). “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16). It will be observed that none of these passages refer to miracles, but to the faithful conduct of ordinary Christians. None can truthfully say, “It is altogether beyond my power to lay up treasure in heaven,” if it means such work as the above. God requires of us such influence as our time and talents and money can exert on others, to persuade them to be saved and enter into the everlasting kingdom, and even the great apostle could exclaim in view of the grand work on one hand, and his weakness on the other, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.” The humblest Christian can look to the same power and lean upon his almighty arm. When Jesus tells us to lay up treasures in heaven he knows that we can in his strength do so, if we give earnest attention to it. The anxiety of the faithful to lay up this treasure will be swallowed up in the eternal satisfaction of victory, so that the successful reaper will receive wages as well as gather fruit unto life eternal.

The apostles often expressed their anxiety about the heavenly treasure, as well as the sweet anticipation of final triumph. Paul, though in much need of temporal things, says to the Corinthians, whose affections had in a measure been turned from him by false teachers, “I have not been, nor will I be, burdensome to you. For I seek not yours, but *you*. And I will gladly spend and be spent for you, although the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” (II Cor. xii. 14, 15).

To the Cossians he preached Christ, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ. (Chap. i. 28). How often and earnestly he prayed that the very God of peace would sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, body, soul and spirit, and preserve them blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he asks that church, “What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” (I Thess. ii. 19, 29).

See, also, writes the beloved John: “Look to yourselves that *we* lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (II John 8). John had been long laying up treasure in heaven, and the full reward he expected was the eternal salvation of those whom he had led to Christ—the reward of the man who built on Christ the true foundation—such material as will stand the trying fire. (I Cor. iii. 14).

We live in stirring times and in times of great possibilities. Since the days of the apostles never were better opportunities of understanding our duty to God and man, and of laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven. We have the blessed gospel showing clearly how Christ saves sinners. We can hold this before our neighbors and our families that they may be saved, letting our light so shine as not to hinder the gospel. Can heaven afford greater joy than that of leading our nearest and dearest friends to Jesus? Jesus puts that joy within our reach. Shall we embrace it?

Among the activities around us, efforts are being made to carry out the Saviour's last great commission—to preach the gospel to the whole creation. Others have labored and died in this great work, and God is calling us to enter into their labors. Appeals come to us from east and west to assist the reapers who are now gathering fruit unto life eternal. Can we afford to turn a deaf ear to those appeals and coldly determine to do nothing for these millions dying in darkness? Will we not rather rejoice that even we can do a little, and labor and pray for ability to do more, until we leave the harvest field to stand with that great multitude from every nation who shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

A letter from Bro. Hiram Wallace informs us of his illness, which, on the 8th of April, had lasted four weeks. Though scarcely able to write, he was a little better and hopeful that he would so far recover as to be able to visit the provinces and enjoy our summer sea air.

Bro. Wallace is one of our true and faithful preachers, who is widely known in the Maritime Provinces, and only known to be loved and trusted. Many prayers will ascend to the Heavenly Father of mercies that if it be his will his useful life may be long spared for the benefit of his cause. D. O.