

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., APRIL, 1896.

EDITORIAL.

GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF OUR BODIES.

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Glorify God, therefore, with your body.—I Corinthians vi. 19, 20. R. V.

It is the due conviction of the fact that God claims our body as his own, and the ground of this claim that leads the honest hearted to consecrate their bodies as well as their spirits to the service of God. The men who think they are their own, propose to live unto themselves. Regardless of the impossibility of any one living without the aid of others, they study only their own interests and how to please themselves.

In this place the apostle is earnestly charging his Corinthian brethren to keep their bodies pure from all defilement, especially from the filthy habits of the heathen, because their bodies are the property of God, members of Christ, and temples for the Holy Spirit. God claims them not so much because he is their Creator, nor on account of his providential care of them as on account of his redeeming love. "*Ye are bought with a price.*"

The following facts claim our attention :

- I. The Christian is not his own.
- II. God has bought him with a great price.
- III. For a high purpose.

I. The Christian is not his own. This should be distinctly understood at the beginning of the Christian life and borne in mind every day till its close. He is the servant of Christ. When a man enters the services of a government, he is entrusted with important public affairs and is paid what supplies his needs so that he may give his best energies to those affairs. Jesus says to his servants, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*" While employing their best powers to advance the cause of Christ, God will give them wisdom to guide their private affairs with discretion, and will make them gainers and not losers by seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness. History demonstrates Christ's faithfulness to this promise. God loves those who cheerfully give time, and money, and influence to spread his truth, and he is able to make all grace abound so that they may have all sufficiency for the grand purposes of his love. He has ordained that his kingdom shall grow and prosper by the faithful labors and sacrifices of his servants, and he will not desert his willing workers.

The constant recognition of God's ownership of his people not only invites them to watchfulness and prayer that they may do his commandments and have his approval, but inspires them also with an abiding confidence in his interest in them and his care over them. While others are racked with anxiety about the future—what they shall

eat and drink, etc., they remember that their Father numbers the very hairs of their head and counts each of them of more value than the many sparrows he cares for. "Like David they can say, "I will both lay me down and sleep in peace, for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety." Their bodies are not their own, but are in the safe keeping of their Almighty owner, who will never leave them till they lose their last earthly defilement, and appear in the image of their glorified Redeemer. "*Ye are not your own.*"

II. God has bought the Christian with a great price. Every wise buyer considers the article worth the price he pays for it. God is as wise as he is good, and we learn the value he places upon us by the price he has paid for our redemption. He knows the difference between lost men and saved men, because he comprehends eternity; and when there was only one name by whom we could be saved, he spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all. Jesus says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the price at which he bought us. *He thought us worth that great price, and eternity, with its redeemed millions, will confirm his wisdom and grace.* The principalities and powers in all the heavenly places will learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God.

III. God has redeemed the Christian for a high purpose—which is to glorify himself, and he gives him the grand privilege of doing this with his body, soul and spirit. Look at this apostle with abilities of the highest order. When in the service of sin he was a leader of men. His body was at the disposal of Satan. His feet were swift to shed the blood of the saints. His throat was an open sepulchre, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. But when he discovered that he was not his own, but redeemed with the blood of Christ, how wonderful his change! His mouth, once full of cursing and bitterness, was now never weary of uttering his praise, "*Who loved me and gave himself for me.*" His feet were now as swift in carrying him round to preach unto all men the unsearchable riches of Christ. He glorified God in the inner prison at midnight. The prisoners heard his prayers and songs of praise, notwithstanding his unwashed stripes and fastened feet. His sweet voice stayed the self-destroying arm of the alarmed jailor, and led him and all his house into the fold of God.

Paul's body was very precious to his Redeemer, both in work and suffering. By the one he was sowing and reaping and gathering much fruit unto life eternal. By the other he was bearing about in his body the marks of the dying of the Lord. His scars and marring wounds the result of his frequent and severe beatings, pointed to the death and also the life of the Lord.

Beloved brethren, though we are so far below the apostle in work and suffering for

Christ, yet we belong to the same family and are heirs of the same inheritance. Through abounding mercy we can also say of the Son of God, "Who loved us and gave himself for us." We have been bought with a price and for a purpose. He who bought us can be glorified in us. He has work for us to do, whose importance baffles description. The wise and obedient in that work "will shine as the brightness of the firmament."

We speak of the angels and admire their wonderful work. But our Redeemer has better work for us to do. He does not say that the angels are the light of the world, nor the salt of the earth, but he waits to make us both.

We admire angels' songs and seraphic music, but our Redeemer has better music and sweeter songs for us.

We speak admiringly of angels' bodies and their golden wings, but if fruitful we shall have more glorious bodies than the angels.

Instead of receiving the nature of angels, we shall be partakers of a divine nature. Having cost the Redeemer much, he will love us the more; and having much forgiven, we will love much.

Original Contributions.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

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Of all the figures used in the New Testament to illustrate the relation of Christ to the Church, there is perhaps none more expressive than the figure of a marriage. This was not entirely a new idea with the New Testament writers. The prophets had represented God's relation to Israel by the same figure. God was the husband of Israel. Israel was the bride, and, in her apostasy, the unfaithful wife, of God. The idea would therefore be familiar, at least to the Jewish readers of the New Testament. To get the full force of the figure we must keep in mind the marriage customs of the East, much the same now as then, upon which the analogy is founded. There were three features in these customs which need emphasis.

First. When a man desired a wife, a third person was engaged to carry on the negotiations between the parties. So Abraham's servant went to procure a wife for Israel, Gen. xxiv. So Samson said to his parents concerning the young woman of Timnah "Now therefore get her for me to wife." Jud. xiv. 1-2. This third party is called "the friend of the bridegroom." Jno. iii. 29.

Second. After this third party had gained the consent of the prospective bride to become the wife of the man who had entrusted this matter to him, *there was a public espousal, or betrothal.* It appears that this was a public ceremony in the house of the woman's parents, at which a formal declaration of their engagement was made. It took place among the Jews, sometimes a year before the marriage. We know that Joseph was espoused to Mary the mother of Jesus