

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., - FEBRUARY, 1899

## EDITORIAL.

SYNOPSIS OF A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN  
CHARLOTTETOWN BY THE EDITOR, ON  
THE 8TH OF JANUARY.

For our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself.—Phil. iii, 20, 21.

What costs us much we reckon dear Paul suffered much in planting the church at Philippi (Acts xvi) and it was dear to his heart. Their treatment of him enhanced that affection. When neglected by other churches this church sent once and again to his necessity. This he valued, and even more for the benefit it was to themselves than to him. He calls their kind offerings "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God," and adds, "but my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (chap. 4)

Although this church was beset by teachers whose example, life and end drew bitter tears from the Apostle, yet he assured them that they in common with himself were citizens of heaven that waited for a Saviour who would come and fit them for an eternal residence with Himself at home.

When men high in favor visit a city it is customary to confer on them the freedom of the city, as the hero of Soudan received the freedom of London last summer; so Jesus, who is Lord of all, makes all who receive Him citizens of heaven. They receive its privileges and are concerned in its growth and all things which pertain to it. Their treasure and their hearts are in heaven. Thither have gone their best friends and kindred, and there their Saviour reigns, with whom they expect to spend their eternal future. How well for every professed Christian to solemnly enquire: Am I a citizen? Do my life and actions fit?

Let us consider—

I. The standing of true Christians—citizens of heaven.

II. What they are waiting for. A Saviour.

III. What that Saviour will do for them.

The standing of true Christians—they are citizens of heaven. They have never been there, nor even seen any one that has, but their dependence is entirely on the Son of man, who is in heaven. He has told them that except a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven; and has also described the new birth—that the Spirit breathes or speaks where He pleases, and men hear what the Spirit says about the Son of man being lifted up on the cross to save the perishing, and that when men believe with all their heart what the Spirit says of Christ, they are begotten of the Spirit. These Philippians had believed in Jesus, were born of water and of the Spirit, and were now waiting for a Saviour from heaven.—(Acts xvi, 14, 15 and 31-34) The jailor, one of the first converts, had a wonderful change when

he was begotten of God and started on the road to heaven; so has every one that is born of God, their treasure and hopes are in heaven. The Saviour has done much for them, and they love and praise Him; but their bodies are unfit for heaven and they need another birth. Jesus says, from the heart come evil thoughts—adultery, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evils come from the heart, and they defile the man. Such a body, without renewal, cannot enter heaven. Jesus enables those who receive Him to mortify in a great measure these evils and overcome them. They fight the good fight of faith and conquer them. But they still live in the body to humble the Christian and keep him constantly under arms. Paul was an eminent Christian, but he had to fight to keep under his body. So had John and Peter and James, and all the apostles. All could join Paul in saying: Not as though I had already attained; either were already perfect, etc., etc. So can all good men, such as Luther, Livingstone, Judson and Spurgeon, Garfield and Gladstone. All had to fight to keep under the body. It humbles all to think of their poor corruptible bodies.

We have known noble spirits on earth. Their company has made us feel nearer heaven, their counsel helped us, and to explain to them our troubles was like throwing them off our own shoulders. But where are their bodies to-day? Like the good of all ages, and like a vapor, they have passed from sight. While living their bodies humbled and deceived them, and finally slipped from under them to mingle with their appropriate clay and worms. That body, made in the likeness of God to be pure and live on, has by sin become weak and dying, so that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption.

But what has astonished the universe is the fact that he who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That body, vile and low as it was, was not too low to hold the spirit of God's equal, and in it he humbled himself until he reached the cross. In his way lay the gloomy garden in which he prayed alone in agony and sweat and blood, yet he humbled himself. Along the pathway was the traitor and band with swords and staves and the cords to bind him. In the priest's palace he heard his accusation; for making the good confession they all said he is guilty of death, and also heard his leading disciple, with bitter oaths, deny him, yet he humbled himself to be dressed in purple and crowned with thorns and mocked as king of the Jews. But who can describe or imagine the scene of Calvary, the body of his humiliation. The temples torn with the crown of thorns, the hands and feet nailed to the wood, and between two thieves raised on a cross between earth and heaven, hated by one and forsaken by the other, wondering that there was none to help and in deepest agony crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." No voice was heard but that of deepest reproach and cruel mocking. But he endured the cross, despising the shame and when about to leave the body of his humiliation, he cries "It is finished," another cry, "Father into thy hand I commit my spirit," and bowed his head and died. When God forsook him his cry was "My God, my God,"

but when ready to receive his spirit it was "Father into thy hands I commit my spirit." His work was finished, even his body would suffer no more disgrace. Although his enemies had made his grave with the wicked, they were defeated for he was with the rich in his death. Isa. liii, 9, R. V., John xix 38-42. The body of Jesus had never sinned and although he had humbled himself to the death of the cross his body was not allowed to be in a criminal's grave.

The scriptures place peculiar emphasis on that ALMIGHTY POWER WHICH RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD. Let us behold if we can the contrast between one crucified in weakness and raised in power, between a body sown in dishonor and raised in glory. Jesus' resurrected body was not an entirely new body but the old body fashioned anew. He who could easily come and stand among his disciples after the doors had been securely barred against invading enemies, could also show them his hands and his feet.

The citizens of heaven now groaning under the body of their humiliation wait for a Saviour. He has saved them from the love and condemnation of sin, given them the spirit of adoption, and is in heaven interceding for them. They love Jesus and can never feel fully satisfied until they see him face to face. But their bodies are unfit for the presence of the King. No one else can save their bodies and fit them for heaven, but they rejoice to believe that Jesus can and has assuredly promised to come from heaven for the purpose so they gladly wait for his coming. In reading the history of Christ it is wonderful how often he has made that promise. I will raise him up at the last day, Jesus repeats over and over again. And the apostles constantly dwelt upon this promise. "Surely I come quickly," was his last promise. It inspired a hope that anchored the soul on Christ and heaven and purified as Christ is pure.

III. What the Saviour will do when he comes from heaven. He will fashion anew the body of our humiliation. He will not create new bodies for his people, but change the old body. Perhaps no one had a clearer view of the glorious future than John the disciple, whom Jesus loved; and of the newly fashioned body he says: "We know not what we shall be;" but this he knew, "when he shall appear, we shall be like him." The human and divine met in the body of Christ when he was on earth, but who can conceive what that body is now glorified in heaven. But such will be the body of our humiliation when Jesus fashions it anew. It will be conformed to the body of his glory. It is a divine working alone that can do this. That working by which he subjected to himself the iron will and majestic talents of Saul of Tarsus and made him the irresistible standard bearer of the cross among the nations—that fitted the impetuous Peter to be his leading ambassador, and with perfect composure meet the Jewish counsel, backed by the power of Rome, charge them with the shameful death of the Lord, and assert his determination to proclaim it, although threatened with certain death if he did so. It was the working which utilized the burning ardor of John, who sought fire from heaven to destroy the people who did not receive his Master. That working made him one of the most patient and the most lovable of mankind. It is able to subject all things to his own use and for his own glory, and will at his coming conform their body to the body of his glory. His faithful citizens are looking and waiting for his coming, and the closing cry of God's revelation is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—(Rev. xxii, 20.)