

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B.

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EDITORIAL.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF BELIEVING.

Believest thou this? She said unto Him, Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.—John ii. 26, 27.

Jesus asks Martha a question respecting her faith rather than her understanding. Our salvation turns not on our understanding of all that Jesus says, but on our heart-felt confidence in Him. Christians resemble little children, not because little children know more than others, but because they heartily confide in those whom they regard as true and faithful.

Jesus met Martha in deepest sorrow. He whom He loved was dead; and without telling Him the fact, Martha exclaimed, Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. What she had seen and known of Jesus convinced her that death would at once retreat at His presence. Her anxiety and her confidence in Jesus prompted her to intimate a desire that He would ask God to bring the loved one even from the grave. When Jesus told her that her brother would rise again, she seemed to feel that she had gone too far, even to hint that she might then see him, and in apology for her too eager desire declared her firm conviction that Lazarus would rise in the resurrection at the last day.

The resurrection was but dimly taught in the Old Testament. At this time it was but imperfectly understood by the Jews. Though it was the dividing line between the Pharisees and Sadducees, even the former held the most vague opinions of it. This appears from the question which the Sadducees put to the Saviour as a puzzle, respecting the woman who had as husbands the seven brothers in succession. It was evident that neither sect understood the Scripture nor the power of God, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Martha believed in the resurrection. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead (or, as in the Revised Version, though he die) yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

These glorious truths respecting the resurrection of the dead saints and the change of the living saints when the Lord shall come, were not understood by the apostles until after Jesus had risen. They did not so much as understand that He Himself would rise, and they would not believe those who had seen Him after His resurrection. He had often told them of the glorious day when the Son of Man would come in His kingdom, but they understood Him not. He had shown Peter, James and John what the kingdom would be like, on the "holy mount" when "His face shone as the sun and His garment was white as the light." The two men who appeared in glory and spake of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem represented the risen saints and the changed saints who in the resurrection day shall ascend together to meet the Lord in the air and shall be forever with the Lord. Moses was dead, but now appears in glory, as the risen believers shall appear in that day. Elias never died, but appears in glory as whosoever liveth and believeth shall then appear. They spake to Jesus of His death, and this will be the eternal theme of the glorified in heaven—the decree that He accomplished at Jerusalem.

The disciples were strictly forbidden to tell any man the vision till after Jesus rose from the dead. They did not understand it, and must not handle it. This, like much of Jesus' teaching, they neither

know nor remembered until He, the Spirit of Truth had come and led them into all truth. He brought to their memory and understanding all that Jesus had previously taught them, and showed them things to come.

In 1 Cor. xvi. 51, 52, Paul handles the matter as a new revelation. "Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED," etc., etc. We hence conclude that Martha did not understand what Jesus declared would take place with the dead and living believers at the resurrection day, and that Jesus asked her if she could receive the sublime announcement on His authority. Her answer is beautiful for its simplicity, firmness and intelligence. He said it and that was enough for her because she was confident that He was the Christ and the Son of God who should come into the world. Everything that He said was the truth of God and all who trusted in Him were safe. He is the rock of their salvation. Martha confessed with her mouth and believed in her heart the very truth which Jesus had declared to be the rock on which He would build His church and against which the gates of hades would not prevail (Matt. xvi. 18). This place and occasion were peculiarly appropriate for Jesus to make the sublime announcement and for Martha to make the "good confession." Everything seems to be in advance and to have a prospective bearing. Jesus had not yet entered the grave in person but is about to send an order to the "last enemy" to yield up his prey. It was not yet "made known unto the sons of men" what would happen to the living and dead believers at the resurrection, but Jesus tells it to Martha. Jesus has not yet "before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession" which His believing followers were to repeat after Him in all coming time, but Martha makes it in advance. At the darkest spot in human history, where the lifeless body of a loved one, bound in grave clothes, is put into a cave with a stone laid upon it—where stand a weeping multitude, weeping sisters and a weeping Saviour—words are uttered and power displayed which "make all things new." About to touch the spring which unlocks the grave, Jesus gives forth the promise and the earnest of the hope which lights the domain of death and transforms the king of terrors into the gentle harbinger of eternal joy. He asks every child of God "Believest thou this?" and the confident affirmative answer in every case gives peace and joy.

When the condemned sinner who vainly seeks rest from every quarter ceases this striving—considers Jesus' work and invitation and promise and falls helplessly into His arms he finds rest to his soul. "Yea, Lord, I believe thou art the Christ the Son of God."

Original Contributions.

GREAT GAIN.

The most important question that any man or woman can ask themselves in life is, "How can I make the most of my life?" "How can I spend my time in order to gain most for this world and for the next, for time and for eternity?"

Like all other questions that we may ask ourselves, or may desire to be enlightened upon, God's word has for these a plain answer—"Godliness with contentment is great gain." What a blessing it would be to us if we would ask ourselves these questions early in life. Go to God's word for the answer; be guided accordingly, and seek our gain through these channels alone, in place of spending our lives seeking worldly gain that will either leave

us or that we must soon leave ourselves as we pass beyond the shores of time.

In this life men seek gain and happiness through many channels—honor, wealth, pleasure, learning and knowledge, temporal power and influence; and yet from these sources there can not come true happiness nor great gain. God's receipt for great gain is "Godliness with contentment." What is godliness? Webster defines it as "piety, belief in God and reverence for His character and laws." Then, in order to have godliness, we must believe that God is "and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him," and have reverence for His laws and commands, be careful in the performance of religious duties, and this must proceed from love and reverence to His divine character and commands. A life of Christian obedience brings us daily to a knowledge of God, and a knowledge of God brings us to great gain. Jesus says "this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." As we have to leave all earthly gain behind at death, then "great gain" can come only through "eternal life."

We thus gain the witness of the Spirit, and through the Spirit have our minds conformed to the will of God, and our lives brought under its control, whereby is produced the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness and goodness," "fruits unto holiness," of which the end is "everlasting life," "great gain."

This alone can bring contentment in this life, surrounded, as we are, with perplexities within and without. Contentment can only come from a mind acquiescing with the perfect will of God, believing that He doeth all things well. Thus trusting in God we can be content when health, prosperity and friends fail us; contentment can shine in the fiery furnace of affliction, in the night of adversity, and in the bereavement of friends, death or desertion.

True contentment is grounded on the perfect excellency of Divine character, for we know that God cannot err or be frustrated, that His promises cannot fail nor His love change; on the equity and benignity of His government, for we know that "all things shall work together for good to them who love God, to the called according to His purpose; on the richness of the Divine gifts, earth, heaven, sea, sky, valley and mountains, all things in nature, His revealed will and His only begotten Son from Heaven. What higher honors? what more enduring blessings? and what greater gain from which to draw contentment? Contentment drawn from these sources is a perpetual feast to the soul, which connected to that peace which comes from godliness, which the world can not give, neither can take away," is great gain for time and everlasting gain for eternity.

H. A. DEVON.

Correspondence.

Dear Christian,—Our Annual is once more a thing of the past, and now we look ahead in anticipation to the next one. How many of us have been benefited by our attendance only the future will reveal. It is sufficient to say that everything was done by the brethren and sisters of Deer Island to make us comfortable, and we feel that while we enjoyed a pleasant visit, the Churches at Lord's Cove and Leonardville were strengthened, and made to rejoice anew in their labor of love. Many faces were absent that we would dearly loved to have seen, and many anxious enquiries were made on account of their non-presence. But it seems that they were situated as some that we read about in the New Testament; they made excuses; one had to attend a jubilee, another was building a parsonage, while a third was seeing to his awmill. Well, they missed a good meeting and