

The Harbinger & Advocate.

'SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE'—PAUL. ROCHESTER, SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1871.

THE HARBINGER.

The great mass of religious papers of the day are wedded to some abstract doctrine or exclusive sect. For this end they have been originated and perpetuated. Each is made the exponent and defender of the peculiar doctrines of the party to which it belongs; and the opponent of the sentiments of other bodies. Instead of proclaiming the truths of the Bible, detached portions of it are only used to subserve a denominational purpose. Hence, instead of enlightening the world by a proclamation of the simple truths of the Bible, it is so used as to shed darkness over it, and sink that invaluable book very low in the estimation of a large portion of mankind.

Book, tract, sermon and essay-writers, and sermonizers, with few exceptions, have some peculiar dogma, sect or party to sustain. For this purpose they labor, professedly, in the name of the Lord and for his glory. But their works condemn them. For instead of teaching the pure doctrines of the Bible, in love and harmony, they are divided into belligerent parties, and each teaches for doctrine the commandments of men. If all taught the truth, there would be no disagreement among them; for truth never contradicts or contends with itself.

The object by which each is actuated is wrong: it is to build up his church, creed or party. So long as such motives govern them, they cannot see the hidden truths of the Bible, especially those that condemn their sectarian selfishness, worldly practices, and false doctrines. They may be skilled in all the sciences, and be unwearied in their researches for truth, but they never will find it so long as the object or motive that governs them is wrong. They are of that class who were to exist in the 'last days,' who would be 'ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of truth.'

They abound in their evidences to sustain their respective contradictory positions; and that evidence is, not the word of the Lord; but it consists in nicely constructed sentences, essays and sermons; rhetorical flourishes; bold affirmations and daring assumptions; unlawful inferences; fearful perversions of isolated quotations of Scripture; and the free use of the mystical principle of interpreting the plain word of the Lord; by the aid of this principle they can make that word mean anything, everything, and nothing, as their cause may demand, and thereby prove whatever they please.

From this Babel school of mystifiers, we, as a people, have just emerged; and it would not be at all strange if some of us were yet, to a certain degree, under their pernicious influence. All, however, freed themselves sufficiently at first, to agree with Bro. Wm. Miller that the coming of the Son of Man, resurrection of the dead, kingdom of God, new heavens and earth, new Jerusalem, and reign of Christ, &c., &c., are phrases which are to be understood in a literal sense; but some paused here, and set about the work of building a sect under a human name. This being their object, as matter of course they could see no further light, especially if it was not in harmony with the fundamental principles taught by 'Father Miller,' on which the sect is built. Had their object been, to obtain a perfect knowledge of the Bible, and to proclaim as far as possible all its precious truths, they would have seen no cause of complaint against others for advancing in the study of that book, but they would have rejoiced at the new development of any truth it contains. Had their object been, to follow or know the Lord, or his word, instead of sustaining a party, they would have as freely, gladly, and zealously applied the literal principle of exegesis in the study of the life and death question, as they did to the second advent theory: they would have most strenuously contended that life, death and destruction, &c., &c., are literally to be understood. But the object they had in view prevented them seeing things in this light: the sect could not be rallied on 'Father Miller's' foundation, if they followed the literal principle any further than he had gone.

Thus the matter appears to us; and the sad result has been, a free and full investigation of the Bible, to a certain extent, has been prevented, the light of some precious truths has been withheld from many, while others have been confirmed in their errors; a formidable division has taken place, and the cause of our soon coming Lord has been greatly dishonored among us.

Were we now free from these evils, we would

thank God and take courage; but we are not: perilous times yet exist, the mystical principle yet reigns to a limited extent among us, even us, who repudiate its use on the questions of the advent, new earth, kingdom, and life and death. Hence, according to the instructions received in the mystical school, some yet contend that Jerusalem, Zion, tabernacle of David, throne of David, Judah, Israel, Gentile, heathen, &c., &c., mean something different from their common and literal import; or they are mystically to be understood.—Certain theories require the use of this principle, in this respect, to sustain them: the application of the literal principle would be most fatal to them.—And we have been deeply pained to see the manner in which those theories are sustained by their advocates. We will give a specimen. In his 'Synoptical Exposition of Zechariah Fourteenth,' in the Watchman for July 9th, Bro. H. J. uses the mystical principle very freely. He first makes Jerusalem mean 'all the Lord's enemies' or 'kingdoms of this world'; and then the 'new Jerusalem'!! Talking Jerusalem and going into captivity of half of the Jews, he supposes signifies the 'going captive into perdition' of 'all the enemies of God'!! 'Mt. Olives' he defines to be 'Mt. Zion'! 'or the whole earth'!! Dividing Mt. Olives, means the 'everlasting separation' which is to 'take place between saints and sinners'!! Fleeting of the affrighted Jews to the valley, he takes the liberty to say signifies that the saints will be 'changed gloriously' and be 'caught up to the mountains'.... 'Mt. Zion,' 'the new earth'! Reaching unto Azael, is made to stretch unto the 'utmost bounds of the everlasting hills'!! The reign of Christ from 'sea to sea,' means, 'literally, there shall be no more sea, except the sea of glass, or purified earth!!! Summer and winter' signifies 'perpetually and forever'!! All the land from Geba to Rimmon, &c., denotes the whole 'earth.' The fighting against Jerusalem, named in the 4th verse, is made to mean, the 'Lord' and all 'his saints,' fighting against 'apostate christianism or all his enemies'; but in the 12th and 13th verses the fighting is made to consist in the opposition which 'apostates and other enemies of God,' have ever brought against the 'saints' or 'inhabitants of that [what?] Jerusalem'!!! 'The plagues,' means 'the seven last plagues'!! Many other similar examples might be given from the writings of those who oppose the doctrine of the Age to come, but this is all we have room to record now: it is sufficient to show what sad work the mystical principle makes with the plain and immutable word of God.

Were we endeavoring to sustain a favorite theory, we might be led to thus interpret the word of the Lord. But this is not the case; we are actuated by no such object. We have no sectarian interest to subserve; no party name or banner under which to rally or to gather others; no doctrines of men to advocate, no man's person to admire, court or fear. Our object is to know and proclaim THE TRUTH, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as revealed in the BIBLE. To the cause of that invaluable book is the Harbinger pledged.—Our object is, regardless of the praise or blame of finite mortals, to remove as far as possible the dark veil of mysticism, under which the Scriptures have long been enshrouded, that they may speak in their literal simplicity, to the joy of many who do not now understand them. We study the Bible not by isolated or detached words or sentences, in order to obtain proof to sustain a theory—but by books, subjects, prophecies, or parts embracing the entire subject of the writer under consideration. We also give to one class of literal words one and the same signification, unless we have the very best Scriptural authority for doing differently. Hence, we find but one signification for Jerusalem in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, and that is the common literal one. So with other plain terms that occur in that literal prophecy, and many others we might name.

This rule, by which to study the Scriptures is right, and commends itself to every enlightened mind. Well, it is the rule by which the Harbinger is conducted, and which guided us in our investigations on the Advent, the Life and Death, and Age to come questions. And all we ask of those who oppose either is, to be governed by the same rule. We will ask no more at your hands; and this we do ask in the name of the Lord.

You must present Bible evidence, in plain Bible words, for giving different and conflicting significations to Jerusalem, in Zech. xiv., and in very many other prophecies. And what we say of Jerusalem, we say of Zion, tabernacle of David, his throne, Judah, Israel, Gentiles, heathen, &c., &c.

The Harbinger is pledged to the cause of the Bible—the whole Bible. We find, however, in conducting it, that some who profess to love that cause,

will not endure sound doctrine; for they turn away their ears from the truth, and stumble at the plain word of the Lord.

A settled determination seems to exist to curtail its circulation, and cripple its energies. But if God be for us, and our friends do our duty, we have nothing to fear: the Harbinger will live to the terror of evil doers, and to the joy of many who love the truth. But if our voice falters, or our peniters in proclaiming the truth, and the hands of our patrons become faint, or they grow remiss in keeping our list of subscribers good, and in paying their own subscriptions, then the Harbinger will lose its power, and go down for want of the means to sustain it.

In view of these things, we ask, Shall the Harbinger live—the free, fearless and uncompromising advocate of the whole truth of the Bible? Shall its subscription list be kept good, if not enlarged? the latter may, and should be done. Will its present patrons continue their patronage, and those who owe for their paper, pay without further delay? We kindly solicit them to do so.

In a word, let each friend of the Harbinger rally anew, at this time of sore trial, to its aid, that it may be fully and permanently freed from its present embarrassing condition, and more efficiently and successfully than ever, proclaim to all who will hear, the glad tidings of the soon coming kingdom of God.

ADVENT WATCHMAN.

In this paper for July 9, in an article headed,—'Age to Come,' we find the following unkind expressions. Speaking of our writings on the Age to Come, the writer says:

'This, coming from a man whose profession and standing is such, as to entitle him to some credit in Bible knowledge, is the most astounding assertion I ever heard made. That man is really to be pitied whose theory drives him to take such a position. He sees that as sure as the Scriptures teach the destruction of the earth, and the creation of the new, at the Second Advent, just so sure is the destruction of his fine spun theory. . . . But Bro. Marsh's theory contradicts Christ, and says his reward is not given till a thousand years after he comes. Let Bro. Marsh and all that sympathize with him in this theory, think of this, and repent before it is too late. Your theory makes God a liar. . . . He makes this assertion, which we have shown to be false. . . . His conclusions are false. . . . This heading is only used for effect, to startle the reader, and bias the mind.'

Our object is not to reply to these uncharitable and censorious declarations, nor to the communication that contains them; but we wish simply to inquire whether the conductors of the Watchman expose or approve these unchristian denunciations. We charitably hope they escaped their notice, when the article that contains them was admitted into their columns.

We do not demur at, but invite, the most critical investigation of our writings; but we do complain, for the truth's sake, when held up in a paper professing to be on terms of christian friendship with us, as being 'actuated by wicked motives, for an honest expression of our sentiments.'

QUESTIONS.

FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF ELICITING LIGHT.

- 1. If probation is extended to any part of the heathen subsequent to the Advent, or to any part of the blinded Jews, would not God show partiality, unless it was extended to generations of a similar kind who have previously died without the light of truth?
2. How can those who have previously fallen victims to death, enjoy the benefits of this future age of probation, since those who have part in the 'first resurrection' are 'blessed and holy,' and since 'the rest of the dead' are not to live again 'until the thousand years are expired'?
3. Will this age of probation extend beyond the limits of the thousand years?
4. Will the city which is to be builded during the thousand years survive the conflagration, and exist in the new earth?
5. Will the 'sanctuary'—the land of Palestine—'be cleansed by fire at the coming of the Lord'?
6. If so, will it be cleansed again at the expiration of the thousand years, when the 'elements melt with fervent heat'?
Questions similar to these frequently salute our ears, therefore I would respectfully solicit an answer from the pen of our beloved brother, J. B. Cook.
Lisbon, N. Y. W. SHELTON.

Answers to the Above.

My prayer is, that light may be elicited by the present effort, however humble it may be deemed. There is in my view, a perfectly clear and satisfactory answer to be given to each and all these questions. They are well expressed. They involve difficulties which have perplexed some acute minds. But the materials for an answer lie on the very surface (though they penetrate to the centre) of things.

The Word and Providence of God are alike determinate in their decisions on these points, as I conceive.

Answer to Question 1st.—No. The same question might have been raised relative to the calling of the Gentiles. Those who believed under the apostolic ministry may have been no better than some other Gentiles who had died in previous ages: But was God partial? No! The harlot Itanah and the God-fearing Gibeonites may have been not a whit holier or worthier than other Canaanites who had already died; but was God partial, in not giving them all just such an opportunity? No. Some men may have a heart to do good, with wisdom or wealth; but must God, in his providence, give wisdom or wealth to all such, or be partial? No.

But 'God's ways are equal'! Yes; they are equal, because He requires only the one, two, five, or 'ten talents' which each one, or each age has. The great object of probation is, to test, develop, and mature character. This may be done in a great diversity of external conditions—by a great variety of providential gifts and educational advantages. Each age is judged by its own light—not by a future second probation! They are judged for the deeds of this life! The mosaic revelations were in advance; those at the first advent were still in advance; and those at the opening of the millennial age will be still sevenfold greater: amen. 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people.' Isa. xxi. 26. 'Where much is given, more is [justly] required.'

Answer to Question 2d.—They can not. Both Scripture and facts are against the idea. We might as well imagine that 'the Holy One of Israel,' will save some, as old smokers purge their pipes—by burning them! If one may indulge imagination against God's truth, then others may. Then the Gospel is a sham; and all preaching and faith avain. But no. The Gospel is God's method and means of saving all who shall be saved.

Answer to Question 3d.—No. The light of the prophetic lamp ends with the close of God's great week. The revealed plan of God is there consummated. What is said incidentally of the 'ages to come' affirms nothing relative to probation. It is a fact that all past dispensations to angels and men have been probationary, till character has been developed and decided. 'But 'secret things belong to God—things revealed, to us.' Deut. xxxii. 29.

Answer to Question 4th.—Scripture does not answer, that I see; except by analogy. The 'new heart'—or new character of the christian—is retained at the crowning consummation of God's grace toward him, in the resurrection. So the restitution is retained as fast and as far as it goes. As 'mortality (in the christian) is swallowed up of life' in the resurrection; so all that is restored and made heavenly 'in the dispensation of the fulness of times' (the 1000 years reign) may, I conceive, be absorbed, or embraced, or 'swallowed up' in the final consummation of the great plan of God.

Answer to Question 5th.—Yes. See Isa. iv.; Psa. l. 3-6; Dan. vii. 10; Rev. xiv. 1-3; xv. 1-4; xvi. 8. It will be 'after the manner of Egypt.'—False miracles like the magician's plagues and fire, and an army of all nations led by Anti Christ, like that of Pharaoh against Israel, will fill out (a part of) the grand scene. God will 'wash' and 'purge' Jerusalem, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.

Answer to Question 6th.—No. The new heart of Abraham is not to be renewed at the opening of the great day. For 'God's work is perfect.' It never needs doing over, in order to be done better. Like the atonement of Christ it is done 'once for all. So the immortalized saints will be above death and the devil, like their risen Lord, forever. Future time, during 'the thousand years'—'day of the Lord,' will no more mar or undo God's work (so far as 'it is finished') than past time has undone it. PLEASE READ THE ABOVE. Compare it with the Word, and remember that no inference, no argument whatever, can outweigh 'one jot or one tittle' of 'the law or the prophets.' This false notion of 'charmony' based on (or tried by) some human mind or theory, is the bane of christianendom! It is Anti-Christ! 'One jot' of God's truth is more mighty than the Pope or prince—more stable than 'heaven and earth.' Amen!