

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

"JERUSALEM! MY HAPPY HOME."

Who is there that has not been moved and comforted by reading or singing this beautiful hymn? It is not generally known, however, that it is one of the oldest hymns in the possession of the church. It was discovered in a volume of manuscript poems in the British Museum, as old as the reign of James the First. It is probable, however, that the hymn itself is of much earlier origin. A recent writer even professes to trace it back to St. Augustine's Church.

Your readers will, I am sure, thank you for publishing it in the Messenger.

S. BROWN.

Jerusalem! my happy home!
When shall I come to thee
When shall my sorrows have an end,
Thy joys when shall I see?

Oh, happy harbour of the saints!
Oh, sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

In thee no sickness may be seen,
No hurt, no ache, no sore;
There is no death, no ugly deil,
There's life for evermore.

No dampish mist is seen in thee,
No cold nor darkness night;
There every soul shines as the sun,
There God himself gives light.

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,
There envy bears no sway,
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
But pleasure every way.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
God grant I once may see,
Thy endless joys, and of the same,
Partaker aye to be!

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square,
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
With carbuncles do shine,
Thy very streets are paved with gold;
Surpassing clear and fine.

Thy houses are of ivory,
Thy windows crystal clear,
Thy tiles are made of beaten gold;
O God that I were there!

Within thy gates nothing doth come
That is not passing clean—
No spiders web, no dirt, no dust,
No filth may there be seen.

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem!
Would God, I were in thee,
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

Thy saints are crowned with glory great,
They see God face to face,
They triumph still, they still rejoice,
Most happy is their case.

We that are here in banishment,
Continually do mourn;
We sigh and sob, we weep and wail,
Perpetually we groan.

Our sweet is mixed with bitter gall,
Our pleasure is but pain,
Our joys scarce last the looking on,
Our sorrows still remain.

But there they live in such delight,
Such pleasure and such play,
As that to them a thousand years
Doth seem as yesterday.

Thy vineyards and thy orchards are,
Most beautiful and fair,
Well furnished with trees and fruits,
Most wonderful and rare.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers,
As nowhere else are seen.

There's nectar and ambrosia made,
There's musk and civet sweet,
There many a fair and dainty drug
Are trodden under feet.

There cinnamon, there sugar grows,
Therenard and balm abound,
What tongue can tell, or heart conceive
The joys that there are found.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow,
Upon whose banks at every side,
The word of life doth grow.

There trees forevermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

There David stands with harp in hand,
As master of the choir,
Ten thousand times, that man were blest
That might this music hear.

Jerusalem! my happy home!
Would God I were in thee,
Would God my woes were at an end,
The joys that I might see!

For the Christian Messenger.

ON SWEARING.

In the *Christian Messenger* of the 20th inst., the Rev. Timothy Harley, Pastor of Brussels St Baptist Church, St. John, has favored the Baptists of this province with his opinions, perhaps I ought to say decisions, in relation to swearing in courts of justice. I do not suppose that I shall impart anything on this subject not already familiar to all our ministerial brethren and church members of ordinary religious intelligence. My purpose is simply to prevent the juvenile readers of our denominational organ, and those among us who have but little opportunity for obtaining religious knowledge, from adopting, without due consideration, the conclusions Brother Harley has so positively enunciated, or hastily deciding that it is their duty to set themselves in opposition to the unanimous judgment of civilised nations, and almost unanimous judgment of the Christian Church, by henceforth refusing, at all cost, to give evidence upon oath, in any courts of justice to which they may be summoned as witnesses. It would have been well for brother Harley to have manifested a more lively consciousness of the fact, that this was precisely what he was demanding of his readers. A less *ex cathedra* style of delivering his judgment in the matter might have resulted.

It is true, as he says, that "The only court of appeal for believers" in matters of doctrine and duty "is the New Testament." But when summoned to that court we must take heed whether we are asked to receive its utterances without note or comment, or, instead, some doubtful constructions placed upon them by him who has cited us to the court. We must beware also of any attempt to bring into dispute "the teachings of divines," whose great learning, patient thought and earnest honest search for truth, may be no less worthy of our regard than the opinions of the person who is urging upon us the acceptance of his own peculiar notions. When Brother Harley quotes Matt. v. 33, 37, and James v. 12 and adds, "Some affirm that these passages have no reference to oaths in courts of justice. What is their authority?" (I presume he means reason) "for the assertion? Does not Jesus first refer to the legal oath performed unto the Lord, and in the next sentence forbid it in his disciples and thus as far as they are concerned, repeal the statute?" He does something more than cite us to "the court of appeal," the New Testament. He admits that there are two very different interpretations of the judgment pronounced by that court in this matter, that accepted by nearly the entire Christian Church, present and past, learned and unlearned, and that entertained almost exclusively by the excellent but eccentric Quakers, a few English Baptists and Brother Harley. He alludes to the first interpretation of scripture almost contemptuously, asks about it a question which he leaves unanswered, as if it were unanswerable, and then insists upon his own interpretation as if it were infallible and justified the assumption with which he concludes, that only a cowardly fear of consequences could cause any one to reject his view of the matter under discussion. If one of our most learned and experienced ministers had treated the subject in this authoritative manner, I should have published my most earnest protest. Whether Brother Harley knows it or not, there are good reasons and the best of authority for rejecting his construction of Christ's words "Swear not at all."

1. We ought not to adopt for any passage of scripture, a rule of interpretation which we can not apply and are not willing to apply, to all similar passages of Holy Writ. Brother Harley violates this principle. He insists upon an *absolute meaning* being given to a divine prohibition in relation to *swearing*, but he would refuse to give the same absolute meaning to a divine prohibition in relation to *work upon the Sabbath*. Yet the words of the 4th Commandment, "In it thou shalt not do any work" are as full, unqualified and emphatic as the words of Christ in Matt. v. 34. "Swear not at all." But while Brother Harley will admit, I presume, that the first prohibition does not forbid "works of praise, mercy or necessity," he denies that the second permit the swearing deemed necessary for the interests of truth, the defence of

character, or the administration of justice. His rule of interpretation is not sound. It breaks down as soon as it is tested.

2. The best of all interpreters of Christ's words are himself and his apostles. To these and not to any human authority I shall point Brother Harley for proof that Christ's words "Swear not at all," were intended to forbid only useless and profane swearing, and not the practice of administering oaths in courts of justice. Jesus once stood at the bar of an earthly judge. His testimony was demanded upon oath. Did he give it? He did. In Matt. xxvi. 62-64 we read, "And the high priest arose and said unto him, answered thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, *I adjure thee by the living God* that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God! Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said." Here is proof, not only that Jesus permitted an oath to be administered to him, but that he refused to give his testimony in the court of Caraphas till he could seal with an oath his solemn avowal that he was the Messiah.

Paul in several instances swears to the truth of his assertions. I do not refer to the frequent occurrence of "God forbid," which in the original is simply, "Let it not be," but to such passages of his writings as Rom. i. 9. "For God is my witness." Gal. i. 20. "Behold before God I lie not." 2 Cor. i. 23. "Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." These, and several others which I have not quoted, are to all intents and purposes oaths, Jewish forms of swearing. To swear is to appeal to God for the truth of what is asserted. Each of these then is an oath, and, according to Brother Harley's views a violation of Christ's command. In Heb. xiii. 17 and vii. 21 we are twice informed of the Almighty's swearing. In Rev. x. 6, we are told that the volume of earthly history shall be closed with an oath from an angel's lips. Can that be morally wrong and forbidden by the Saviour which is sanctioned by the example of the Divine Father and Son, inculcated by the teachings of the Divine Spirit, and practiced by holy angels and inspired apostles? All this may have no weight with Brother Harley and may not in the least tend to modify his view of the subject. But it should at all events induce him for the future to recognize the fact that those who differ from him have good reasons for so doing—reasons which he should deal with, before discussing the motives he imputes to those who reject the opinion he has adopted and so curtly insists upon others receiving.

Bentham, not the Bible, long ago led me to the conclusion that the swearing of witnesses in courts was a useless and pernicious practice. But a reconsideration of the subject, above all the teachings of God's word, convinced me that I was in error, and that oaths were sanctioned by the highest of all authority and essential to the welfare of society.

M. A. H.

OUR SCRIPTURE CATECHISM.

It was with an earnest desire to aid Parents and Teachers in training their young people in religious knowledge, and filling their minds with the unadulterated milk of the Word, that we prepared the "Scripture Catechism" a short time ago. We have since published the opinions of two or three friends, whose judgment we value, respecting the compilation. A number of other brethren, whose position in the churches entitles them no less to be heard with respect, have examined the little book and stated their views of its adaptation to serve the purpose designed. We take the liberty of placing a few of these before our readers:

Rev. E. O. READ, of Berwick, says:—

"From a hasty perusal of the Catechism, I think it is well calculated to accomplish the design you have had in view, and to meet a want that has long been felt, I hope it may have a wide circulation, as I believe it is worthy of a place in all our families and Sabbath Schools."

Rev. Jas. A. STUBBS, of Deerfield, Yarmouth Co., says:—

"I like the Catechism much. I think it an excellent addition to our Sabbath Schools. May the Lord bless you in your work."

Rev. A. H. MUNRO, of Liverpool, says:—

"I am glad that you have undertaken the Scripture Catechism and I like its special features—the answers being confined to Scripture language. Its classification of topics also seems to me to be very good."

Rev. Geo. WERNERS, of Kent, Hants Co., says:—

"It is a good little work and well deserves a place in every Christian family. I will try and introduce it into our Sabbath School when it

opens in the Spring. I am pleased to learn that it is so well received by the brethren generally. May it be accepted of the Great Head of the Church and used for the glory of his name and the good of his cause."

Rev. L. B. GATES, of St. Mary's Bay, Digby Co., says:—

"I like the Catechism very much. Think it is just what is needed."

Rev. STEPHEN MARCH, of Bridgewater says:—

"I like the plan upon which the Catechism has been prepared, and particularly the Biblical replies to the questions proposed. I do not doubt that it will be rendered valuable as an Instructor in the Family, in the Bible Class, and in the Sabbath School, and I trust that many may be induced to avail themselves of its assistance."

Rev. E. N. ARCHIBALD, of North River, P. E. I., says:—

"I feel in hopes that next spring all the Sabbath Schools will use them. It meets a felt want in the endeavour to indoctrinate bible truths."

Rev. GEORGE E. DAY, of Yarmouth says:—

"Send to my address at your address at your earliest convenience 350 copies of your Scripture Catechism. I hailed with pleasure its appearance. I think your Catechism is excellent—just what our Sabbath Schools, and, in fact, our church members need. Hence it is with pleasure that I order the number mentioned. Probably we shall want more before long."

Rev. A. CHIPMAN, of Lower Stewiacke, says:—

"Am much pleased with your Catechism.—Will urge its introduction into our Sabbath School in the Spring."

Rev. E. C. SPINNEY, of Homeville, C. B., says:—

"We do not fail to appreciate the merits of your Catechism."

I purchased one, and have read it with much interest and profit. I am of the opinion it is a work much needed in our Denomination as well as in others.

I recommended it to my people and have since been directed to order one hundred copies. I hope we shall soon have occasion to send for more. It seems to me that every church should do all in its power to circulate a production of such priceless value. The charge is so trivial, that the poorest need not be in want of one."

The following from brethren, not in the ministry, will show that they are no less decided in their favorable expressions:

Mr. W. H. CHIPMAN, of Bridgetown, says:—

"The Catechism I would like to introduce amongst the children in our Sabbath Schools. It is much needed."

Mr. THOMAS FULTON, of Upper Economy, writes:—

"Having perused the contents of your Scripture Catechism, I think it a good work and would highly recommend it to the use of Sabbath Schools and families. Being brief and comprehensive it affords the means of rapidly communicating Scriptural knowledge to the youthful mind and thus of securing one of the great ends of Sabbath School instruction."

Mr. W. J. GATES, of Bridgewater, says:—

"I have given the Scripture Catechism a careful perusal and believe it well adapted for our Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes, and trust our Sabbath Schools will generally use it. I think the Hymns at the end are quite sufficient for all practical purposes in our schools, being few the children can more readily commit them to memory and sing accurately."

Mr. JOHN WHELOCK, of Kingston, Aylesford, says:—

"It is good, just what we want. A combination of religious truth calculated to train the youthful mind in the ways of religion and virtue. It places before the reader a summary of Christian doctrine and practice. Every church member and family ought to have one, it is complete. In fact, it needs no commendation, it speaks for itself. Surely all must appreciate it."

Mr. W. R. DORY, of Hebron, Yarmouth Co., says:—

"I have examined your Scripture Catechism, and found it in my opinion just what is required in our Families and Sabbath Schools. I wish you to send me 50 copies."

Mr. E. BENT, of Digby, says:—

"I think it just what has been long wanted in our Sabbath Schools to instill Baptist, (i. e.) Scriptural principles in the minds of the youth."

Mr. H. E. PAYSON, of Westport, says:—

"I have a copy of the Catechism handed me by Mr. Moore. I have perused it and feel to say I think it is what we want in our Sabbath Schools and private families. Wish you to send me a dozen copies for the first till I see how they may take."

Mr. M. KINSMAN, of Billtown, Cornwallis, says:—

"I think it good, and will supply the want which has long been felt."

We believe there have been favorable expressions respecting the Catechism in some other letters received from brethren, but have failed to put them aside for the publication of extracts. The writers will please pardon us.—Ed. C. M.

Enjoy the blessings of this day if God sends them; and the evils bear patiently and sweetly. For this day only is ours; we were not born yesterday, and we will be dead to-morrow.