

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Messenger. Misread Passages.

No. III.

Ye are fallen from grace. Gal. v. 4. It is sometimes argued from this passage that it is possible to fall from grace. Without now discussing that question I may say that this verse does not justify such a conclusion. In the light of the context we may understand it thus:—Salvation is of God's free grace, and He justifies those who have faith in His son; but some of you (Galatians) are seeking to be justified by the law of Moses, by being circumcised; if then you be justified by that means, you are not justified by the other, namely, the grace of God. If you be circumcised with the hope of being saved thereby, Christ shall profit you nothing. Barnes has a good note on this—"a man who can be justified by his own obedience does not need the aid or merits of another; and if it were true, as they seemed to suppose, that they could be justified by the law, it followed that the work of Christ was vain so far as they were concerned... the adoption of the one is in fact a rejection of the other."

2. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Rom. xiv. 5.

There were some hard feelings between the Jews and Gentiles at Rome concerning meats and holy days. Paul writes to smooth down this state of things, telling them not to judge each other harshly because they did not see alike. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth. One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." It may be noticed in passing, that there is no reference here to the Lord's day. The subject-matter is the rites and ceremonies of the Jews; their feasts and holy days.

The words "Let every man" &c., cannot be safely used apart from where it stands or in cases precisely similar. It does not refer to subjects that were morally wrong but to ceremonial observances. If the Jew thought it wrong to eat meat, he was to abstain, if the Gentile esteemed it right he was to act accordingly.

From the passage under consideration some appear to think that if a man is fully persuaded in his own mind that a thing is right then it is right, which is an error akin to another: "If a man is sincere in his belief it does not matter what his religion is;" and for this reason I look upon this passage as misread. That it will not bear either of the above applications, Paul's own words shew in Acts xxvi. 9-12. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, &c." It is possible to be profoundly in earnest and profoundly mistaken at the same time.

He that doubteth is damned if he eat, &c. Rom. xiv. 23. Paul has been teaching that things lawful themselves, become unlawful if by their use a weak brother is caused to stumble, and that it is better therefore to avoid such things. Some of you (he seems to say) who are strong in faith may conscientiously partake of certain meats, but do not let it be a cause of stumbling or offence to a brother whose faith is weak, happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth. For he that discerneth a difference between meats, what might be eaten and what might not, and by eating what with a good conscience he might, leads a brother who through weak faith discerns no difference, to eat what he ought not, because he eateth not of faith, that man is condemned if he eat; he (who set the example) incurs the penalty his sin deserves. It will be seen that this verse has no reference to the Lord's Supper, and possibly some have kept away from a misconception of its meaning, supposing that if they partake of the ordinance while they have any doubts in their mind, they risk the loss of their soul. The word 'damned' is so universally applied to the lost that some take it wherever they find it in the N. T. as referring to perdition. But it by no means bears that meaning here. It just means condemned to a certain punishment for a certain sin. In short, if a man by doing what may be lawful in itself leads a brother into sin, he sins himself and will be punished accordingly.

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4. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1 Cor. ii. 29. This, unlike the last verse noticed, has reference to the Lord's Supper, and through misunderstanding its meaning how many have refrained from that ordinance. Of this verse a writer in the Pulpit Analyst, vol. 5, says, "I venture to think that this is one of the most unhappy mistranslations in the whole of the whole Testament. I know of no misreading of Scripture, which has cost more loss of service to the Christian Church, and more anguish of doubt and dread to human souls." Barnes says, "Perhaps there is no expression in the Bible that has given more trouble to weak and feeble Christians than this. It is certain that no one has operated to deter so many from the communion. Of the word 'damnation' Alford says:—"A mistranslation which has done infinite mischief."

A careful reading of verses 18 to 28 will help to explain v. 29, as indeed it will nearly always be found that the Bible is its own interpreter. In difficult passages the context should be always carefully read. The writer, the persons to whom written, and the object in writing, should ever be kept in mind. In this case the Corinthians came together professedly to eat the Lord's Supper, but instead of it, they made a disorderly feast of it, without any order as to partaking together, or the quantity taken. "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken." For this he reproves them sharply, pointing out to them how it should be observed, and solemnly warning them of the consequences of their thus acting:—"Whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily (referring to their conduct) shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," meaning as some suppose, guilty of the profaning the emblems of his body and blood. Others, and I think more correctly, they became Gaspirits, by their thoughtlessness and utter disregard of what they were doing, partakers in the death of Christ. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

It may be noticed that the word "unworthily" is not found in either of the three most valuable manuscripts, viz. Codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. See Tischendorf's New Testament, Tauchnitz edition. Under this verse his note is "S. V. A. om unworthily." Alford omits it in his commentary. If it be spurious, as is highly probable, then it is pretty clear that Paul refers to their manner of observing the Lord's Supper. It was probably adopted by some transcriber from v. 27. For the sake of any who through misunderstanding this passage, and anxiety to do what is right, and fear of abusing the ordinance abstain from it, I will quote from the writer already referred to, in "The Pulpit Analyst," vol. 5, p. 164. He says:—"These words cause intense distress to sensitive and anxious consciences, to those who are filled with self-distrust and self-rebuke, and who dread lest they should bring shame on the Name which they desire to honour, by the weakness of their faith, or the poverty of their love. Let such dismiss all anxiety as to the possible bearing of the word 'unworthily' in their case. It bears precisely the opposite way. The unworthiness which the Apostle denounces so sharply, consisted in the utter absence of all anxiety upon the subject; a callousness which suffered a man to make a hearty meal with his boon companions, under pretence of celebrating the Lord's Supper. Any anxiety of spirit, any fear of being unworthy, which has humility and self-distrust at the heart of it, would, I say unhesitatingly, be a sign of worthiness in the sense in which the terms worthy and unworthy are employed by St. Paul. The difficulty at Corinth was the utter absence of trouble about it; eating and drinking with no discernment of the Lord's body, that is, of all that was meant by the Lord's Supper than if it had been a pagan festival."

I will only add that the word "dam-

nation' here is very far from meaning what is commonly understood by it. It means, as in Rom. 14. 23, judgment or punishment, and the following verse seems to point out what that punishment was: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." We may learn here that the abuse of this ordinance of the Lord will result in weakness, sickness, sleep. The gradation is very natural. We learn too that the right use of this ordinance will give spiritual strength, health and wakefulness. Thus may it always be with those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and observe his ordinances.

Respectfully submitted,

Milton. J. B.

For the Christian Messenger.

Missionaries crossing the Atlantic.

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, NOV. 17, 1876.

Dear Brother,—

Some of your readers may welcome a few jottings from our missionary party. It consists of Dr. Stevens and wife, returning after a short vacation to commence their fortieth year of labor in Burmah. D. A. W. Smith and wife, also returning, having been in Burmah eleven years previous to their short visit home. They take with them two children, leaving two others in America to be educated. These go to Rangoon, Dr. S. to resume his labors among the Burmese, and Mr. S. to take charge of the Karen Theological Seminary. A. V. Crumb and wife, and H. Morrow and wife go for the first time, the former to the Red Karens of Karenee (a Burman word meaning red karen) the latter to the Karens of Tavoy. We have two young ladies, Miss E. H. Payne, of Halifax, N. S., going to labor for the Burmese of Henthada, a station dear to Nova Scotians. The mission there was founded by their beloved Crawley, so lately fallen. The other is Miss Sheldon, of Mass. going to Maulmain.

We left New York, Oct. 21st, and arrived here this afternoon. We shall not soon forget the kindness of the New York Baptists, tendered through their Committee of Hospitalities. Each lady was presented with a steamer chair and a box of niceties for the voyage, most of which found its way to our less favored friends in the steerage, as cabin passengers are well provided with all they need. The books they gave us would form quite a library, among which we find the "Life of Madam Feller" by our venerable Dr. Cramp. This little volume found eager readers.

The voyage across the Atlantic was exceedingly pleasant, except the first two days, during which sea-sickness interfered with our comfort, baffling the influence of a variety of remedies especially prepared for the occasion. A physician in our party pronounced it incurable by anything but time. We spent two Sabbaths on the ship. The first may have been enjoyed by those who were proof against sea-sickness, but your correspondent did not happen to be of that number. The second was indeed a day of rest and refreshing. Mr. Smith preached in the morning to a large congregation of cabin and steerage passengers, all welcome in the saloon on such occasions. In the afternoon we had Sabbath School, studying the usual lesson for that day. In the evening, Dr. Stevens preached a missionary sermon. Our cabin passengers were nearly all professors of religion, and all seemed to respect religious things. The Captain was always present at service, but took no part, leaving it all to the ministers to do as they chose. It might be remarked that nearly all on board were Scotch, and they are a religious bible-reading people. Many were returning from visiting America, and the Centennial and their criticisms were pretty severe, but perhaps merited. Some sober Scotch ladies thought the dresses of their American sisters, particularly those advanced in life, entirely too gay, and would prefer a modest cap to so much borrowed hair. Some were surprised to find so much temperance in America, especially that all our ministers were teetotallers. Of course they approved of it.

On the morning of the 31st, we sailed along the north coast of Ireland, looking cold and cheerless, but wearing its dress of green. The coast is mostly rocky but a few cultivated spots appeared. At noon we touched at Moville, the Queenstown of the north, to land pas-

engers, mails, and telegrams. It is a small town a few miles up Loch Foyle. The country on the north side of the Loch is very beautiful and highly cultivated. The houses are low and long, but have the appearance of taste and comfort. Near each house is a large heap of peat, for fuel, and in the barnyard, are large neatly thatched stacks of hay and grain. We passed very near Green Castle, or rather its ruins, covered almost entirely with ivy. It is supposed to have been built by De Coursey, to whom Henry II. gave the northern part of Ireland. It was an object of no little interest to those of us unaccustomed to see ancient ruins. On our left, the country was low and sandy, the only object of interest being Martello Castle, on a high point. It is supposed to be of Druidic origin, and has lately been rebuilt and used as a fortification. A little later we passed the Giant's Causeway, and had a good view of that natural curiosity. It is not, as I supposed, an isolated rock, but an extended headland, stretching along the coast for several miles. It is formed of immense hexagonal columns, presenting a perpendicular face to the sea. At one place called the organ, they look like the pipes of an organ. The Giant is a great mass of detached rock, sitting on a projection half way down to the water. I confess it looks like many other things as much as like a giant. Perhaps my imagination was not sufficiently vivid.

Our sail up the Clyde was most enjoyable. The scenery is perfectly magnificent. Lovely cultivated fields stretch down to the edge of the water, with many fine residences. We had a good view of the home of the Duke of Argyll, near the town of Ellensboro. He seems to be an agriculturist, as well as a scientific man, nearly opposite is the city of Greenock, an important seaport. It contains the grave of Burn's Highland Mary. A little further up we see Ben Lomond in the distance, near the celebrated Loch of the same name. We hope to have a nearer view before we leave. Dumbarton Rock, a great isolated rock on the margin of the river adds much to this exquisite picture. It was formerly used as a fortification. Near by is a monument erected to the memory of Henry Bell who in 1812 placed the first steamer on the Clyde.

Near Glasgow, the river is very narrow indeed, and has been rendered navigable for large vessels at an expense of two millions of pounds. The city of Glasgow is dingy and smoky. You soon realize that you are not in America. Everything looks old and slow—slow cabs, slow waiters at the hotel, slow clerks in the stores, slow everything. A little American snap would be a great improvement.

Yours, &c., H. M.

For the Christian Messenger. From Lower California.

A NEWLY INVENTED ILLUMINATING GAS. Dear Brother,—

My object at this time is to call your attention to the subject of a new illuminating gas, a notice of which appeared in one of the papers I sent you, some weeks ago, and to ask you to inform me through the Messenger, or otherwise as it regards the expediency of introducing it in your city. Not doubting but in Halifax you have a monopoly as we have here. But our City Fathers, the Council have seen the "light" and are convinced of its worth, and have decided in its favor, and that the new Company have as good a right to the streets for pipe-laying as the old Company. Now this new enterprise is not a Yankee speculation, or "catch" but the inventor is an honest German, many of whose minds are as fertile in getting up new things as any American, viz: Homeopathy, &c., &c. This gentleman's name is Mr. Samuel Green, "not very green" say you. Mr. Green came to me twelve months ago as an invalid in search of health, and is still an inmate of our dwelling, and I can speak as to his honesty and straight forwardness. The simplicity, application, and inexpensiveness of his invention are the points upon which the novelty rests, and for which letters patent have been issued to Mr. Green from Washington.

We, and hundreds of others, have witnessed the process and public exhibition of the Gas. The retort was charged in our presence with something like 20

pounds of ordinary rubbish and from which was evolved two hundred cubic feet of gas which burned with a beautiful bright flame free from smoke, or smell. The process of manufacture was most simple, and a few shovelfuls of useless material are utilised into a valuable commodity. It is estimated that a thousand feet of this gas can be manufactured at a cost not exceeding twenty-five cents. The experiment we witnessed was at the United States Hotel into one part of which the gas was introduced, and it was estimated that if the pipes were laid throughout the building, that it would effect a saving of more than \$150 per month in gas bills.

The revolution that this enterprise will effect in our sanitary affairs and households—the filth and garbage, now an incubus, will be prized, and the scavenger will beg to be permitted to remove it, and our health officer will be relieved of half his unpleasant duty.

This gas when manufactured on a large scale will produce another source of profit by the large amount of ammonia and coal-tar, after the gas is extracted which will compensate for the attendant expense, &c. In England the experiment has been tried by the use of dead animals and proved a failure, but there is plenty of good material for the gas in every place, without dead animals being employed.

A stove, also is being constructed which dispenses with wood and coal substituting vegetable productions from land and ocean. Of this you will hear more anon.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

Everybody in the commonwealth must and will be truly glad that the political campaign is drawing to a close, and that in less than two weeks the great agony will be at an end, for a time at least. American politics develop a phase of recklessness that is unknown to Britishers. One can scarcely listen to the stump orators who have flooded the country for many months past, and this city in particular, when a protracted meeting has been in session for months, every night except Sundays with bonfires and torch light processions, one of which last week extended a mile and a half, more or less, with music, and a fiery chariot with all kinds of illuminations and transparencies, drawn by four horses concluded by an out door meeting, the stump orators, consisting of Governors and senators, or congress men addressed the 15,000 people or more or less, from a rostrum which had been prepared with no small expense, lighted with gas burners, &c., and which is to remain until after the great struggle is over in front of St. Charles Hotel. This belongs to the Democrats. The Republican's head quarters are at the Skating Rink, which will seat some 4,000 persons, and is kept open every day and night, and also the Union Hall, by the Democrats where our services are held on Sabbath evening, it being the largest place or Hall in the city. The remark was made on last Sunday that if the church was half as wide awake as our politicians mighty miracles would be wrought in the name of king Jesus. How true it is that the "children of this world are wiser then the children of light." We rejoice to hear from time to time of the work of revival in Nova Scotia, and many of the British Provinces. Surely God has not dealt thus with any nation."

DEATH IN A THEATRE.

A sad calamity occurred last night in the Royal Chinese theatre, San Francisco, which resulted in the immediate death of 26 Chinese, and the wounding of 15 or 20 more. Whilst the performance was going on, some one in the audience raised the cry of fire. The alarm was groundless, but it created a terrible panic, and a great portion of those in the auditorium in the gallery started for the only means of exit. Some of the foremost fell, or were pushed, down, and others fell pell mell upon them, and in a few minutes a hundred Chinamen were piled on the top of one another. The officers rushed in with a re-inforcement of police, and in a short time cleared the debris and took out the unfortunates who had been crushed, and carried them to the sidewalk. The fresh air revived a few, but the majority were dead, and about 15 wounded. Strange as it may appear, whilst the dead and wounded were being removed, the police endeavored to press the Chinamen into this service but they refused to help. And stranger still, the actors, though fully