

**"THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS."**

MR. EDITOR,—In a letter under the above caption, signed "Presbyterian," which appeared in the last number of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, I find the following :

In short, after death is Paradise, then the resurrection, then the second coming of our Lord, who reigns over His redeemed on the earth—a new earth, which forever will be enjoyed by man as his inheritance, and to enter then on the use and enjoyment of those high dignities of governmental powers with which God in the beginning endowed our first father in Paradise. If such dogmas, held and uttered by members of the Toronto Presbytery, are Presbyterian doctrines, the sooner and wider they are made known the better.

Now I have no intention at present of discussing this as seems to me, untenable doctrine where Scripture is properly interpreted; but I wish to join with "Presbyterian" in expressing a doubt whether the doctrine is Presbyterian, that is, in harmony with the Westminster Standards, and to thank him for letting the public know that members of the Toronto Presbytery are in the habit of uttering them. "After death is Paradise," Luke xxiii. 42, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, Rev. ii. 7, compared with Rev. xxi. 2, 14. These are the only passages in the New Testament in which Paradise is spoken of. If the text in Luke implies something after death, that in Corinthians has no such implication, and that in Revelation is certainly to be understood of something after the resurrection and the new heavens and new earth. And yet on this is founded the dogma that after death the children of God go to Paradise; as opposed to the commonly-received opinion that death ushers them into heaven. Is Paradise, then, a place; and a place different from heaven? Is it Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi. 23)—a kind of waiting place for souls, different from heaven? If so, what of lost souls? Is there a waiting place for them which is not hell (Luke xvi. 23)? A purgatory? Am I wrong in discussing here an unscriptural recognition of a state of probation between death and resurrection, both for Christians and sinners? Let us beware. The teaching of Scripture is explicit. "The Son of Man is in heaven" (Acts iii. 21). Stephen saw Him there (Acts vii. 26, also Heb. iv. 14). "To depart from this life is to be with Christ; absent from the body, at home with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8), that is, in heaven where Jesus is. Many other passages teach that being with Christ is being in heaven. So far for Scripture. Now about Presbyterian doctrine? The Shorter Catechism says, question 37, "The souls of believers at death do immediately pass into glory." The Larger Catechism says, question 86, "The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the 'invisible' Church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory," etc. No room left here for Paradise as something different from heaven. The Confession says, chap. xxxii, "After death the souls of men [which neither die nor sleep] having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory. . . . The souls of the wicked are cast into hell. . . . Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none." That is, the Scripture does not teach there is a paradise for souls after death, which is not heaven; or a purgatory, which is not hell. Clearly the dogma referred to is contrary to Scripture, and is not Presbyterian doctrine. Pity then, that it should be "held and uttered by members of the Toronto Presbytery."

But perhaps "Presbyterian" is not well informed regarding these strange views. He says the order is death, paradise, resurrection, second coming of Christ, everlasting abode on earth. But no place is left for heaven; unless the exercising of governmental powers on earth, over the lower animals, as given to Adam in Eden, or over the living nations of men on the new earth, be heaven. Besides, most men—some premillenarians—believe that the dead rise, not before, but at the coming of Christ, and as a result of it (1 Cor. xv. 23, John vi. 40) that then the blessed risen and changed saints "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 17). That is in heaven. However, these are minor matters. I only wish to

utter a word of caution regarding dogmas which are not new, but have, after full consideration, been rejected by the Church of God in times past.

PRESBYTER.

**MACHINERY.**

MR. EDITOR, Thanks for your pithy editorials on vacant charges and candidating and calling. It might be easy to say hard things on this subject, and I doubt not but some hard things will be said, and justly said too. I fear some one with the sword of Goliath in his one hand will come out of this cave with more than the skirt in the other.

If this business was scriptural one hundred years ago, will some of our theologians come forward and show that it is scriptural now?

If this business was the glory of the Church one hundred years ago, when the State filled the crib, can it be the glory of the Church now when the crib is filled from the other end? By prayer a host of ardent young men enter our Church at the one end, and, by a cold process of machinery, we starve out some and grind out others at the other end.

The greatest thing to be admired in the whole business is the calm patience of the sufferers. Any man will tell you that the machinery of our Church has lost us much, and humanly speaking, there is much more to follow, and yet no Ajax, D.D., or otherwise will seize this machinery and carry it off the course. Ministers suffer, vacant charges suffer and settled charges suffer most of all. Some charges are glad to give their pastors a holiday and money too to get them off for a while,—Micawber like—for in the meantime they have fresh blood, a good attendance and more liberal collections on the Sabbath. Holidays by our machinery become a relief all round, and this is one of the best things it has ever been known to do.

Some of our suffering ministers and vacant charges have ecclesiastically ceased to exist. It may fairly be said their usefulness is done. Some of our settled charges, and for that matter our settled ministers too, are looking for relief, and the machinery affords them none. Like the boy on the burning deck, some think they have stood about long enough. Some settled charges with plenty of money backed up by a good deal of Christianity buy off their pastors when the machinery fails, and, like the chief captain, with a great sum obtain their freedom; but more anon.

**CALLING.**

That calling is scriptural none in his senses will deny. Paul was called on his way to Damascus. Such a call is a highly scriptural call. Paul never doubted the genuineness of it himself. Such a call was a sustaining power to Paul; and such are all genuine calls. This call was recognized by the Presbytery of Antioch as genuine. This call was all that was thought necessary for ordination at that ancient time.

The Presbytery of Antioch, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, sent them away. The good people of Seleucia and Salamis did not come with one of our modern calls, and lay it on the table of the Presbytery of Antioch.

Perhaps neither Paul nor Barnabas had ever one of these formidable documents presented to them by any of our Church courts. They may never have had the pleasure of hearing how their talents were just adapted for the congregations of Seleucia and Salamis respectively. We have never even heard it mentioned that Sergius Paulus, perhaps some remote connection of the Apostle Paul, and deputy of the country, had anything to do with this call. His name is not mentioned as a commissioner to support the call before the Presbytery of Antioch. In those days the Presbytery of Antioch might have thought that they knew as much about the talents and suitability of Paul and Barnabas as the good people of Seleucia and Salamis did.

If the Presbytery of Antioch had not given over its powers they might very profitably judge of the talents and suitability of some of our ministers without charge or our graduating students, and send them away to some of our congregations of Seleucia and Salamis. They might do as much service for the Master in thus being sent away as they render to the Master under our modern plan.

I suppose it depends a good deal on what Seleucia and Salamis would say in the matter. And their

say will depend a good deal on the place they happen to occupy on the map or the world at the time. Should Seleucia and Salamis lie in Muskoka they will be very grateful to the Presbytery of Antioch for sending them a Paul and a Barnabas. And should they happen to lie farther south on the map I fear our modern use and wont would prevail, and the action of the Presbytery of Antioch would not be sustained before the next meeting of the Synod at Jerusalem.

There was no fault found with the Presbytery of Antioch when they ordained and sent Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel in Seleucia and Salamis. This appointment, without any calling under our modern plan, does not appear to have been an invasion of the rights of these congregations. They appear to have succeeded fairly well, and no great loss was sustained by being in happy ignorance of the plan now generally adopted in our Church.

That our congregations suffer very materially under the present mode of settlement none will attempt to deny. They continue without pastoral oversight for years, and the neighbouring congregations being well supplied, the fittest survive. Strong charges become weak and the weak die. That they fail to obtain a pastor lies in the system and not in the congregation.

Our congregations not only find our system slow, but worse still they find it equally uncertain. Our town congregations may fare better, but it is no fault to the great mass of our congregations that a town is not booming in their midst. The place they occupy on the map debars them from having a town, and the machinery of our Church deprives them from having a pastor. Were they under the care of the Presbytery of Antioch things would be different. Pastors would occupy these charges continuously. Many who are now wandering about with all the vagueness of uncertainty would have hope revived by receiving some definite work to do for the Master, even if it was as hard as it was remote. Young men also could be found now as well as then, and ready to be sent to such charges, knowing that in his turn, the Presbytery of Antioch would consider his claims to preach before Caesar at Rome. It is questionable if either Paul or Barnabas would have liked to have spent all their days within the narrow bounds of either Seleucia or Salamis.

But the city charges, when they become vacant, have their trials as well as their weaker sister charges in the country. They search the land from Dan to Beersheba, and can find no David to refresh them and make them well. The schools of Alexandria and Jerusalem do not furnish the type of a man they want. They too remain vacant for years, divide up into factions, and many of the more devout connect with other churches. They too lose their place and power and in a great measure cease to become centres of influence for good in their respective cities. The Presbytery of Antioch, being well acquainted with all the apostles, would have sent them a son of thunder at once.

DIDO.

**THE SECOND COMING.**

MR. EDITOR.—I have just read your issue of the 14th ult., in which appears the third article on the second coming of Christ. This is a subject which oftentimes occupies my own mind. The Bible is full of it, both the Old and the New Testament. I have several times put the question to ministers of various Protestant denominations, Why they scarcely ever touch it in their sermons? Their answers have generally been, that "there were such differences of opinion on the subject and that it was not very essential." Such excuses for not preaching this part of the Word have never satisfied me. Although a layman, and making no pretensions to know anything beyond what is plainly written, it appears very evident to me that "Berean," instead of casting light on the subject has to my mind made it still more mysterious. The fourth of 1st Thessalonians, taken in connection with the twentieth of Revelation, is to my mind very clear that Christ's second coming for His saints, who are to reign with him 1,000 years previous to the rest of the dead being raised, and the great white throne judgment, are two distinct, yes, very distinct, events. Such a subject should never be made one of controversy but of prayer.

A PRESBYTERIAN.

New Westminster, B. C.