

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh,—James v. 8.

[For OUR MISSION]

The World's Hatred—Concluded.

John 12 : 10, 11.

BY A. F. SANDHAM.

BUT let us not fall into error. We are not called upon to make ourselves offensive to the world. That is, by being stubborn or wilful. Some men pride themselves in this sort of peculiarity. Jesus never made Himself offensive. He did not seek the world's hatred. He tried to turn that hatred into genuine love. But He never shrank from reproof of the world or its customs. With a deep overpowering love for the world, nevertheless he opposed it, and so must we. Of this line of action, we have a strong instance in the case of Jeremiah the Prophet. A man of deep affection, of true love for his nation, of the highest type of patriotism, yet no prophet was ever called to deliver more unwelcome messages, or to run more contrary to the wishes both of king and people. While *he* loved *they* hated.

"For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house"—Jer. 32 : 2.

He is a prisoner. And why?

"For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it"—Jer. 32 : 3.

Simply because that whatever God said, Jeremiah said, and nothing could lead him to act otherwise. They were hard words he had to speak. He had to offend king, prince, priest, people, yea, his own fellow-townsmen and family no doubt; but not one word of offence, which tended to draw upon him that hatred, was of his own choosing. Observe the message, "Thus saith the Lord (mentioned over 200 times). In other words, like Lazarus, he was a living witness against the people of Judah. Now, for a last example, read—

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"—Rev. 1 : 9.

John is an exile because the world hated his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. It was for the Master's sake he is in exile. Faithful to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, he was made to know that the world was still, after 90 years advance in other matters, just as intense in its hatred of Christ. The only thing the world gave him for his testimony was hatred. But we find that over against this is a gift which God's Word promises to the faithful.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation :

but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16 : 33

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."—2 Tim. 3 : 11, 12.

Not much said here as to the improvement of the world. The enemies of the truth are not on the decrease.

But we said that persecution and hatred were gifts promised to the faithful. We like to accept gifts. Are we really to accept this :

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."—Phil. 1 : 29.

And just in proportion as we accept the one gift, Jesus—so shall we receive the other, suffering. The closer I walk with Him, the further I shall be from the world. The more faithfully I imitate Him, the more I shall suffer with Him. It always has been so, it always will be. But remember, there are glorious privileges attached to such suffering. Just glance back at the record of God's Word.

Joseph closely obeyed God. Joseph's God was with him, both in the mansion and the prison. Elijah faithfully spake God's Word. Elijah's God was ever with him. Daniel faithfully testified for God, and so did his three companions. That close walk aroused hatred, which drove one into a lion's den and three into a fiery furnace; but God was in each place, waiting to receive them and comfort them. Jeremiah faithfully cried, "Thus saith the Lord," and when the world shut him up, God still talked to him. Stephen faithfully testified against the world, and its hatred only opened heaven to show him its glory and to receive him therein. Paul faithfully testified—the world hated—but the angel of the Lord stood by him. John faithfully testified, and the world's hatred sent him to Patmos, a place in which he heard the voice of God and saw visions of future bliss, &c. These are but a few instances of the many given in God's Word, and in history where the world's hate served to help the saint. How very forcible comes home the words of the Master :

"And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear : Fear Him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."—Luke 12 : 4, 5.

"No more that they can do." The world's hatred cannot follow beyond death. It is all they can do. It was all they could do to the Master. He experienced their hatred to the utmost; and remember the nearer you come to that Master's image, the nearer you become what He has called you to be. Are any of our readers like Lazarus, hated by the world. It is a glorious position. Oh, that we were all thus. What a power one such minded man as Paul or Elijah would be. The world turned upside down by a few poor fishermen. Why? Because they were near One who