

THE CHRISTIAN.

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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The Christian.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.—John xiii. 34.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.—John xv: 12.

A new commandment Jesus gave,
All merciful and pure;
From selfishness his saints to save,
And all their hate to cure.

Each other love as I love you,
A precept new indeed;
A love like His, so dear, so true
Is just what Christians need.

The old commandment, thou shalt love
Thy neighbor as thy self,
Was just and right and did reprove
The worldling for his pelf.

But human love is e'er too frail
To build the church aright,
But love like Christ's can never fail
To do the work with might.

A higher standard Jesus brought
From His bright home above,
For by His life and death He taught
This people how to love.

Did Christ our Lord for us expire
Upon the cruel cross,
For brethren we, if need require,
Should suffer death or loss.

The power that moves the gospel train
Is naught but Christian love,
When love like Christ's in Christians reign,
The saving train must move.

Oh for this love, this burning zeal,
To warm up every heart
Then for his brother each will feel
And nobly do his part.

JOHN B. WALLACE.

Jan. 10, 1885.

DID PAUL MAKE A MISTAKE?

DEAR BRO.—In studying the Sunday-school lesson found in the Acts XXI: 21-28, there is a matter which I desire to lay before you and the readers of the CHRISTIAN for explanation. It is in reference to Paul in the temple at Jerusalem, taking upon him the Nazarite vow with four of his Jewish brethren, and being at charges with them as to the offerings used.

The circumstances were as follows: Paul had returned to Jerusalem to be present at Pentecost; a report was circulated that he taught "everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place," (the temple). His brethren told him what things were reported of him and

believed by the people, and that they, hearing he had returned, would certainly come together. The brethren, then, in order to allay any bad feelings against the apostle, and thereby preserve him from injury, asked him to take upon him the vow and be at charges with these four brethren, by which, said they, it may be known "that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; but that thou thyself walkedst orderly and keepest the law."

The apostle, having conformed to the request of his brethren in Christ, was found in the temple by the Jews, at the close of the seven days for purification, who laid hands upon him to put him to death.

The question is: Why did the apostle take the vow? Or, on what ground did he take it? This vow was a part of the Jewish law which was taken out of the way by Jesus, according to the epistles of Paul to the churches. Col. II: 14. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. Rom. VII: 4-6. That, "Now we are DELIVERED from the law, being dead to that in which we were held," that we are "become dead to the law by the body of Christ." II Cor. III: 11. "For if that (the law) which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Gal. III: 24-25. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Did the apostle act contrary to his teachings? This I think is evident from the passages quoted above. Has not this action of the apostle a streak of inconsistency about it? Was it not misleading to the Jews? How is it to be reconciled with his teachings to his brethren? I confess I find it difficult to interpret. The effect of this action on the considerate Jew would be to cause him to believe that the law was still in force, and would strengthen the position of those Judaizing teachers who taught that the law was to be observed in conjunction with the gospel; thereby hindering to some extent the progress of the gospel among the Jews.

I take it that the apostle unwittingly made a mistake. Being infallible only in his preaching, when he was guided entirely by the Holy Spirit; but apart from that, he was liable to make a mistake, at least as much so as was Peter in regard to the Gentiles. See Gal. II: 11-12. The Holy Spirit was not given to keep him from sin, but to guide him into all truth in the preaching of the gospel; hence, the apostle had to watch, and fight, and pray, like every other child of God. He acted in this case by the request of his brethren; without a thus saith the Lord, and under trying circumstances—the hour of persecution. To which, if it were a mistake, the arms of mercy will reach, and for which the blood of Christ will atone when forgiveness is sought. Of the persecution that awaited him at Jerusalem the Holy Spirit warned him. He expressed his willingness to be not only bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus. Yet the apostle, at the urgent request

of his brethren, who were also mistaken, sought to evade the persecution as long as possible by taking the vow. But it did not have the desired effect. If the Holy Spirit had commanded the action to that end, it would most certainly have been effectual in quelling the riotous spirit of the Jews. I would like very much to hear from others more competent than myself to investigate this case. Yours,

R. W. STEVENSON.

St. Thomas, Ont., Feb. 11, 1885.

THE NATURE OF ANGELS.

NO. II.

1. One strange feature of my subject is, that angels always appear in the form of men. Their face, form, voice, person and look are uniformly those of men. A question may arise here: Is this their real normal form, or is it an assumed one. They are spirits, whether pure essential spirits, in the sense that God is spirit cannot be affirmed, but certainly they are real spirits, and they have form, visible form. If, however, it be so that spirits are invisible to mortal eyes, then, of course, their appearance is assumed.

2. I would, however, prefer to assert that the angels are acting a real part, and not an assumed one when appearing to men. True, they are usually invisible, but why are they so? Because we are in the flesh and cannot see them, as they are only visible to those in the spirit, as the two men on their way to Emmaus, our eyes are holden. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him." (Luke xxiv. 16.) We cannot see spirits while we live in the flesh, as our eyes are holden, and will be until we leave these bodies of clay. We lack vision and not the visibleness.

3. Not only do angels appear in the form of men, but they clothed themselves in the style of dress of the people to whom they appeared. They also talked as men talked, using their words and their pronunciations. Indeed, so completely did they seem men, that they were often mistaken for men, and were called men. Men, on the other hand, were taken sometimes for angels, as it was at the house of the widow, Mark, when the angel had delivered Peter from prison. The damsel, Rhoda, saw Peter, and said so, but others said it was his angel.

4. When the women visited the grave of Jesus, on the morning of His resurrection, "they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment;" also, at the ascension, after Christ delivered His valedictory address, when about to leave this world for the courts of glory, when His disciples were looking so intently after Him, they saw two angels. "Two men stood by them in white apparel." In both of these cases the men seen were angels, yet so exactly did they look like men, that they were called men. I suppose these angels appeared on earth as they will appear in heaven.

5. The power of angels seems to be very great. In fact we cannot limit their power. It, no doubt, is limited by Him, who is Omnipotent. Angels seem to be empowered to take life