

Communications.

Christ the Head of the Church.

In Ephesians i. 22, 23, we find the following language: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

In this age of the world there are so many churches (so called) that many young people are puzzled to know which is the true church. If people would turn to the sacred volume and listen to the voice of him who spake as never man spake, they could easily ascertain which is the true church, and also who the head of the church is. They would very soon learn that there is no divine authority for the existence of any church save the church of the living God. 1 Tim. iii. 15. It is also called the church of the first born. Heb. xii. 23. In Acts xx. 28, it is called the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. In Matt. xvi. 18, we learn that Christ promised that he would build his church. In the Bible we find letters addressed to the church of God. In those letters the children of God are instructed how to act towards each other, and also towards those who are without. We find no letters in the Bible addressed to the Campbellite, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, nor the Roman Catholic church. Neither does the Bible speak of the Pope of Rome, of Martin Luther, of John Calvin, of John Knox, of John Wesley, of John the Baptist, of Roger Williams, nor of Alexander Campbell as being the head of the church.

But the head of the church is that being who was rich, yet, for our sake, he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. It is he who loved us and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. It is he who is called the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; the first and the last, who lives and was dead, and who lives forevermore, and has the keys of hell and of death; he who can open and no man can shut, and can shut and no man can open. It is he who hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is he who declared himself to be the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. It is he who is called the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. It is he who, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. It is he of whom John spoke, who he said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." It is he of whom Isaiah spoke when he said: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." It is he of whom Paul spoke when he said: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." It is he of whom Paul spoke when he said: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature; for by him were all things created, that are

in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." It is he, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It is he "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "It is he "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." It is he who "Suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." It is he who said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

THOMAS J. ADAMS.

The Contest Progressing.

BY S. H. REDDIX.

NUMBER III.

The contest of the past two centuries has been a somewhat peculiar one, owing to the many parties and still more varied ideas, the greatest efforts have been made to uphold and sustain them, and the contest has therefore been a struggle, not so much between truth and error, but between different shades of error, striving for the mastery and proving that an unlawful striving never wins a crown. Nevertheless, among all there have been those whose objects have been to obtain the truth in Christ, and to hold forth only that grand remedy attested by prophets and apostles, and sealed by the blood of the crucified one. This sentiment took shape in different parts of the country, in more than one party, by more than one man, all at about the same time, and gave rise to what is now the current reformation. This materially effected all parties, because the truth comes out in contrast with errors of every form, and, as in the days of Luther, men by thousands daily left Catholicism, so they now left sectarianism; and as many formerly ran beyond truth in leaving Catholicism, likewise many who left sectarianism have gone to liberalism. The positive, aggressive manner of the truth now advancing with such signal victory over the creeds and confessions of sectarianism, claims the world, and both infidelity and Catholicism muster their forces to intercept its onward march. So that, perhaps, there has not been a stronger or fairer contest than has been obtained in this period, both as between Christianity and Catholicism, and the former and infidelity. The only great impediment in the way has been Protestant Sectarianism. This no man can maintain, and though it is neither claimed nor

owned by the defenders of true Christianity, it hangs heavily on the shoulders of him who meets the crafty foes of the Bible. No man can or has met Catholicism and successfully exposed its errors and superstitious dogmas, without finding that his opponent holds up sectarianism and makes it appear that Catholicism is either the source of all the peculiar sentiments of sectarianism, or, if not, that the latter has been as ready to manufacture a new religion as the former; and thus by a system of negations, they have been able to avoid the issue. Liberalism holds up all the dogmas of Catholicism and Sectarianism as the target to be demolished. Holding this to be the essence of Christianity, all the absurdities, superstitions and cruelties, from which all true men shrink, he fires away, and, one by one, he fastens his arrows in the "dogmas of the church" and boldly claims a victory over the Bible. Many who see the just condemnation of their dogmas, surrender, and give over all they possess, both counterfeit and genuine. They have read the Bible only to find proof of their dogmas as truth of the Bible. Their only food has been the chaff of sectarianism. Who has heard or read the most aggressively liberalistic lectures or books that has not discovered that the starting point to infidelity was first a revolt at the unhealthy orthodoxy, in which the subject had been educated and trained. Ingersoll's lecture on "The liberty of men; women and children" is a sample. Yet how many advocates of the truth have just as readily condemned the perverted sectarian ideas and practices that so horrifies this champion? Take away "all the dogmas of church" which the friends of truth have as strongly condemned, and how much argument will be found in the declamations of these fierce liberals roaming over the country to-day? The better class of liberals to-day are indebted to a morality gained by contact with Bible truths and Bible society. As they pass away and the generations come on, who have only feed upon the empty husks, they offer us a substitute. We shall see its legitimate fruits, which will be as unwholesome to society as ever the dogmas of church could be. Perchance in the contest now going on, taking new shape every day, causing sectarianism to weaken and stagger as a drunken man, it may finally die the death it deserves to die. Then there will be every opportunity for a fair contest, in which a victory for truth will shine forth with a lustre that will commend it to the gaze and admiration of an intelligent people. Many of the best men on the side of truth are to-day studying the Bible, who, in former years, studied their creeds. There are more direct appeals to the Bible and less attention to creeds in all churches to-day than ever before; yet the work has only begun. Sectarianism, though weakened and vacillating, is not dead yet, as its pulse grows weaker and its breathing shorter, infidelity will speak louder, and the friends of truth must be ready to shoulder the burden of proof for Christianity.

In the mean time the life of society will hunger for something more invigorating than infidelity can present, and when the tide shall turn the brighter day will come. This day is not far distant, for the world moves more rapidly now than ever before, and the facilities for research are better than ever before. In the future when the battle comes on, there will be more direct attacks and less skirmishing. Imaginary foes will give place to real ones. Thus the contest, though sharp, must be shorter, and when the mist has cleared away, truth in all its mighty proportions will be engraved on the banner of Jesus to all generations, and the dark night of error will be as a period only to be studied by him who reads the history of the nineteenth century.

The Growth of the Earth.

Richard A. Proctor, in a lecture before the society of arts, in England, said in speaking of meteors, that the earth is continually growing by direct accretion, and must continue to do so while it remains a member of the present cosmical system. This is due to the meteors of all sizes which travel in vast belts in irregular courses about the sun. These belts are numerous, and from time to time the earth plunges through one of them, attracting to itself the meteoric fragments and particles which come within its sphere of attraction. Not a night passes without the appearance of falling stars, and of course they continue to fall during the day, though usually unseen by human eyes. It is computed that hundreds of thousands of these extra-terrene bodies fall upon the earth every twenty-four hours. The addition of a few thousand tons yearly to the earth's weight is practically imperceptible, but it undoubtedly takes place, and in the course of millions of years, may have its effect.

To this a Lowell astronomer adds: It should not be understood from the above that these "shooting stars" often reach the earth as solid matter at all. [They are very small; rarely weighing more than half a grain,] according to Prof. Young, and are invisible as they approach the earth until they come quite near. Before they reach the outer limit of our atmosphere, some forty-five miles from the ground, they are doubtless cold and dark, but the friction caused by their passage through the air generates a heat which first fuses them, thus rendering them visible, and then burns them up; that it reduces them to smoke and vapor, so that whatever weight they bring is added to the atmosphere only.

Once in a great while one comes along large enough to reach the ground without being consumed, and this gives us the much prized arolite, of which Amherst college has so fine a collection. Where the meteors come from is an unsettled question. Probably most scientists incline to the belief that they are fragments of cosmical matter which have been floating in space until reached by the attraction of the earth. Others have suggested that they are the wreck of exploded planets, but the fragments resulting from such an explosion, if there ever was one, would hardly be as small as the meteor's are. With a little more probability some hold that they are parts of the sun, hurled into space by solar volcanoes.

The surface of the sun is continually being shaken by explosions of greater or less magnitude, and the great explosion viewed by Prof. Young a few years since undoubtedly threw matter beyond the influence of the sun's attraction; at least such was the computation of Prof. Proctor, mentioned above. Such matter must have been in the form of vapor, which would probably be widely diffused, so that it is quite possible that those who have seen arolites have had genuine pieces of the sun within reach.

The number of shooting stars is probably more rather than less than is stated by Proctor. It is not a rare thing, especially in autumn, for an observer to see one every five minutes on a clear night, and yet his field of vision does not cover more than one or two square miles, probably, and the meteors are of course falling just as thickly everywhere else, which would allow for the arrival of millions in a single 24 hours.

What a world of gossip would be prevented if it was only remembered that a person who tells you of the faults of others, intends to tell others of your faults.

One hour of eternity, one moment with the Lord, will make us utterly forget a lifetime's desolation.—Bonar.

We Shall Not All Sleep.

BY NOAH B. BLOUGH.

Sleep, as we all understand, is taking rest or resting. There is not an individual, who does not need the natural sleep, for we must all have it, and plenty of it too, or our bodies will soon wear out and our minds not be capable of performing their duty; for nature must have sleep, and if we would not get it, we would soon become sickly, and waste away, physically and mentally. But if we become weary and tired, and take a good night's rest or sleep, we feel much rested and refreshed every way. So much for natural sleep.

But the sleep mentioned in our text, is not the sleep that nature demands, but the sleep of death; not the sleep of the sinner, for we know that all sinners are "dead in trespasses and sins," and it is said, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light." We learn that when Lazarus died, Christ told the people he is sleeping, and they thought he does well; but he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead," hence it follows that the term sleep in the Scripture often signifies death. Paul says, "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed." This is truly a great mystery. We shall not all die, but if we are true followers of Christ, and live at the time of Christ's second coming, we shall never die, for not all shall sleep; is this not a great mystery?

The above, I think, is one of the most beautiful arrangements that God has planned. Did you ever think what a glorious arrangement it is? Did you ever think how it would be with us if we are true followers of Christ when he comes again, if that should be before we die? Oh, what a happy thought, that we shall die or sleep, but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Oh, what a mystery; to think that Christ shall change our natural bodies into spiritual bodies in a moment's time. But there is still another beautiful arrangement connected with the subject. All the true followers of Christ, who died since Christ was on earth, and as many as will yet die before his coming, are represented as sleeping in Jesus—sweet thought to sleep in Jesus—but the beautiful arrangement which God has ordained, is revealed by Paul in first Thessalonian iv. 15, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that sleep." Christ shall not take us up in the air first, no we shall not go before them that died in the Lord. I read that God is a God of order, and the apostle Paul says, on one occasion, "Let all things be done decently and in order." It would not seem in order, if the saints that are living when Christ comes, would be changed before those who fell asleep in Christ hundreds of years before. I think we must all confess that it is a beautiful arrangement which God has made known unto us.—Selected.

ORDER.—Put things right back in their place when done with. Never leave them all about, helter-skelter, topsy-turvy—never. When you use any article—tongs, boots or shoes, pins, thimbles, pincushions, needles, work-baskets, kitchen furniture, every article of housewifery or husbandry—no matter what it is—the moment you have done using it, return it to its proper place. Be sure to have a special place for everything and everything in its place. Order, order, perfect order, is the watchword—Heaven's first law. How much precious time is saved—aside from vexation—by observing order—systematic regularity! And little folks should begin to preserve order in everything. Form habits of order. These loose, slipshod slatternly habits are formed in childhood, and habits once formed are apt to cling for life. Young friends, begin early to keep things in their proper places; study neatness, order, economy, sobriety; in everything be just, honest, pure, lovely, and you will have a good report.