

tians. And great criminality is incurred by those who linger, or frame excuses for neglect. He who refuses to do his part in providing the gospel for all nations is in fact engaged in an adverse enterprise, and is doing what he can to delay the Lord's coming.

Crotchetty people are seldom harmless. They may be instruments of great mischief. A singular case occurred in England about half a century ago. The Serampore brethren and the Baptist Missionary Society had disagreed, and for a number of years there were two Missionary Societies in our denomination. At length the difficulties were removed, and a minister who had been one of the leading spirits on the Serampore side, was invited to preach one of the annual sermons on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society. He accepted the invitation, and preached; but unfortunately he was the victim of a crotchet, and he spent the whole time of the exercise in setting forth the crotchet, and arguing for its adoption. The crotchet was this:—all missionary efforts, as at present conducted, are useless. The missionaries by whom God will convert the world will be converted Jews. Your object, then, should be to employ measures for the conversion of the Jews, from whom may be selected suitable agents, who will traverse heathen lands and turn the nations to God. The preacher was eloquent, and his imagination fruitful; but his exhortations fell on unwilling ears, and the Society had to lament the scantiness of the collection, for who would give in response to such an appeal?

When the Saviour foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, his disciples asked him to tell them what would be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. In his reply he gave no dates, but indicated certain events which must take place before his coming, though still without assigning dates. He added, "Immediately after the tribulation of these days" . . . "he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect," &c., (Mat. xxiv. 29-31); but the Lord has not come. His other predictions have been fulfilled, and their fulfilment is recorded in history. God's "immediately" may differ much from ours; "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter iii. 8). So with the word "quickly" used by the Lord Jesus, in dictating the closing sentences of the Apocalypse—"Surely, I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). It is the year of grace, 1879, and the Lord has not come. He will come, but neither man nor angel can say when.

The diversity of opinions on this subject is marvellous. In proportion to the obscurity of a theme is the positivity with which some men pronounce upon it, holding their own views to be correct, and all others erroneous. Those who do not understand the true method of interpreting figurative language (and their number is large) are apt to make sad blunders. Explaining figures literally, they impute to the sacred writers the oddest fancies, and represent them as fathers of most ridiculous notions. In interpreting the book of Revelation folios of dreariness have been written, enough to make all compositors and printers' apprentices "stare and gasp." Even Caxton would have been scared at them.

Some of the advocates of the early coming of our Lord have proposed a novel interpretation of Matt. xxiv. 14, hoping thereby to remove certain difficulties out of the way. They would have us believe that the Saviour did not intend us to expect a general diffusion of the gospel among the people, but to be "a witness" to the country. A Missionary, for instance, might stop for a few hours at some populous island, gather a few scores of the inhabitants on the beach, and preach a sermon, by the aid of an interpreter, departing thence to the next people. This, it is said, would be the preaching of the gospel in that island, "for a witness." But can it be imagined that our Lord meant anything less than such an introduction of the gospel as would give all the inhabitants of the country in question an opportunity of learning its truths, and examining and deciding on its claims, to be followed by such an effectual blessing as would result from the ingathering of converts into churches, and the production of a rich harvest of spiritual fruits? This process will have to be repeated in every land till Isa. xi. 9 is fulfilled. Dr. Watts, as it appears to us, has verified the right interpretation:—

"Sun, moon, and stars convey thy praise
Round the whole earth, and never stand;
For, when thy truth began its race,
It touched and glanced on every land;
Nor shall thy spreading gospel rest,
Till through the world thy truth has run;
Till Christ has all the nations blessed
That see the light or feel the sun."

The twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation is a favourite portion with prophetic students. That chapter is the most obscure of all the chapters in God's Book. It bristles with difficulties, sufficiently appalling to the modest critic. How much is to be understood literally, and how much spiritually, need not be here discussed. The "first resurrection," however, may be confidently set down as spiritual. The probability is, that it will not be thoroughly understood till it is seen by its own light: the fulfilment will be the interpretation.

One remark, however, may be permitted. The twentieth chapter represents a glorious episode in the history of Christ's Church; its progress and development may spread over many centuries. But whether the time be long or short, it will be borne in mind that all will precede the Lord's coming, and be preparatory to it. This observation does not refer to the last paragraph of the vision, comprising verses 11 to 17, in which the writer anticipates the final judgment, and gives a brief sketch, substantially similar to other passages in the New Testament. See Mat. xxv. 24-48; John v. 28-30; Acts xvii. 31; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 7, 8.

Other episodes are contained in the same book. Each seal, trumpet, and vial is a separate one. But dates are altogether wanting, and landmarks are dimly discernible. As the time draws near, thrilling experiences will be enjoyed by God's people who will then be dwelling on the earth, and who will see and hear much with which not only we, but those also who will succeed us in the next ages, must be content to be unacquainted. But the times of ignorance are shortening.

The general conclusions may now be briefly stated:—

I. The Lord Jesus will come again "the second time without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). He has promised to come, and He will come, for He is "the faithful and true witness" (Rev. iii. 14).

Now, He is within the veil, performing the duties of the high-priest's office—interposing, as far as is needful, in the

management of the concerns of the Church—and governing the world. Let us often think of Him as actually engaged in our behalf, and let us not be unmindful of the "hope set before us," of which we are in fact reminded whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. xi. 26).

II. The time is not fixed. It is fixed in God's decree, but it is not revealed to any of his creatures. "The day will declare it." All we know is, that it will come suddenly, unexpectedly, "as a thief in the night."

III. The purposes for which the Lord will come are clearly set forth:—

1. He will come to bring this dispensation to a close. This will involve a series of sore judgments, affecting the material interests of the world, and the world itself, all being doomed to destruction, (see 2 Pet. iii.); it will also include the termination of the mediatorial kingdom of the Saviour (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

2. He will come to complete the happiness of his people, (John xiv. 3).

3. He will come to sit as Judge of the human race, and award to all their final allotments.

IV. Certain practical considerations demand serious attention.

1. We must be content to remain ignorant on many important points. The number of those points will increase the longer we live. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing," [Prov. xxv. 2]. And when He conceals it, woe be to the vain man who thinks himself competent to search it out, and puzzles his brain and wastes his time in the endeavour. The Apostle Paul said, "If a man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know," [1 Cor. viii. 2]; and the Apostle Paul was a true philosopher.

The writings of Archbishop Whately contain many observations on this subject, which may be profitably studied by all who are desirous of being regarded as thinkers; especially his "Logic," and his "Annotations on Lord Bacon's Essays."

2. Let us avoid dogmatism. An old friend of ours was accustomed to say when various opinions were referred to in conversation, "A good deal may be said in favour of that view." Our friend's own views were rather broad, and he was very averse to dogmatism on any matter, in which respect he may be safely imitated. It is disgusting to hear shallow minded men talk in favor of their peculiar notions, assuming airs of authority, and demanding submission to their dogmas.

Opposed to dogmatism is indifference—a state of mind equally or even more dangerous. We have need to guard against it, as it often proves to be the parent of unbelief. The outcry raised in these times against dogma, as it is called, is as senseless as it is mischievous. There is a medium course, which an honest searcher after truth will have no great difficulty in finding.

3. Public instructors should shun speculations in their teaching. The reference is to the pulpit. It is rarely desirable for a preacher to unfold the method of a process. The results only need to be placed before an audience, accompanied by such explanations as will tend to satisfy intelligent hearers.

A singular case occurred many years ago in London. The pastor of one of our churches in that city had employed himself in a philosophical, and had thrown the result, the argument including into a sermon. Being invited to preach a missionary sermon in Kent, he took that sermon with him, and preached it, but soon discovered that he had made a mistake. No one understood him, and consequently no interest was felt, and the good man expressed afterwards his regret that he had not preached a plain gospel sermon, which would have warmed all hearts and opened all pockets.

4. Great care is required in the choice of texts on the subject of this paper. An uncritical reader of the Scriptures (many preachers are found in that category) notes a number of passages, some in the Psalms, some in the prophets, and some in the New Testament, which speak of the coming of the Lord as a most desirable event, and give assurance of its certainty. These passages are supposed to relate to the Lord's second coming, and are so uniformly interpreted. But it is overlooked or forgotten that the comings of the Lord have been numerous, sometimes of a judicial character; sometimes merciful, and that Jesus himself used language to his disciples which was evidently susceptible of a twofold application, partly to the fall of Jerusalem, and partly to the final judgement. There is a dividing line somewhere, and a transference from one event to the other is supposed to exist; but there is a want of agreement among the best judges as to the proper place for it, and it is an allowable inference that great caution is requisite in the choice of texts.

5. Insoluble difficulties and irreconcilable conclusions must be expected.

We have to do with imagery of the wildest, grandest kind. The Easterns surpass all other people in this particular, and the writer of the Apocalypse surpasses all other Easterns, having, besides, this speciality, that it is a prophetic book, abounding in figures, but altogether wanting in dates. Whatever system of interpretation we may choose to adopt, we shall find ourselves so perplexed by digressions, and episodes, and side-lights, that it may be safely deemed the wiser course to give up attempts at explanation, and satisfy ourselves with the belief and expectation of the Lord's coming, leaving questions of time and manner, and attendant circumstances, to be answered by the event itself. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

(Conclusion in our next.)

ERRATA.—In the first column of the above article, 10th line, for "further communications," read "fuller communications." 2nd column, 9th line, for "are extraordinary," read, "an extraordinary;" 19th line, for "efforts," read, "effects;" 43rd line, omit "a" and read, "the dictates of common sense;" 75th line, for "Whereas two or three," read, "Where two or three," &c.

For the Christian Messenger.
Foreign Missions.

LETTER FROM REV. W. F. ARMSTRONG.

CHICAGO, Dec. 28th, 1878.

REV. W. P. EVERETT, Sec. F. M. B.

Dear Brother,—I have been desirous of sending you a somewhat detailed report of my recent visit to Berhampore, but have not hitherto found time.

You are aware that the Telugu country is bounded on the north by Orissa, the language of whose people is Oriya. In that country the General Baptists of England have had for a long time a very successful mission.

Berhampore, though not in Orissa, is very near the border and may be said to form the dividing line between the Telugu and Oriya fields. The town has a population of about 22,000 and is the residence of an English General Baptist Missionary, Rev. H. Wood. At present there is another missionary family there also, but they are about removing to open a new station further inland.

Ever since we came to this northern section of the Telugu country I have been desirous of making a tour to Berhampore for the purposes, firstly, of seeing the country along the way, so as to ascertain definitely the proportion of Telugu speaking people in that section of our field; secondly, to make known to them the good news of the Kingdom, so far as this could be done in a brief tour; thirdly, to form the acquaintance of the missionaries at Berhampore; and, fourthly, to make arrangements with them for a supply of Oriya Scriptures, books and tracts for the Oriya speaking people on the field.

The visit, I am glad to say, was a success. I have learned considerable respecting that section and find that it is more of a Telugu country than I had supposed. Half-way from Chicacole to Berhampore the population is almost wholly Telugu, and on the remaining half the Telugus are much in excess of the Oriyans until the immediate vicinity of Berhampore is reached, where they seem to be about equally divided. From Berhampore, northward, the proportion of Telugus becomes gradually less until you reach a point about 30 miles north of Berhampore, where Telugus almost wholly disappear.

I am overpowered with the magnitude of the work. In our field, that is, in the Telugu field accessible from Chicacole, there are over a million of souls. What nobler work could any man desire than striving to give the gospel to this great multitude? The whole land swarms with human beings. Oh! for the Dayspring from on high to visit them.

The only source of regret during our visit was that circumstances made it impossible for me to give much time to direct evangelical work along the road. But we trust to be able to do more there hereafter. I formed a very pleasant acquaintance with the missionaries, their native preachers and their work. And last, but not least, I obtained by way of exchange for Telugu literature, a good sized box of Oriya books and tracts and made arrangements to secure additional supplies on the same terms. I was absent from home about three weeks on this journey of over 100 miles.

I hope soon to be able to spend considerable time in travelling with the native preachers and the colporteur. This department of labor I regard as the right arm of my mission work.

I have recently purchased a tent which a government officer who was leaving the station disposed of at a very low price. This will be of great service to us.

We are looking forward with pleasure to the Conference to be held here, 18th Jan'y.

Yours, &c.,
W. F. ARMSTRONG.

The Christian Messenger.

HALFAX, N. S., February 19, 1879.

DOMINION PARLIAMENT.

Parliament opened at Ottawa on Thursday last. The members of the House of Commons were sworn in in the morning. The Senate met at 2.30 p. m. Two new members were sworn in. The Commons were summoned and directed to elect their Speaker. On returning they chose Hon. Dr. Blanchet without a division. He was conducted to the chair by Sir John A. McDonald and Hon. Mr. Tilley. After returning thanks, in English and in French, for the honor conferred upon him, Sir John A. offered his congratulations and moved an adjournment.

The State dinner in the evening was a brilliant affair. The dignitaries and prominent men from all parts of Canada were present.

On Friday an immense concourse gathered in and around the Parliament buildings. The corridors were filled by 10 o'clock in the morning and hundreds failed to find room. The galleries of the Senate Chamber were crowded and every foot of space on the

floor was filled with ladies in full dress. The Princess and suite arrived at 5.45 p. m., dressed in mourning with ornaments and necklace of diamonds. At 3 o'clock the Marquis of Lorne arrived with his attendants. On taking his seat on the throne he proceeded to read the following

OPENING SPEECH.

Hon. Gentlemen of the Senate:
Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

In meeting the Parliament of Canada for the first time, I desire to express the gratification I feel at having been selected by Her Majesty for the high and important office I now fill, and to assure you of the great satisfaction with which I now seek your aid and co-operation.

In acknowledging with profound gratitude the reception which has been accorded to myself as Her Majesty's Representative, I am also commanded by the Queen to convey, through you, to the people of Canada, her thanks for the loyal, generous and kindly manner in which they have welcomed her daughter.

The contribution of Canadian products and manufactures to the great national exhibition at Paris last year attracted much notice, and it is believed will have a beneficial effect on the trade of the Dominion with Europe. I congratulate you on the success which must in no small degree be attributable to the kind and unceasing exertions of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as President of the British section. The report of the Canadian Commissioners will be laid before you when received.

I am pleased to inform you that the amount awarded for the fishery claims, under the Washington Treaty, has been paid by the United States and that Her Majesty's Government has arranged with Canada and Newfoundland for their respective shares of the award. The papers on the subject shall be submitted to you.

The important and rapidly increasing trade between Canada and England in live cattle has been seriously threatened by the appearance in various parts of the United States of pleuro pneumonia. In order to prevent the contagion from spreading to Canada and the consequent interruption of the trade, I have caused an order to be issued, under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act, 1869, prohibiting the importation or introduction into the Dominion of American cattle, for a short period. It is hoped that the disease will ere long be extinguished in the United States, and the necessity for continuing the prohibition removed. Your attention will be invited to an amendment of the Act I have just referred to.

My Government has commenced negotiations with Her Majesty's sanction, for the development of the trade of Canada with France and Spain, and with their respective colonies. I hope to be able to lay before you the result of these negotiations during the present session.

It is the purpose of my Government to press for the most vigorous prosecution of the Canadian Pacific Railway; and to meet the reasonable expectations of British Columbia. In carrying out this intention, due regard must be had to the financial position of the country. Communication by rail has been effected between Manitoba and the U. S. system of railways by the junction at St. Vincent of the Pembina branch of our railway with the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. That portion of the main line which extends from English River to Keewatin is now being energetically pushed to completion in order to secure as rapidly as possible the connection between Lake Superior and the Great North West.

A bill for the amendment and consolidation of the Acts relating to Stamps shall be submitted for your consideration, as well as a measure amending the Act relating to Weights and Measures.

The decennial census must be taken in 1881 and I think it expedient that a measure for the purpose should be passed during the present session, in order to give ample time for the preparation of all the preliminary arrangements, and to insure the Census being taken as accurately and inexpensively as possible. In connection with this subject it may be well to consider the propriety of providing some means for the collection and collation of Vital, Criminal and General Statistics.

A bill will be laid before you for the rearrangement of some of the departments of the Government, and also measures relating to the survey and management of the Dominion lands, to the Mounted Police, and to the Post Office Department; and also for the amendment in some particulars of the laws relating to Indians.

A measure will also be submitted to you for the vesting in Her Majesty, for the use of the Dominion, of certain Ordnance and Admiralty lands in the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons—The estimates for the ensuing year will be laid before you at an early day. They have been prepared with as much regard to economy as is compatible with the efficiency of the public service. I regret that the receipts in the treasury from ordinary sources continue to be inadequate to meet charges against the consolidated revenue. You will, I doubt not, agree with me in the opinion that it is not desirable that our finances