

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger The Coming of the Lord.

No. 2.

Some years ago the writer had the privilege of spending a few hours with the late excellent Bro. Duval, of Lake Lomond, N. B. Mr. D. had been preaching a series of sermons from 2 Tim. iv. 6-8. "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." While we were quietly taking our dinner together, he said to me: "Bro. I want you to assist me in the investigation of a point of undenominational truth. The subject for the ensuing Lord's Day, was—" which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day," and the question for investigation, was, "what is meant by the phrase—that day."

I have intimated already that the phrase—"The day of the Lord," must not be confounded with "The coming of the Lord," and that neither of these expressions are identical with the judgement of the great white throne. The day of the Lord, is a period of time, it may be longer or shorter, in which the Lord deals openly in manifest judgement and righteousness, with the inhabitants of the world. It is an expression found frequently in the Prophets, and refers to the times of terrible judgements on Israel, or on the nations. See particularly Zephaniah i. 14, and the passages referred to in the reference Bibles. The phrase occurs in the New Testament, and sweeps over, as I believe, the whole period of the Book of Revelation, from chap. 4 to the close; all of which, I am confident, refers to what is still future and unfulfilled.

But my reference to the late worthy brother of Lake Lomond, was made simply for the sake of his memorable expression—"undenominational truth"—The question whether the Lord Jesus is to return to this earth before or after the Millennium, is, happily for us all, one that can be discussed upon its own merits, and does not, so far as I am aware, ever affect the standing of christians in the various churches to which they belong. True, the "Adventists" have done much to bring the doctrine of the speedy coming of the Lord into disrepute, by attempting to fix the time, in which they have repeatedly failed, (and must always fail), and worse than that, by associating with it, doctrines concerning the state of the dead, and the future state of the wicked, which are fearfully erroneous, and doing an immense amount of harm. But then this is an old device of the enemy, to sow tares among the wheat, to mix up false doctrines with the truth, and the better the men are that he can deceive and engage in this bad business, the more successful are his devices. Many will be sure to adopt the errors for the sake of the truth, and others will reject the truth because of the errors associated therewith. and in either case, his end is accomplished. Persons have been dealt with for these errors by some of the orthodox churches, I am happy to say; but I have never heard of any one having been expelled from church fellowship, merely because he believed that the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, is to come down in glory upon this habitable world, and set things to rights, before the Millennium, so as to introduce that glorious period, which the saints of all ages have looked for, and longed for, and sighed for, and prayed for, and waited for; when the Lord Jesus is to reign from the rivers unto the ends of the earth, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea.

When wars shall cease And earth shall rest, In robes of peace, Supremely blest.

Yes, brethren, this is undenominational ground. We may investigate the question as coolly as we would a question of discovery in the arctic regions or in the torrid zone, or any problem in mathematics or chemistry. Let eternal truth be our aim. Let us look up to the Lord

for wisdom and direction, let us sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus, and seek that wisdom that cometh down from above. Let us "Search the Scriptures" and in all this we cannot but get a blessing, though we may not all see eye to eye.

Now then let us turn to the book which has the emphatic and divinely inspired title: A REVELATION. Let us read the Preface. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto HIS SERVANTS things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Rev. i. 1, 3.) Surely there is no foundation here, (or any where else in the book,) for the very prevalent idea that this Book is so obscure and mysterious that nothing definite can be made of it. So that one must almost apologise for quoting it, and for attempting to learn any thing from it. People seem to forget in this connection what the word Revelation means; they seem to attach to it the notion of *mystification and concealment*; and it is not very uncommon to hear the Apostle John, the writer, (not the author,) of the Book, styled in barbarous English, *The Revelator*. Who ever condescended to style him *the Revelator*? No, no, it seems to be assumed, that this would never do. To reveal is, "to make known something unknown; to disclose; to divulge; to unveil." "How can we apply all this to this marvellous Book?" Surely we must coin a new word, John has not revealed, he has *revealed*!!! And what God says is a Revelation, man has in effect decided is a *mystification*. But here, as in all similar cases, it is man that has made the obscurity and the difficulties, led on doubtless by him whose folly and final doom are here so clearly depicted. "Let God be true and every man a liar." This wonderful Book is a REVELATION, for God says it is.

Come with me then to the nineteenth and twentieth chapters. What find we here? Seven successive events, all arranged in order, are clearly indicated, and all just before us now, and all of thrilling interest to you dear readers, and to me while I write. Oh Blessed God guide this pen and guide the eye and the heart of every reader:

- 1. First, we have a glorious scene of joy in heaven, called "the marriage supper of the Lamb." xix. 6-9.
2. Secondly, The Lord Jesus comes out of heaven, attended by his bride—"the armies in heaven follow." He comes visibly down to earth, and earth is up in arms against him. "And I saw the beast," (an emperor) "and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army." These rebel hosts are dashed to pieces, and their leaders, the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. verses 11-21.
3. Thirdly, An angel comes down from heaven and binds and confines Satan. Chap. xx. 1-3.
4. Fourthly, The Lord Jesus and his risen saints reign over the earth for one thousand years; that is, during the Millennium. verse 4-6.
5. Fifthly, Satan is released from his prison, and we have the final apostasy, the holy city the camp of the Saints, (the Jews, who will never apostatise again, though the Gentiles will,) is besieged and the besiegers are killed with fire from heaven. xx. 7-10.
6. Sixthly, we have the judgement of the great white throne, the resurrection of the wicked dead, and their final doom, the lake of fire. xx. 11-15.
7. Seventhly, we have the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. xxi. 1-8.

Let the reader carefully go over this portion of the word, and see if these things are not so. I would add a few words and close this article.

The reader is requested to notice that of the seven events here enumerated, three take place before the Millennium, and three afterward. Those which occur before the Millennium, are 1. the marriage of the Lamb; (Matt. xxv. 1-13. 1 Thes. iv. 16-17. Epnes. v. 25-57, may be consulted in this connection); 2. the coming of the Lord down to this earth, and 3. The binding of Satan. Those which occur after the Millennium, are—1. the final apostasy, 2. the final judge,

ment, and 3. the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. Now then can we wonder that the theory that confounds all these events, or restricts them to the same point of time, finds insuperable difficulties in these chapters? Were that theory correct these chapters would indeed be among the most obscure and difficult in the whole Book, and, what is more, a great many other chapters and passages would be in exactly the same category! But on the theory advocated in these papers, all these difficulties vanish. These chapters are among the plainest in the prophetic writings, I will not say, among the plainest in the Bible, though perhaps I might say so without exaggeration. And to my mind this is evidence conclusive that the latter theory is correct, and the former erroneous. The Bible will not bend to accommodate our theories.

The first scene to be looked for, is not the day of judgement, nor the burning up of the world, nor the appearance of the Son of Man coming with clouds, so that every eye may see him. But it is his coming, not to the earth, but into the air, to meet his bride, the living and the sleeping saints, who alone will hear his voice, and see his face in that day, (I simply give the theory here, and wave the arguments for a future article.) Between this event and the present moment, prophesy does not place, and never has placed, any event whatever. But there are prophecies to be fulfilled before he comes down to earth, and stands upon Mount Olivet, whence he went up. (See Zechariah xiv. 4. Acts i. 9-11.) This the world will see, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Then will be fulfilled Pa. ii. 8, 9. Daniel ii. 44, 45. Zech. xiv, and Rev. xix. 20, 21. But Rev. xx. 11, 12, and the burning up of the world mentioned in 2 Peter iii., will not take place for more than a thousand years after this event. It is never said that the world will be consumed with fire when the "Lord comes." It is in the "Day of the Lord," that this event is to occur, and at the time of the great white throne judgement, which, as I most firmly believe on Scripture authority, will be the close of the day—the last act in that important period—and not at the beginning.

Dear Reader, how stands the matter between you and God? Are you one of his redeemed children? Are your affections set on heavenly things? Are you one of the wise, or one of the foolish? What about your lamp? Have you a good supply of oil in your vessel, grace in your heart? The midnight cry has been ringing out, and is now ringing out upon the midnight air, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him." All this agitation, this writing, reading, lecturing, preaching, discussing, about the coming of the Lord, is sounding forth that joyful cry. It is not—Mark—"Behold the Judge is coming," but the BRIDEGROOM! O ye saints! trim your lamps and get ready, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort yourselves one another with these words," 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

PAUL.

For the Christian Messenger. Letter from London.

LONDON, Oct. 10th, 1879.

The Duke of Beaufort has written the following letter to Mr. Daniel Owen who recently published a pamphlet in which he sought to show that the English farmer would be able to compete in the English market with the American wheat producer, providing the soil in this country were properly tilled. In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of this pamphlet the Duke says:

"I have to thank you for the reprint of your paper, read at a meeting in June of the Cowbridge Farmers' Club. These are some parts of the paper, partly opinions of your own, partly those of others, with which I do not agree, and which to my mind are not in accordance with the present state of things in America, and as far as I can see, are still further from the

probable future of the wheat-growing zone or district of the Continent, both in Canada and in the United States.

On page 12, in commenting upon the unprecedented crop of wheat grown there, last year, you state that it is exceptional, and may not happen again for years to come. As a matter of fact, the crop is much larger this year than it was last, and, though the weather was unusually bad and changeable for America, the harvest was well got. As there are now railroads working, others making, and again more contemplated, I believe the surplus of wheat produced beyond the quantity wanted for home consumption in Canada and America will increase every year for some time to come. Also, as they get money from selling their wheat, they will invest some of it in manures, and, instead of having eleven bushels per acre to sell, grown on their now unmanured land they will raise the productive powers of their land. Besides this, the wheat zone is enormous and as the flood of emigration has again set westward more acres will be cleared and cultivated. As to the expense, I think that the gentlemen quoted in your paper are in error, for I have no doubt that, though from the very farthest part of the wheat-producing districts it may be more, yet wheat can be landed at Liverpool from the average of the distance from the coast at a cost of 4s. per bushel, or 32s. per quarter. Can you compete with this in England? I say certainly not.

You have had great experience and have grown crops that sound almost fabulous in quantity, but I see that, with all that science and capital could do for three years, you had crops far less to the acre than for the seven previous years. The fact is that in America the sun never fails them as it does in this climate. Their crops ripen quickly, and it is almost a certainty that they have fine weather for harvesting. Bad weather beats even expense and good judgement. Mr. Osborne, I think, greatly overrates the average wheat produced per acre in the United Kingdom even in the favorable seasons, when he puts it at thirty bushels. I believe twenty bushels to be much nearer the mark. He is wrong also in saying that it costs 9d. per bushel railway freight to the coast, which would be £1 10s. per ton. I believe it to be an error also to say that the railways are carrying wheat at a loss. There is not sufficient competition to cause them to do that.

The result of my consideration of the subject is this—that climate, steam transport by sea or land, together with the labor question on both sides of the ocean, has made it out of the power of our agriculturists to compete with the growers of wheat on the American continent, and that they must turn their attention to cheaper and better modes of growing beef and mutton, so as not to be driven out of the market also by the Americans. The distance difficulty and expense of transport of live and dead meat give us an advantage we shall be wise to improve, instead of wasting time and capital in trying the impossible task of competing with them in growing wheat."

For the Christian Messenger.

"His Appearing, and His Kingdom."

EIGHTH ARTICLE.

In my last article I spoke of the idea often expressed, that these matters are comparatively unimportant. Sometimes again the objection is put in another form—"the study of such subjects is mere speculation, and is generally quite unprofitable."

By speculation is probably meant, not "intellectual examination," "viewing an object in its different aspects and relations," "the act of scientific thinking," as the word sometimes means;—but "mere theory" or "conjecture" (Webster's Dictionary). Now we all will agree that theory and conjecture, in relation to the precepts or promises, narratives or predictions of the Holy Scriptures, are clearly unprofitable. On that point there is no need for discussion.

But is it unprofitable speculation for any one to believe what God has revealed; and to study to understand it better? Was it unprofitable speculation in which the apostle Paul indulged

when he wrote that part of his first letter to the Corinthian Church which we call the 15th chapter, or that part of his first letter to the Thesalonians contained in the latter part of the 4th chapter? Was the Lord Jesus encouraging speculation when, a few days before His death, departing from the temple and sitting with His disciples in the Mount of Olives overlooking the chosen city, he discoursed to them at length concerning "things to come?"

"Certainly not," I think I hear a chorus of readers reply, "but then His words are very mysterious, and it is useless for us to pry into their hidden meaning. Wise men cannot agree as to their true interpretation."

But we need not therefore conclude that to us as well as to the world, Jesus spoke in parables, that we might not understand. He himself said to His disciples, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God"; and fifty years later, He gave to His "beloved disciple" a revelation, "to show to His servants what things must shortly come to pass." (Oh, what duration the "short" time of the divine purpose may cover!) Does He forbid us to study the book of this revelation, so often called, and perhaps truly so, the most difficult book in the Bible? On the contrary His words are (Rev. i. 3) "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Surely we are not to read and hear without trying to understand the words. Hear what the great apostle wrote (1 Cor. ii. 6-16—B. U. Version): "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, which no one (even) of the rulers of this world has known,—things which eye saw not, nor ear heard, and which entered not into the heart of man, which God prepared for those who love Him; BUT TO US GOD REVEALED THEM BY HIS SPIRIT (in His word), for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. * * * And we received * * * the spirit of God, THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS THAT WERE FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD."

No doubt there may be many prophecies that will not be clearly understood until their fulfilment draws near, or perhaps is accomplished. Some portion of the book of Daniel, for example, is "closed up and sealed till the time of the end," (Dan. xii. 4, 9). But to the apostle John it was said (Rev. xxii. 10), "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand."

The things concerning the second coming and future kingdom of Christ are not found however in the obscure books alone, but in nearly every book in the New Testament.

LUKE.

November 3rd, 1879.

P. S.—When I said in my answer to Rev. J. A. McLean (in which I ignorantly omitted to place the "Rev." before his name) that I was "of course unable to refer directly to the works" of Clement and Polycarp, I used the words "of course" without due consideration. I have since examined a copy of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers in the original Greek.

Clement, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, after sundry exhortations to humility and godliness, says, "In truth His will shall be accomplished speedily and suddenly, for the scripture also testifies that He will come speedily and will not tarry, and the Lord will suddenly come unto His temple, even the Holy One whom ye are expecting."

Again at the close of his second epistle he says, "If therefore we shall have acted righteously (done right) before God, we shall enter into His kingdom, and shall receive the promises * * * Let us therefore be hourly expecting the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of the manifestation of God."

The words already quoted from Polycarp convey substantially the sense of the original. (Polycarp's Epist. ad Phil., V.)

LUKE.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Venice.

VENICE, Oct. 3rd, 1879.

That American tourist who pronounced Rome to be a very fine city, but complained that the public buildings were sadly out of repair, should have been twin brother to the gentleman who, on making the ascent of the Acropolis at Athens to survey the ruins of the Parthenon, remarked that they might well call the place a necropolis, for he had never seen so many tombstones in his life. According, however, to the well known "virtuoso," Mr. J. C. Robinson, who has addressed to a contemporary an