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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

By Special Request.
The Starless Crown.

"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."
—Dan. xii. 3.

Wearied and worn with earthly cares, I yielded to repose,
And soon before my raptured sight a glorious vision rose:
I thought, whilst slumbering on my couch in midnight's solemn gloom,
I heard an angel's silvery voice, and radiance filled my room.
A gentle touch awakened me,—a gentle whisper said,
"Arise, O sleeper, follow me," and through the air we fled;
We left the earth so far away that like a speck it seem'd,
And heavenly glory, calm and pure, across our pathway stream'd,
Still on we went,—my soul was wrapped in silent ecstasy;
I wondered what the end would be, what next should meet mine eye,
I knew not how we journeyed through the pathless fields of light,
When suddenly a change was wrought, and I was clothed in white.
We stood before a city's walls most glorious to behold;
We passed through gates of glistening pearl, o'er streets of purest gold;
It need not the sun by day, the silver moon by night;
The glory of the Lord was there, the Lamb Himself its light.
Bright angels paced the shining streets, sweet music filled the air,
And white-robed saints with glittering crowns, from every clime were there;
And some that I had loved on earth stood with them round the throne.
"All worthy is the Lamb," they sang, "the glory His alone."
But fairer far than all beside, I saw my Saviour's face;
And as I gazed he smiled on me with wondrous love and grace.
Lowly I bowed before His throne, o'erjoyed that I at last
Had gained the object of my hopes; that earth at length was past.
And then in solemn tones He said, "Where is the diadem,"
That ought to sparkle on thy brow—
"Worn'd with many a gem?
"For thou hast believed on me, and life through me is thine,
But where are all those radiant stars that in thy crown should shine?
Yonder thou seest a glorious throng, and stars on every brow,
For every soul they led to me they wear a jewel now!
And such thy bright reward had been if such had been thy deed,
If thou hadst sought some wand'ring feet in path of peace to lead,
I did not mean that thou should'st tread the way of life alone,
But that the clear and shining light which round thy footsteps shone,
Should guide some other weary feet to my bright home of rest,
And thus, in blessing those around, thou hadst thyself been blest."

The vision faded from my sight, the voice no longer spake,
A spell seemed brooding o'er my soul, which long I fear'd to break,
And when at last I gazed around in morning's glimmering light,
My spirit felt o'erwhelmed beneath that vision's awful might
I rose, and wept with chaste'n'd joy that yet I dwelt below,
That yet another hour was mine by faith my works to show;
That yet some sinner I might tell of Jesus' dying love,
And help to lead some weary soul to seek a home above.
And now, while on the earth I stay, my motto this shall be
"To live no longer to myself, but to Him who died for me."
And graven on my inmost soul this word of truth divine,
"They that turn many to the Lord, bright as the stars shall shine!"

J. L. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

Brevities.

BY REV. J. CLARK.

Truth is invincible and needs no armour except its own purity.

There is no neutral ground between right and wrong.

He who acts on righteous principles is in harmony with all that is beautiful, glorious, and god-like in heaven and earth, throughout all the changes of time and all the ages of eternity.

A lie may be acted as well as spoken; but the sin of an acted lie is just as great as that of a spoken one, and it may be even greater.

He who walks on the heights with God will have little human companionship.

It is not an unusual thing for a person to be unable to see any object whatever beyond his own shadow.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.
Church Polity.

No. IV.

THE LAW OF EXCLUSION.

It has been repeatedly stated that a church of Christ is a society of holy persons. As a voluntary society it is characterised by entire equality. All the members have the same rights and privileges. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 28). In some parts of the country the votes of male members only are taken; but this is clearly opposed to apostolic rule, and should only be allowed to prevail by general consent. There are subjects on which the sisters may prefer to be excused from voting—such as, financial matters, and disciplinary questions relating to the intercourse of the sexes, otherwise, the women have the same rights as the men, public teaching in the church excluded, which is specially provided for. If they resign their rights in certain cases, the resignation is voluntary, and is in force only for the time. It is observable that the law of fellowship is very stringent: "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat." (1 Cor. v. 11.) John carries it further: He says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 11). It is a special application of the ancient saying, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. xv. 33). The injurious tendencies of some states of mind had doubtless been observed, and it was necessary to put Christians on their guard.

When the early Christians were falsely accused of horrible crimes, they were accustomed to reply, "We are Christians, and no evil is done among us." There was one rule, when such cases did occur,—"Put away from yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. v. 13.

A spurious leniency sometimes creep in. But when immoral acts are proved against a member, our churches act wisely when they issue the decree of exclusion, and make it known. Delay is commonly fatal to justice.

There is a passage, however, which requires some attention. It is Gal. vi. 1. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." To be "overtaken in a fault" is different from continuing in it, or forming the habit of evil. It is evidently a case that may be gently treated. Christian friendship should have full scope. Restoration should be the immediate aim. Let the offender have full opportunity of recovering "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 2 Thess. iii. 15.

The "spurious leniency" already adverted to has done much harm to the cause of Christ. If vice is not excused, it is slurred over or softened down—or unreasonable delay is permitted—and the world laughs at the church, while the truly godly weep over the disgrace that is suffered.

J. M. CRAMP.

May 14, 1879.

For the Christian Messenger.

Development.

Growth is one of the results of existence. Nothing has its development coeval with its beginning. The stately oak comes from the acorn. Yon pile of earth and stone comes from the combined particles of matter, apparently rising from the depths of the sea, and forms what men by common consent call an Island. The coral reef, seem-

ingly coeval with creation, is formed by an insect. The base is the bed of the sea, on which, particle after particle is laid until the surface is reached, and its top becomes a place of deposit, preparatory to agricultural pursuits. We have abundant cases in which from little beginnings we have great results.

Nor is this so any less in the moral than in the physical world. No man becomes at once a bad man. It is by a long series of evil that a man forms the habitual practice of doing evil. The first wilful transgression may be remembered, from which the habitual practice of a certain course of wrongdoing commenced. Perhaps some youth may read this article, who is even now under temptation to step aside from virtue's path, let him pause, there is danger, and no one can forget the consequence of not resisting the temptation. How many fall just here. They lose self control, and are lost. It is the beginning of sin that we should so fear that we put it away from us. There is safety here and no where else.

How many could trace their wanderings in iniquity to one solitary act. "We should take care of the beginnings of sin. Nobody is exceedingly wicked all at once: the devil is too cunning to startle men with temptations to great and frightful crimes at first; but if he can tempt them to leave off their prayers, to take God's name in vain, to drink, to swear, to hear filthy discourse, and to speak of the vices of others with pleasure, he will soon tempt them to crimes of a damning nature." Bishop Wilson. But a higher authority says "When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James i. 15.

VERITAS.

The Second Coming of Christ.

AN ESSAY READ BEFORE THE BAPTIST MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE HELD AT LAWRENCETOWN, ANNAPOLIS CO., APRIL 8TH, 1879.

By REV. JOHN BROWN.

(Published by request of the Conference.)
(Continued.)

I cannot think that God would permit his inspired servants to be so far mistaken as to expect an event to occur thousands of years (for nearly 2,000 have passed away already) before its occurrence. Whatever their writings actual seem to teach as to their expectation of Christ's coming they could not have had any real grounds for such expectation, and we have but little more, if any, God would not permit them, if not indeed lead them, to expect to see what he knew would not take place for many centuries after their death. A thousand, or two thousand years is to us a long time indeed, but "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," 2 Peter iii. 8, and I think they err widely who from this passage make calculations on the ground that with God one day represents a thousand years, thus concluding as some do, that the six days work of the creation occupied (6000) six thousand years. If the creation of the world occupied more than six actual days of 24 hours, it must be proved by something stronger than the above passage. If we take it thus, then we may equally assume that if one day represents a thousand years, then we should have the millennium extended to (365,000) three hundred and sixty five thousand years, instead of one thousand. I think it simply means that what may seem a very long time to men, is a very short time with God. He does not measure time by years as we do; all eternity is his, and all time to him is one eternal now. To him there is in reality no past, present, nor future, consequently no measurement of time. If it be allowable to reckon a day for a thousand years, and a thousand years for a day, what shall be made of the following? "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Ps. xc. 4. Yesterday when it is past, can hardly be called time at all. We

have therefore equal right from this passage to say that a thousand years may be compared to no time at all, as we have from the other to compare it, or make it represent a day. It seems to me simply to mean (in the light of both passages) that a thousand years in God's estimation is no longer than the shortest possible space of time in the estimation of men. At different times we find men who judging from passing events, conclude that Christ was about to come, which conclusion I think they would not have come to had they given good heed to the sure word of prophecy. Buck, writing in 1827, (Thes. Dict. under Millennium,) over 50 years ago, says: "Who knows but the present convulsions among different nations; the overthrow which popery has had in different places where it has been dominant for thousands of years; the fulfilment of prophecy respecting infidels, &c., &c., who knows, I say, but these things are the forerunners of events of the most delightful nature, and may usher in the happy morn of that bright and glorious day when the whole world shall be filled with his glory, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." We wish it had been so; but the happy morn has not yet dawned.

Twenty years later, about 1845 or 1847, Jefferson tells us it was "most confidently expected that Jesus Christ would visibly appear in the world, accompanied by the angels of his presence, to establish his throne at Jerusalem, and personally to resign over the whole earth."

A writer in the Christian's Penny Magazine, in 1854, seven years later says: "Never were there so clear indications of the near approach of the full development of the kingdom of Christ as at the present time."

Thus men have at different times expressed their expectation of the immediate coming of the Lord, and have continued to up to the present time. There are always some to be found who are wise above what is written, and notwithstanding the Saviour's distinct utterances as to the uncertainty and absolute secrecy of this day, they will profess to know within comparatively narrow limits, when the Lord will come. It is to be hoped that being disappointed so often, and their prophecies found to be false, they will in time become more cautious. When events such as are transpiring at the present time occur, such as wars, and rumours of wars, famine and pestilence, there are numbers who seize upon it at once as indications of the approach of the end of all things. Sad to tell, wars and rumours of wars, famine and pestilence are scourges that do not now for the first time afflict our earth. Would God that it were the last.

There has not been in the past, or in the present, so far as I am able to judge anything whatever to justify the immediate coming of the Lord, but in the light of the Bible, and the present state of the world, everything to justify the belief that that event is afar off, and that it will not take place before some very distant and indefinite period.

We may safely conclude that a thousand years, or the Millennium, must elapse before Christ will come, which time itself appears to be, judging from the present state of the world, many centuries down to the future. It is generally taught in the Scriptures that the coming of Christ, and the general resurrection and judgment will take place at the same time. In confirmation of which the following scriptures may be consulted:—Matt. vii. 21-23, xiii. 40-43, xvi. 24-27, xxv. 31-46; John v. 28, 29; Rom. ii. 5, 6, 16; 1 Cor. iii. 12-15; 2 Cor. v. 9-11; 2 Thess. i. 6-10; Rev. xx. 11-15.

On the other hand we have one passage which appears to teach that Christ will come at the beginning of the Millennium, which is found in Rev. xx. 1-10, which passage cannot safely be taken as literal, and that for two or three reasons, 1st. It is found in one of the most highly figurative books in the Bible, and in close connexion with what is unmistakably figurative, such

as the key, the pit, the chain, the seal, the laying hold, the binding, the shutting up, and the loosing. 2nd. It stands opposed to a number of scriptures which refer to the universal and simultaneous resurrection of all the dead, good and bad, which passages are unmistakably literal.

Again, a comparatively small number of the followers of Christ are represented as rising at the beginning of the Millennium, namely: "them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, &c." Besides, if "the first resurrection" be literal then the bodies of the martyrs will rise. If so, then we should expect to find John say: "I saw (not the souls, nor the bodies, but) them that were beheaded, &c." It is not my purpose, however to discuss the Millennium, but only to produce here what to me seems sufficient to justify the belief that the coming of Christ will not take place for a thousand years yet, at the lowest possible estimate.

It will be well now to refer to certain scriptures which speak of what must occur before the end, when the coming of Christ, the general resurrection, and judgment, with the burning of the earth, will take place, and, I think, in the order named. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Num. xiv. 21. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. xi. 9. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, Righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isa. xlv. 23. "His name shall endure for ever, his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." Ps. lxxii. 17. See further Rom. xiv. 2; Phil. ii. 10, 11; John xii. 32; Heb. viii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 25, &c.

The conversion and restoration of the Jews to their own land is also to take place before Christ comes. This is taught in Isa. lix. 31-34; Zech. x. 6-10, and xii. 6-10; 2 Cor. xv. 16; Isa. xi. 11, 12; Jer. iii. 17, and xlv. 14, 15; Ezek. xx. 40-44, and xxxiv. 11-31. Hosea (iii. 4, 5); Amos (ix. 11-15), and Joel (iii. 1-17), also predict the same.

It is well known that neither the conversion of the Jews, nor their restoration to Palestine has yet taken place. Whether their conversion is to precede their restoration, is uncertain. According to passing events it would seem that the latter is to precede the former. The projected railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the known design of wealthy Jews to purchase the land of Palestine, seems as if their restoration was not very far off.* Their conversion however looks less hopeful, for of the eight millions of Jews, the number of conversions, are comparatively few.

Before any one teach the speedy coming of Christ, or even exhort to look for that coming, they must be prepared to shew that the foregoing prophecies have been, or are about being fulfilled.

Have we anything whereby we may be guided to something like a conclusion as to when that event will be? No, nothing. But looking at the present growth of the church, and of the world as a criterion, I can answer without hesitation, and the answer is:—NEVER!

According to the latest statistics that I can find, and said to be carefully made, the population of the world is (1,423,917,000) fourteen hundred and twenty three millions, nine hundred, and seventeen thousand. Let us call it (1,423,900,000) fourteen hundred and twenty three millions, nine

*Since this paper was read, I find the following in the AMHERST GAZETTE of April 18th:—

"Leading Jews in Great Britain have purchased Palestine. The secretary of the Association, which is backed up by the Rothschild's and other financiers, announces that the undertaking meets generally with the approval of the Jews of the whole world."