

# CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS"—2d Timothy, i. 13.

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## CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE,

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For the Visitor.

## The Letters of "Luke."

No. 2.

DEAR EDITOR,—In my first I made some

strictures upon the introduction of his

earliest article, on "His appearing and His

kingdom." Besides, I invited attention to

various statements, which he seems pledged

to prove. I understand that he is to show,

(1) That Chiliasm is true, (a) by the testimony

of Scripture, and (b) by that of history.

And (2) that he, and his brethren

of this faith are "the better part of the

Christian world." But he has not, hitherto,

advanced any evidence to support the

latter. But, as to this, I have no fault to

find, as he may consider doctrine the

Science, and Christian virtue the Art. If

so, there is doubtless much propriety, in

the method which he has adopted. But

the statement, the public—all concerned

—demand the evidence. And it is now

full time that it was forthcoming.

But I must proceed to notice his Second

article, in which, he has taken into the

embrace of his quotation marks many of

the "Fathers," or more literally, many of

declarations from their writings. But,

where these declarations are to be found is

beyond the knowledge of the most intelli-

gent—unless the "walking encyclopedia."

But "Luke" leaves his readers in the great

kingdom of letters without anything to

guide them, except an author's name, and

an inverted comma! Truly, they need

faith, and patience. Let them have both.

Yet it seems to me that this hop-scotch

method of quoting proof, is exceedingly

objectionable. Does he suppose that his

brethren, in turning away from the doc-

trine of their Lord's Second appearing, gave

themselves to the study of the writings of

the "Fathers," so that by this time they

can find the whereabouts, in the original,

of a quotation from them by *instinct*? Or

does he imagine that they are so fond of

fancies, as to be willing to forego the

privilege of examining original sources, in

order to see for themselves. This, or that,

or something else. He assumes to quote

from Barnabas, Papias, and Justin Martyr,

but never gives the book, the chapter nor

the page! What would an audience think,

if their preacher, in rising to address them,

should say—"You may find the text in

Luke?" "In Luke!" Or would it not be

richly amusing to hear a polemic announce

—"You may find this proof-text in the

Bible?" In the Bible! Yet a child may

observe that this is his method of citing

article under review, may justify himself

in withholding the desired information

touching his "declarations."

In the meantime, however, I shall be

anxious to hear again from him, with re-

ference to his testimony from Barnabas.

Where does he find it? He may reply—In

the Pre-Millennial Essays of the Rev.

Nathaniel West, D. D. But this will not

suffice. Rev. at one end of a man's name,

and D. D. at the other, is not to me unmis-

takeable evidence of either reliability, or

infallibility. It is well known, that it is

generally supposed that Barnabas, men-

tioned in Acts iv. 36, did not write the

Epistle attributed to him. It is in 20 or

21 chapters, and much of the Epistle was

missing from the first: True it is said,

that the four and a half missing chapters,

were found in an Old Latin Version. But

during the 9th century, the whole of the

Epistle was lost, and was in obscurity for

about 800 years. At the close of this per-

iod it was again brought to notice, by the

Jesuit Sigismund. And of late, Hefele, a

distinguished scholar of Germany, has

written, showing, that Barnabas was not

its author. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary

—Hacket. Vol. 1. p. 248. Also, New

American Cyclopædia, Vol. II. p. 643).

Yet he cites from this "Father," with as

much confidence as if the scholarship of

the 19th century had never expressed a

doubt about the Epistle of Barnabas.

Luke must prove that he has the right man,

before his readers can heed his first "de-

claration." It is very unwise—not to men-

tion the unrighteousness of the thing—to

enter court with a witness masked under

the name of the very man whose evidence

is needed. And it is clear to all that the

quotation from Barnabas is not worth the

ink used in transcribing it. It is worse

than useless. It shows that the whole

argument is misleading and vulnerable.

"Luke" is before the public with Barna-

bas, but Hefele and a host of distinguished

writers declare that he hasn't the right

man. And this will occasion another trial.

Won't it? I demand proof that the man

whose name is mentioned in Acts iv. 36,

was the writer of the Epistle in question.

I ask this proof from the writer of the

article before me. And until it is given

full and clear, and, conclusive, this first

item of proof will cast its own shadow upon

all that may follow. Did he not know

that this "declaration" would be swept

away as chaff before the wind? Why

then did he give it a most prominent

position? I wonder why, but I must wait

til he informs me; I will wait, and as I am

at present pressed for time, I will leave

the most of the "declarations from the

Fathers" under the light shed upon them

by that of Barnabas.

But I am longing to see the testimonies

from Clement of Rome, and Polycarp of

Smyrna. And in calling attention to

them, I confess that I share in the surprise

common to many by his treatment of these

authors. He must know that explicit de-

clarations from them would weigh much

when evidence from "Barnabas," and

"Papias" would not turn a straw. Why

then withhold the testimony of the former?

The inquiry is pertinent. He evidently

desires to convince those who differ from

him. But he does not seem to me, to use

the means best adapted to carry conviction.

He may have reserved his best arguments

for a second edition. I suggest that he

avail himself of "space," and publish them

without delay. But if I am to believe

Shedd and Hagenbach I shall have need of

patience for they say:—"Their are no

traces of Chiliasm in the writings of

Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp,

Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of

Antioch." (As quoted from Hagenbach

by Shedd, History of Doctrine, Vol. II. p.

390.) But says "Luke," "Did space per-

mit I might bring forward as witness to

the same faith such men as Clement the

companion of Paul and John and Polycarp

who conversed with those who had seen

Christ." (Second article near the close.)

Now I have not the slightest hope that

he ever will succeed in bringing either of

these "Fathers forward as witnesses to the

same faith." Is there no hindrance but

the want of "space?" If this is all he may

have not only "space" but all the spaces,

yet he must fail. He must fail, for there

is not one clear trace of "the same faith,"

in the writings of either. He cannot bring

them forward as witnesses. If one clear

statement from Clement or Polycarp would

make "Luke" King of the world he could

not give it.

But his reply to my last is at hand, and

it demands some notice. I am not sur-

prised at one of its disclosures. It is this.

He says, "Now I am of course unable to

refer directly to the works of the Fathers."

And \* \* \* \* \*

"This index learning turns no student pale,

But holds the eel of Science by the tail."

Men of my meagre advantages may be

allowed to hold her by the "tail" but an

"A. M.," who assumes to "show" and

"to prove" should not content himself

with *second hand* quotations. They

may serve very well as illustra-

tion, but as proof they are somewhat risky.

And I am inclined to think that "Luke"

is near the position of the man who was

asked if he could swear that he was bap-

tized in infancy! I do not believe that my

Bro., would swear that the quotations

which he has given are really in the

writings of the Fathers. He says that he

has not examined the originals. Why did

he therefore attempt to convince other

people until he was fully satisfied himself?

The writings of the Fathers were within

his reach. I do not see how he can say,

"I am of course unable to refer, etc." "I

am of course," does not come with good

grace. There is no good reason why he is

unable. If there is, there is also why he

should not have dashed off to prove so

much. Yet he has my admiration for his

frank confession.

But I do not find that he improves in

caution, for in his last he represents Cle-

ment and Polycarp as "exponents of the

Chiliasm of their times." "Exponents"

—Leaders—Representatives—of

the Chiliasm of their times. Will "Luke" or Dr.

West try to show that they were "among

the exponents" of this faith? No, never.

Why not? The former virtually admits

before the close of his letter that it cannot

be shown that they were. If there are no

words of theirs that "explicitly" declare

that "the coming of Christ is to precede

the Millennium," how does it appear that

they were "exponents" or teachers of this

doctrine? I cannot see how it can be

shown that they were leaders unless it can

be demonstrated that they led. Nor do I

find any Chiliasm in the quotation from

Polycarp. I notice indeed his faith in the

reward of obedience, the resurrection of

the dead, and in the dignity of the saints.

Notice now and see if these are not the

sentiments of the quotation. "If we obey

Christ, and please him in this age, we shall

receive the age to come. He will raise us

from the dead, and we shall live and reign

with him. The saints shall judge the

world." Luke is entirely too fast in saying

"No one would write thus if not a pre-

Millennialist." Any Christian who be-

lieves that there is a blessing in store for

all who please the Lord here; that He will

raise His people from the dead, and that

He will exalt them in His own everlasting

righteousness "would write thus." And

if there is Chiliasm in this I am a Chiliasm.

But there is not. No, not even the faint-

est shadow. If there is, I shall thank the

man who will enable me to find it. And I

will now submit a quotation *direct* from

the 1st Ep. of Clement. "In truth, quick-

ly and suddenly will His will be accom-

plished, the Scriptures also bearing witness

that He will come quickly and will not

tarry, and the Lord will suddenly come

unto His temple, even the Holy One whom

ye expect." Will my Brother please in-

form me where he finds his theory in these

quotations. Imaginary "implied connec-

tions" are not asked for.

He need not be restrained by "spirit."

If matter does not offend, the "spirit"

will neither beguile nor betray. A "spirit"

that seems earnestly dogmatic, yet if it is

really philanthropic is *sweet* in itself, as

the good physician's heart is sweet. It is

his life-saving medicine only, that is bitter.

It is folly to complain of a keen spirit.

Because—

"It had frae mony a blunder free us

And foolish notion."

My spirit invokes the richest blessing

upon him. The richer the blessing the

greater its delight.

Nevertheless, he cannot "repulse" it

from his "position. And doubtless, its