

Our Contributors.

PROFESSOR SCRIPTUM GIVES A LITTLE MORE OF THE SAME.

BY KNOXIAN.

You will remember, gentlemen, that we ended our last talk about small words with a few hints on the use of the word *only*. Being diligent students and anxious to speak and write your mother tongue correctly, no doubt you have "read up" on that adverb and practised with it until you can drop it into the right place in a sentence without a moment's consideration. With equal facility some older men than you are often drop it into the wrong place. I shall assume that during the term of your natural lives you will never be found placing *only* in such a position that it modifies an adjective when you meant it to modify a verb, or restricts a pronoun when you intended it to restrict a noun. I shall also assume that you never placed the word so that, grammatically, it has a forward reference when you meant it to refer to something backward, or a backward reference when you manifestly intended it to point forward. Give the little word fairplay, gentlemen, and if you use it well it may render you good service in placing your ideas before an appreciative and discriminating public.

Now let us discuss another word which though small has, like some small people, great power in the way of making unpleasantness. I mean the word

IT.

This is one of the hardest worked words in the language. Lazy writers and speakers work it to death. The most abused canal horse in creation has a good time compared with this word. As a specimen of how some writers work the little thing, take the following, clipped from a newspaper, by Genung. The reporter was trying to give a description of a temperance speech made by a rope-walker while hanging in the air, and he did his work in this way: "It was a speech not easily forgotten, delivered as it was from a peculiar platform, and on a subject not often touched under the circumstances. It made me think of some other things on the same line of thought. The mind, the soul, has a grip. It may hold on. Sometimes it is imperative. It is not death to do so. It is responsible in the matter. It is chargeable with its own destruction if it does not hold on."

Were it not that the abuse of *it* is so common one might be tempted to think that the young man who managed to crowd so many *its* into the foregoing sentences had not profited much by the temperance lecture. He seems to have been too tired to look for another word, but whether the fatigue arose from listening to the lecture or from too freely disregarding its precepts, is a question that each reader must settle for himself.

But, gentlemen, do not suppose for a moment that newspaper men are the only writers who overwork this little word. Considering the amount of writing they have to do and the haste with which it often has to be done, newspaper writers are a long way from being sinners above all others. The following sentence, taken by Genung from the great Ruskin, is as good as anything of the kind usually found in newspapers of average literary ability. "*It* is pretty and appropriate; and if *it* boasted of any other perfection *it* would be at the expense of *its* propriety."

No doubt many people will say that sentence is quite elegant just because Ruskin wrote it. Ruskin is a great man, and great men can do and say things pretty much as they please in a world like ours. Great men are above rule. But, gentlemen, you and I are not great men yet, though doubtless we will be some day, and in the meantime perhaps it might be as well for us not to crowd too many *its* into a sentence. One of the greatest jurists in this Dominion says *à-gain* and *à-against*. Until we become great jurists or great in some line perhaps we had better pronounce the words correctly.

But do not suppose, gentlemen, that *it* is the only pronoun that requires careful handling. All words that refer to an antecedent need to be watched. You may place them too far from their antecedent, or you may put two or three words or phrases before them, each one of which might be taken for antecedents, or you may do what is perhaps worse—use them without an antecedent at all.

Once upon a time a learned professor—a much more learned one than the humble individual who now addresses you—was criticising a college discourse. The discourse was written by a student who considered the use of pronouns a matter entirely beneath his notice—as some of you probably do. Having dealt with the matter of the sermon the professor made a few stinging remarks about its literary style, and wound up in this way: "I find the pronouns drifting about through this sermon without antecedents, like ships at sea without compass or rudder." It is a cruel thing to send a poor little pronoun drifting out on the sea of discourse without any antecedent to connect itself with. Pronouns are useful words and should not be used in that way by humane men—especially by preachers.

But time is up, and we must reserve the rest of our talk about pronouns until another day. Meantime, gentlemen, study carefully the use of these retrospective words. A graduate who sends his pronouns drifting without any visible antecedents to connect them with ought to be ashamed of himself. If he is not, his college ought to be ashamed of him. Above all things, do not overwork that little word IT.

THE REV. DR. MACLAREN AND THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER OF REVELATION.

III.

Let us now turn to the consideration of this matter of fact. Is it or is it not the case that 2 Thess. i. 6 to 10 will fit in nowhere in the premillennial plan? It is not the case, as an investigation of the facts will show. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you," (verse 6) said Paul. When the Lord comes to set up His kingdom, so long foretold, He will send tribulation upon the opposers of the Gospel. We look for that. The prophets foretold that. Hear Micah speaking on that point (vii. 16 etc.), "The nations shall see and be confounded at their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall be afraid because of thee." The enemies of the Gospel shall run out of their holes. That is tribulation. It is not the end of the world by any means. That scene comes at the setting up of the Lord's kingdom. Post-millennial men do not seem to believe in any kingdom of God outside of the human heart. Hence they have no place for this scene predicted by Micah. Then the seventh verse of this wonderful passage speaks about rest for those that have been troubled. That hope held out fits into the premillennial plan with the greatest of ease and pleasure. Rest at the coming of the Lord, that is the premillennial type. Then farther on, in verse nine, the apostle speaks of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." That points to another stage of the day of the Lord. That carries us forward to the day of judgment, when final sentence shall be pronounced on the wicked, and the world shall be burned up. It is noticeable in this passage of Scripture that the rest bestowed on believers comes before the everlasting destruction visited on the wicked. Such is Paul's order. The order, however, held out in the pamphlet under review is different. According to it (the pamphlet) the rest of the saints comes after the destruction. This passage presents it as coming before. Post-millennial men are wrong in saying there is no rest for the saints till after the day of judgment. Let us notice another point in connection with this passage before passing on. There is not a breath here about the saints being put on the stand for judgment. Post-millennial men believe that the saints will be judged on the great day both as to character and standing. Our college professor fastens on this part of the Word as presenting the fullest eschatological programme to be found in the Bible. How does it come that there is no reference direct or otherwise to the judgment of the saints? Those verses are by no means friends to Post-millennial doctrine. They give their countenance to the other side.

On the middle of page seven it is said, "It provides a resurrection and a judgment for the righteous, or a part of them, at Christ's second coming; but it has no resurrection or judgment for the myriads of the righteous who live and die during the millennium." The way of putting the thought may be taken exception to. It is not premillennialism that provides judgment, etc. It is the Lord that makes all provision regarding judgment. Premillennialism declares what it finds God teaching. Then the writer says that premillennialism provides a judgment for the righteous. Here I complain. The statement is brim full of mistakes. Premillennialism takes these words of our Lord in John v. 24 literally. "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My words and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but hath passed from death unto life." The revised version renders the word "judgment" instead of condemnation. Then the plain teaching of our Lord is that true believers shall never come in judgment. The plain reason of that is that they have been in judgment before. They stood before the Lord and confessed that they were sinners and He blotted out their sins. Far as the east is from the west, so far did He remove their transgressions from them. That is the teaching of premillennial men, that believers have been judged and will not be put on the stand at the great day. The writer of the pamphlet does not seem to be aware of the fact. The works of believers may and shall be judged during the Day of the Lord, but not themselves.

In regard to "the righteous that live and die during the millennium," not very much can be said. The Word, as far as known to me, has not said much about them. May it be with them as it shall be with the generation of believers that are upon the earth when the Lord comes? That generation shall not die. They that are alive when Christ comes shall be changed in a moment without tasting death. May it not be the same with every succeeding generation during the millennial age? They may not die at all. The probability is that every succeeding generation shall be treated as the first after the coming shall be—that is, changed without seeing death. It is not well to dogmatize. The above quotation shows that the writer did become dogmatic. He affirms that believers shall die during the millennium period, a statement which may not be correct. Then the writer well knows that a doctrine may stand against which difficulties have been raised. There are difficulties in connection with the resurrection of the dead, still we hold fast the hope. There are difficulties in connection with the atonement, yet we hold fast the precious truth.

Another quotation from page seven, "Whether these views be true or false is not at present the point before us but the relation they sustain to Rev. xii. 1-10." The state-

ment is a very cool one, after what has been already affirmed. On page six the writer declares these same views "unscriptural." If they are unscriptural they must be false. The Doctor has pronounced them contrary to the Word and hence they must be beggarly doctrines. He dealt a heavy blow when he pronounced them contrary to the Word of God. Then farther on he says that the writers he opposes "impose on themselves and on others." Hence he could not now say that the truthfulness of these views is not before his readers. If those teachings are impositions they are false. The Doctor may as well keep his flag up.

Now we come to the passage itself around which the discussion centres (Rev. xii. 1-10). I shall quote from the fourth verse to the end, "And I saw thrones, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Here let us state the question at issue. There is a resurrection spoken of in the fifth verse. The Greek phrase used is *he anastasis he prote*; the resurrection the first. Here is the formula that Dr. Lightfoot contends is generally used, when the resurrection of believers is spoken of. What does the anastasis mean here? Is it a resurrection of men, or of beasts, or of principles that is foretold? Premillennialists say it is a rising of men that is meant. Post-millennial men say it is a rising of principles that is foretold. One good feature is here found, the one can see what the other means in this discussion. The premillennial man takes the deeper meaning out of that passage. He says that it holds out the hope of men, women and children rising to life, while the other side can see only principles coming into being. "And the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished." "The dead," there mean dead principles say post-millennial men. "No," says the other side. "The dead" there mean men. The latter interpreters are right. The doctor holds that the resurrection promised in this part of the Word is a revival of religion, not a literal resurrection of persons asleep in Jesus. It is principles that rise to life here, not persons. "The rest of the dead lived not." It is dead principles the Holy Ghost speaks of. The doctrine is wrong, root and branch. Men that have investigated the history of this doctrine say that it began with Origen. Whether that be so or not I cannot say. But we are safe in saying this is worthy of such a mind. Origen had a great spiritualizing power. "His theory spiritualizes the very dead. Origen never went farther. The first reason by which this position is maintained by the writer is this: the resurrection spoken of here is not introduced by the second advent of the Lord. Here we have to deal with a matter of fact. How this stand can be taken in the presence of facts is difficult in the extreme to see. We turn to the last half of the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, which lies next to the one we are dealing with. Let the reader look this up in his Bible. What do we find recorded in Rev. xix. 11-21? Who is the rider on the white horse, there spoken of? The thirteenth verse answers that question, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God." The rider on the white horse is the Lord Himself. Why has He mounted the steed? It is not to stand still. It is to travel. Then the fourteenth verse says, "The armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean." If they follow he must move. Then comes an account of a battle on the earth in which He smites the nations. The beast and the false prophet are taken and cast into a lake of fire. The armies of heaven may not do battle in every particular as those of earth do; but they do fight battles and gain victories. Here is a coming of the Lord and followed by the resurrection of the believing dead, as stated in verse four of this wonderful chapter. When the Doctor says that the resurrection spoken of here, verse four, is not a concomitant of the coming of the Lord, and therefore is not literal, he is under mistake in his premises. The resurrection here foretold is accompanied by the literal coming of the Lord.

Many other objections to the literal interpretation of the passage seem to be in the mind of the writer, but are not given. It is a pity they were not stated. We all want all possible light on the subject. One more difficulty, however, is raised against the literal interpretation. It is this that the army that follow Christ out of heaven are risen men, and, therefore, cannot be raised again after the coming of the Lord. In such case there must be a resurrection which precedes "the first resurrection." Some premillennial men may hold that the army from heaven was made up of "raised and glorified saints." That belief is no necessary part of the doctrine. That army may be composed of other orders of beings. That being so the whole objection falls to the ground.

The army that follows the Lord has given post-millennial men a great deal of trouble. They are preachers, says Barnes and others. Does the Bible ever represent heralds of the Gospel as having come from heaven? Never. The Bible says that men are commissioned of the Lord to do their work. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." They are never said to have come out from heaven, for the plain reason that they have never been there.

At the close of page nine it is said, "But when we turn to other portions of the New Testament we discover that they