

tion, faith, prayer, benevolence, and efforts to save souls," also, "just in so far as it is the attitude of believers, it yields the same fruits now."

On this passage I would remark:

1. That for 1800 years, as a matter of fact, Christ's personal second coming was not "imminent" in any proper sense of the term.

2. If the early Christians believed it to be "imminent," they were under the influence of a delusion.

3. Dr. Bushnell held that a pictorial, but unreal atonement, had moral power to make mankind holy; and Dr. Goodwin here asserts that an erroneous and mistaken view of Christ's personal coming has been for at least 1800 years a marvellously sanctifying influence.

4. "Imminence" is a vague term, but it has hardly been applicable to the major portion of the 86 years of the present century. For example, you can hardly say an event is "imminent," which will not actually happen for fifty years.

5. The Christian world at large while believing that its Lord will ultimately come in person, does not accept the position that "the return is imminent, and may occur at any day or hour." Was Christ's first advent "imminent" in the days of Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Isaiah? Might that event have occurred "at any day or hour?" No, it must await "the fullness of the times." Many preliminary events took precedence of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, and were plainly predicted in that relation to it. So there are many things yet to happen before Christ's second advent. They will take time, we know not how much, but though every revolution of the earth on its axis brings the glad event nearer, and the whole church wistfully sings:

"How long dear Saviour, oh! how long
Shall that bright hour delay?

Fly swifter round, ye wheels of time,

And bring the welcome day."

evidently "the end is not yet."

6. Dr. Goodwin would not teach the "imminence" of Christ's second coming, did he not hold the theory that it is to precede the millennium. Suppose he is right. It still follows that if the early Christians held his view, they were wrong. Did error exert a sanctifying power over them, or was there some other sense in which the phrase the "coming of the Lord" was used by them, a sense in which the phrase was true then, and thereafter; is true now, and always? The *onus probandi* rests on Dr. Goodwin. It is truth that sanctifies. Now what truth was it in regard to Christ's coming that had the seal of the Holy Spirit in ancient days and has it yet? It could not be that the coming was "imminent" for that was not truth, nor has it

been, until a very recent period, even if we grant the Dr. all that he can rightfully claim on the subject.

7. Finally, let it not be supposed that the main difference between Dr. Goodwin and the *consensus* of Christians generally is about the *nearness* or *distance* of Christ's second coming. It is not. It is a question of the nature of his coming: whether he is to set up a visible material kingdom with a royal court at Jerusalem, to supersede the spiritual and inward, by the externally marvellous: to reign personally here on the earth a thousand years; or whether the gospel is to go on gradually subduing mankind to its sway, until "the people shall be all righteous." Let it not be supposed that the difference between these theories is unimportant and trivial. Pre-millennianism is a school of Scripture interpretation; it affects some of the most vital articles of the Christian faith, tinges the entire theology of those who hold it, pervades the whole religious character and experience, and exerts a mighty influence on the various forms of Church work. It develops, to a large extent, the feeling "we are the people." It re-acts unfavorably on the missionary enterprise, for why spend time and means on what must prove an ultimate failure. That all who hold this view are not thus affected by it, is only one of many illustrations of such well-known and pleasing facts as that good people often ignore their creeds, that their hearts are better than their heads, and that they are sometimes blessedly inconsistent.

GUELPH.

C.

OUR OLD COUNTRY LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND. A burden has been on my soul for months, until I could almost plead guilty of negligence. A long season of necessary restraint from all extra toil has I hope been ended; and beautiful has been its ending amid some scenes that you would have gladly shared. I owe you a tale of Colonial Missionary doings in the Home Land; and although the dates go back to May, yet you will forgive me; for in the first place I have not seen in your pages, or have overlooked, any account of those May events, and in the second place the pleasant and promising sequel of the May events runs on unfolding in interest even to this hour. May it long unfold more blessing for the Canadian churches. For, in brief, Dr. Wilkes' jubilee visit to the Colonial society's meeting may prove a golden epoch to the Society and to those Colonial churches which rightly cry for aid.

Now, not every Congregational pastor or teacher finds his way to the May Union meetings. No, indeed, for many are so independent in their theory and practice that the world-famed Congregational Union of