

Our Contributors.

DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF.

BY KNOXIAN.

We have a great deal of government in this country. In fact we have more government to the acre than any five millions of people in the world. During the late American war it was said that nearly every man was a "kurnel" or officer of some kind, and it might be said of Canada even in times of peace that a very large number of men are law-makers of some kind. We have our Dominion Parliament, and our seven Local Parliaments, and our county councils, and our town councils, and our village councils, and our township councils, and our High School Boards, and our Public School Boards, and nobody knows how many other governing bodies of one kind and another. In fact you can hardly throw a stick down street without being in danger of hitting some kind of a legislator. Perhaps all this governing machinery is necessary, and no doubt a large part of it is doing useful work. Possibly we could not get on without it. It is clearly useful in one way. If we had not so many public men, ill-natured, jealous-minded, fault-finding people might sometimes be at a loss for some one to abuse. In the absence of a sufficient number of public men to use as targets, they might turn their guns on private citizens, and then we would all have a hard time. So long as there is a live member of Parliament around, or an alderman, or a councillor, or school trustee, the rest of us have a better chance to escape than we would have if there were not plenty of public men to pelt. Public men are useful as buffers to stand between inoffensive citizens and that lovely class of the community whose business it is to throw malodorous missiles at their neighbours.

Still there cannot be any doubt that the presence of so much government has one bad effect. It leads too many people to think that the powers that be can do a great deal to help them. Now, after all, how much can any government do to help the average man in his daily vocation. No sane man denies that good government is an unspeakably great blessing to any country. There is a mighty difference between Turkey and Canada; between Russia and the United States. All this is true, but when you come down to individual spheres of action how much can any government help a man? How much can it help him to "chop," or "log," or "thrash?" or engage in any of those primitive pastimes with which the early settler of Ontario was familiar? The doctor who drives on the back concessions at midnight to see his patients doesn't find it makes much difference to him just then whether the Tories or the Liberals are in power. The merchant who is trying to run off his heavy woollens in a mild winter does not find that the political creed of the member for his riding affects trade to any appreciable extent. The fact is the average man must help himself if he is going to accomplish anything in any line of life. Self-reliance is worth \$500 a year to a young man at the start, and may be worth much more before the finish. Canada is doomed if a large number of our young people get the idea into their minds that anybody can do more to help them than they can do to help themselves. Horace Greeley said that the day a boy found out that he could get a dollar without giving value for it, was the worst day he ever saw. The day a young man concludes that he can get somebody to help him through life is not much better.

ECCLESIASTICAL HELP.

We have so much machinery in the Presbyterian Church that some young men go into the ministry dreaming about the help they are going to get from committees, Synods, Presbyteries and other ecclesiastical organizations of one kind and another. It is a huge delusion, as many an earnest young man has found to his sorrow. So far from being helped, he may be thankful if he does not find some of the fathers and brethren putting the machinery in his way. There are few greater obstacles to real spiritual work in the church than the petrified ecclesiastic who thinks that the church exists for the official rather than the official for the church. If every committee and church court were composed of Chalmerses and McCheynes the main part of a minister's work would still have to be done by himself. A Presbytery composed of Guthries would no doubt be pleasant to attend, but when you went home the preaching and pastoral work still have to be done. A Presbytery of Guthries might be a tonic, but that would be about all. That, however, is much more than some Presbyteries are. Let no young man enter the ministry under the delusion that the church courts can do much for him. A good Session and Deacons' Court or Board of Managers can do more to help a minister in the actual work than all the higher courts put together.

EDUCATIONAL HELP.

There is so much said and written about education in Ontario that some people are in danger of forgetting that a man must think for himself, that is, if he thinks at all. We have so many universities and colleges and high schools and public schools and private schools and ladies' schools and various other kinds of schools, that people are in danger of thinking that you are certain to become a scholar if you just go to school. Some of these institutions are so puffed that an innocent man might well be excused for supposing that the teachers can put brains into his son or daughter. Nobody dreams in these days that a person may become very well educated and never go to school at all. The educational machinery is supposed to do so much that a boy or girl who loves ease might easily be pardoned for thinking the machine should do it all. The hard fact is that the best educational institution on earth cannot help a learner who does not help himself.

THE REV DR MACLAREN AND THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER OF REVELATION

(Continued.)

On page six it is said, "It is evident to ordinary readers of the Bible, that Christ shall come a second time without sin unto salvation, and this exhausts their faith on the topic." These words assume that the ordinary reader of the Word is more likely to see what the mind of the spirit is than others. But who are ordinary readers, and who are not? Dr. Andrew Bonar is not an ordinary reader. Dr. Caven is not an ordinary reader; nor is Dr. Parsons or Dr. Kellogg. There surely is a mistake just at this point. The ordinary reader is not as likely to get at what the Holy Ghost means, as are those other men. It is men who have the Spirit, who have scholarship, and who give themselves continually to the word and to prayer, into whose souls the light of truth shines most clearly.

Let us pass on to note a position taken in the above quotation. A bare knowledge of the fact that the Lord will come exhausts the faith of the saints on the matter. From this we dissent. The word does more than state the bare fact of another coming of the Lord. The word is never bald in its utterances. That must mean that the Scriptures are silent about the time of the next coming, and about the place, and about the concomitants of that coming. If that position be true we need never look for any signs that the Hope of Israel is near, that the day of the Lord is about to dawn, or that the Day star is about to arise. The Scriptures do say something about the time of the next coming. They said something about the time of the first coming. That coming was to take place 490 years after the decree to restore and rebuild the temple. The people of Israel so read the word, and were looking for the Lord to come when he appeared. The word says something about the time of the second coming. Daniel viii. 14, is an utterance on that point. The great apostasy is foretold in Revelation as lasting 1,260 years. That apostasy the Lord destroys by the brightness of His coming. These are two of the things that the word says about the time of His coming, so that it is not correct to say that the bare fact of a second coming is all that we have told us on the subject.

There is something said about the place to which he will come, as well as about the time. The place of his first appearance was specified by the pen of prophecy. When Herod asked where Christ should be born, there were men that could answer him. They pointed the king to Bethlehem. In like manner there is something said about the place of his appearance when he comes the second time. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," said Zechariah the prophet (xiv. 4). The word of prophecy is a sure word. That Christ shall stand on that mount when He comes, is beyond a doubt, and that the mount shall be divided is fact. The first prophetic utterance regarding the place came true. So shall the second.

Another quotation from page six, "To affirm, as some Premillennialists do, that these three future advents demanded by the theory are only different stages of the whole return of Christ to the earth, is to abuse language, in order to conceal the unscriptural features of the theory." If the above language were as correct in deduction as it is strong in terms there would be an end to all opposition. But strong terms are needed by times. They are needed here because the general position is not secure. The writer makes reference to the fact that premillennialists believe in a plurality of comings on the part of our God. To be sure they do. The Word has taught them to do it. But the writer of the pamphlet believes in a plurality of comings. When the Lord was born that was a coming. When He destroyed Jerusalem, that was a coming. When He comes to judge the world, that is a coming. He believes in a plurality of comings as well as others. That the coming of the Lord may take place by stages, is a doctrine against which no well-founded objections can be taken. A man may lift his hands and say, "Abuse of language!" but that is exclamation not argument. Turn to Isaiah vii. 8, "And within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people." These words foretell the captivity, or rather the fall of the northern kingdom. A similar prophecy is found in the first chapter of Hosea, and also in Amos. The question arises, how did the fall of Israel take place? Did it come in a single hour or by stages? The answer is, "By stages." The nation "shall be broken," say the prophets. "An ordinary reader" might say that is to take place in a single day, but in so saying he would have been wrong. One deportation took place within two years of the utterance of the prophecy, under Tiglath-pileser (II Kings xv. 29). Another stage of the fall came twenty years after in the reign of Hosea, under Shalmaneser (II Kings xvii. 16). The final stage came at the end of sixty-five years, by the hand of Esarhaddon, who carried away Manasseh, king of Judea also. There is an event, the fall of a kingdom, that took place by stages, stretching over long years. The fall of that kingdom may have been a coming of the Lord. It is one of the most reasonable things in the world to look upon the day of the Lord as coming by stages. Here let me lay before us words from Rev. Dr. Glasgow, the Irish Assembly's Professor of Oriental Languages, bearing on the subject, "Various views of the final judgment are presented in the Bible as to time and circumstances. It is a day (John vi. 39); a time (I Cor. iv. 5; I Peter i. 5), a personal inspection of a flock (Matt. xxv. 31); a harvest (Matt. xiii. 39, xi. 12); and in this vision a census, according to the statistic

evidence of books. The 'hour' of the Lord's coming is also repeatedly mentioned. Now in the text there is nothing said whatever as to the length of time to be occupied, but popular thinkers, with a presumption equal to their ignorance, — a sinful presumption — fix it down to a human day of twenty-four or of twelve hours. Learned theologians, expositors and enlightened preachers are more cautious. Of these I cannot find one, (and I have searched libraries) making the time a human day or any brief period of time. In various other places of Scriptures besides prophetic visions, a day means, according to the radical sense of the word, a period; as when Paul calls the Gospel age a day of salvation (II Cor. vi. 2). The other terms — a season, a harvest, etc., render a human day impossible; and it appears equally impossible when we consider the work and the means. Angels are employed to sever the righteous from the wicked (Matt. xiii. 41). While Jesus could do it all, and without any instruments such is not the divine arrangement. But the angels, or the saints, honoured as instruments, could not do their work without adequate time." It is a clear case that Dr. Glasgow, though a Post-millennial man, holds that there may be stages in the day of the Lord. Further he shows that he holds that that day may cover centuries. Dr. Glasgow by no means thought it an "abuse of language" to understand that the great day has stages in it. Nor should anybody else come to such an unwarranted conclusion.

"If three advents, each having appropriated to it a distinctive work, and separated by lengthened periods of diverse character, can be counted as one, then we can see no reason why the first and second advent of Christ should not be reckoned as different stages of the same coming of the Lord." Precisely so. The writer is correct in this statement. The word brings these two comings together. They are on the same page. They are in the same verse. They stand separated by only a comma. The various comings of the Lord are all of a piece. Take Isaiah lix. 16-17, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garment of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as with a cloak." The above is a short passage but the two comings are in it. The grand feature of the first coming was salvation. That feature beyond a doubt is in the passage. Vengeance is to be a feature of the second coming. That, too, is in the passage. That passage points to the first and second appearing of the Lord; nor can it be explained apart from these two events. Take another passage, Isaiah lxi. 2. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord as the day of vengeance of our God." There are the two comings. The first proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of mercy. We are in that period yet, thank the Lord. He has not come to proclaim the day of vengeance. There are the two comings in the one verse. They struck the Jew as being one. They should not strike the Christian as being one. The first time the Lord came He carried salvation alone with Him. The next time He comes He will bring more, namely, vengeance. The fact that Christ preached about the day of judgment in no way touches the position now taken. It is a fact to be borne in mind that our Lord, reading from the roll of the prophet, stopped and did not read the clause in which the word "vengeance" occurs. So that when Dr. Brooks and Drs. Kellogg and Parsons and others present the different comings of the Lord as stages of the grand whole, they are following closely the chart that has been given for their and our guidance.

The writer winds up this paragraph of his pamphlet by denying that II Thess. i. 6-10, or Matt. xxv. 31-46, does, by any fair handling, refer to any future advent of Christ, recognized by Premillennialists. If these passages do not refer to a future advent of the Lord, it is clear they do not refer to a past one. The raising of this point is a matter of pleasure. It is a species of argument that two may use. Let me for a moment call for the same kind of explanations from the other side. Let me ask the attention of the writer to I Thess. iv. 13-18 — a passage that no doubt he has often read and expounded. Let the reader look up this passage again. When Christ comes again it will be to judge the world. These verses, then, must deal with the day of judgment; for the personal coming of the Lord is there foretold — so the writer of the pamphlet holds. Now note facts: The day of judgment has come, and there is not a breath about the wicked, or about a judgment throne, or about a verdict, or about condemnation. What we contend is that the theory generally held has no place for I Thess. iv. 13-18. It is not possible that the apostle describes the day of judgment by halves. Much has to be read into that passage to make it a fitting description of the day of the Lord. This modern general view of eschatology has been constructed without regard to many parts of the word. It has no place for the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. That long chapter describes the resurrection of believers, but says nothing about the other class of people. How is it possible to believe that good and bad rise together, and are judged together, and the apostle, speaking about the event through fifty-eight verses, says nothing about the wicked! Let those believe that that can. If the passage referred to be a description of the day of judgment, it is different from all other presentations of it in the word. Let one of the prophets bring that day before us, say Joel, and how does it appear from his pen? According to him it is a day of darkness, of gloom, of clouds and of thick darkness, a day when fire devoureth, a day when the earth shall quake when the heavens