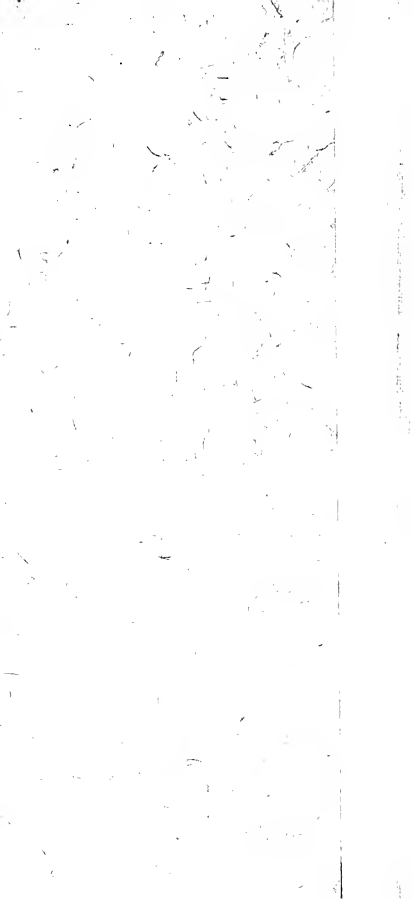


NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 06825054 1



Hardie
ZFRE



(Hawkins)

ZFRF

Handwritten scribbles or marks in the top left corner.

THE
POST-MILLENNIAL
ADVENT:

WHEN THE CHURCH MAY
EXPECT THE SECOND COMING
. . . . OF CHRIST.

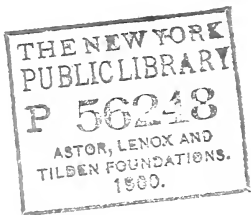
BY REV. ALEXANDER HARDIE.

"How shall not rather the ministration of the
spirit be with glory?"—2 COR. iii, 8.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW YORK : EATON & MAINS.
CINCINNATI : CURTS & JENNINGS.

275
1905



Copyright, 1894, by A. HARDIE.

Copyright, 1900, by EATON & MAINS.

EATON & MAINS PRESS,
150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

FOREWORD.

THIS book is written because :

1. There is a great deal of harmful pre-millennial literature.

2. Some persons are quite disturbed in mind about the Second Advent.

3. It is hoped that aid may be given to some who are perplexed, and who have not access to the great authors on this subject.

University, Los Angeles, Cal. 1900.

EXPLANATIONS.

Apocalypse. means disclosure or revelation.

Chiliast. a believer in the personal reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years.

Eschatological. . . from Eschatology, "the doctrine of the last or final things, as death, judgment, and the events therewith connected."

Hermeneutics. . . the science of interpretation, exegesis.

Millennium. a happy period of 1,000 years.

Pre-millenarian. . a person who believes that Christ will come before the millennium.

Post-millenarian. a person who believes that Christ will not come till after the millennium.

Parousia. presence or coming of Christ.

THE POST-MILLENNIAL ADVENT

THE Church has always held the doctrine of the Second Advent. But occasionally, and only occasionally to any considerable extent, has the question of the *time* of the coming agitated the minds of Christians.

At Thessalonica after the reception of Paul's first epistle there was a pre-millennial excitement, which was caused by hasty interpretations of certain passages. On this account and more fully to instruct the erring, the apostle said in his second letter, "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be

Post-Millennial Advent

troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present; let no man beguile you in any wise."—2 Thess. ii, 1-3.

Again, in the midnight of the Dark Ages, in the year 999, when the lamp of knowledge was well-nigh extinguished, many people imagined that the Saviour was then coming. Indeed, so greatly were some disturbed in mind that in the churches and in the shadow of the churches multitudes slept during the last nights of the tenth century. But this planet and the heavenly bodies went on in their usual courses, and the excitement died away.

Even in the present day there have been premature expectations concerning this great event. In 1843 unwise speculations on this subject disturbed some communities in New England.

Post-Millennial Advent

But the doctrines of Pre-mil-lenarianism are conspicuous by their absence from the great Creeds of Christendom.

In the Apostles' Creed, which had its origin in the days of primitive Christianity, are these statements: "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead;" "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

The Nicene Creed, which was formulated in 325 A. D., declares: "And he shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead;" "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

The Athanasian Creed, which is placed in the fifth century, contains the following: "From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise

Post-Millennial Advent

again with their bodies; and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

It is highly significant that these three great Catholic Creeds contain no pre-millennial clauses, while, on the other hand, they do most unmistakably favor the post-millennial view. Dr. William B. Pope affirms that Millenarianism was "by no means at any time the faith of the Church, as is proved by its absence from all the early Creeds." He further states that "the doctrine of a pre-millennial coming of Christ was excluded from every form of early Creeds, the keynote of all these being, FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD." From these facts it is fair

Post-Millennial Advent

to conclude that whatever unwarranted speculations on the *parousia* may have occurred, they never disturbed the theological thinkings of primitive Christianity.

Furthermore, in addition to these Creeds, the Christian world possesses six pre-eminently valuable documents — documents that really give a consensus of the faith of the Church Universal.

The Prayer Book of Episcopalianism is a venerable embodiment of holy teaching. Its Thirty-nine Articles give doubtless a good summary of the Christian faith of the sixteenth century, and its fourth article, on the Resurrection of Christ, affirms: "Christ did truly rise again, and took again his body, . . . wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until

Post-Millennial Advent

he return to judge all men at the last day.”

There is another very venerable document, the Westminster Confession of Faith of Presbyterianism. In reference to Christ, the Mediator, in chapter eight, article four, it declares: “On the third day he rose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered; with which he also ascended into heaven, and there he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.”

The Augsburg Confession was drawn up under the supervision of Luther and Melancthon. The original document was read before Charles V. in 1530. This Confession is the chief standard of faith in the Lutheran Church, and largely represents the Prot-

Post-Millennial Advent

estantism of Europe. In its eighteenth article—"Of Christ's Return to Judgment"—are these words: "Our Churches also teach that at the end of the world Christ will appear for judgment; that he will raise all the dead; that he will bestow upon the pious and elect eternal life and endless joys, but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end."

Likewise the Heidelberg Catechism is a largely representative theological statement. "It was compiled at the request of the Elector Frederick III.," was published in 1563, was "recognized" as an authoritative by the Synod of Dort in 1610, and has been translated into all the languages of Europe. It is the standard of all the Dutch and German Reformed Churches of America. In this compilation of doctrine

Post-Millennial Advent

we find these words in answer to question forty-six: "That Christ was taken up in sight of his disciples into heaven, and in our behalf thus continues, until he shall come again to judge the living and the dead."

The Larger Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church, which is the Greek Church, teaches the same doctrine concerning the *parousia*. This Catechism was approved by the Holy Synod and received the sanction of the Czar of Russia in 1859. (Schaff's Creeds of Christendom, vol. ii, pp. 445, 542. See especially pp. 479-481. Questions 226-234.)

The Discipline of Methodism, though not a venerable, is a highly venerated, influential document. It gives both polity and theology to one of the most spiritual and intelligent post-

Post-Millennial Advent

reformation, ecclesiastical organizations. Its evangelistic work and its Scriptural teachings are held in honor by the piety and learning of Christendom, and its third article, "Of the Resurrection of Christ," declares: "Christ did truly rise again from the dead and took again his body wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day."

Surely it may be asserted that the three Creeds of the primitive Church and the great Confessions of Protestantism, so far as their doctrinal statements have any bearing on the question, most decidedly favor Post-millenarianism. Dr. William B. Pope says that "Mediæval Chiliasm was generally the badge of fanatical and heretical sects," and that "there have been no

Post-Millennial Advent

sects based solely upon opinions on this subject." (Pope's Theology, vol. iii, p. 396.) In reference to this subject the unanimity is quite remarkable, and is a rebuke to those writers who maintain that Christians have generally given the Bible a pre-millennial interpretation. The truth is that these condensed formulas, which give a consensus of Christian faith from primitive times to the present day, are decidedly post-millennial. Well-nigh the whole of the historical argument favors the conclusion that Christ will not come till after the millennium.

Yet the question under consideration is not satisfactorily settled. While the testimony of Fathers, Confessors, and Reformers on any point of doctrine may be instructive, still our final appeal must always be made to

Post-Millennial Advent

the Holy Scriptures. This being the case, let us turn to the Word of God and pray that the spirit of interpretation may be given as we inquire of the Lord concerning the *time* of his Second Advent.

However, before commencing the discussion, it may be well to notice a peculiar error which has lately been entertained by some. These say that the *parousia* occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem. Such was not Peter's opinion; for shortly after Pentecost, in speaking of Christ, he declared: "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things."—Acts iii, 21. Certainly the destruction of Jerusalem was not the restoration, which, however, will take place when is fulfilled the promise to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Acts iii, 25. Now

Post-Millennial Advent

if Christ has already come, the Church has been in a most grievous error during all these centuries in celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Every minister of the Gospel is very familiar with these words: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this wine ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."—1 Cor. xi, 26. Thus the whole of Christendom has been under a dreadful delusion for nearly two thousand years, or Christ did not come at the destruction of Jerusalem. We may be assured that Whedon is right when he says: "Nor is Christ represented as coming at the destruction of Jerusalem."

In the Apocalypse of Daniel and in that of John a clear light is thrown upon this question of the Second Advent. But it seems expedient at present to

Post-Millennial Advent

bestow special attention upon the Apocalypse of our Lord. Let us turn, then, to Matt. xxiv and xxv, Mark xii, and Luke xxi. The reader, especially when aided by a harmony of the Gospels, can discern the general order of events in this prophetic discourse. Still, it may be well to give the following outline, which is based upon Robinson's English Harmony which is divided into parts for the convenience of reference, and which, like the other quotations in this pamphlet, is according to the Revised Version:

1. "And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Post-Millennial Advent

2. "And as he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"—Matt. xxiv, 1-3.

I.

1. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray."

2. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet."

3. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail."—Matt. xxiv, 4-8.

4. "But take ye heed to yourselves; for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before governors and kings shall ye stand for my sake, for a testimony unto them."—Mark xiii, 9. "Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to

Post-Millennial Advent

meditate beforehand how to answer ; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to withstand or to gainsay.”—Luke xxi, 14, 15. “And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”—Matt. xxiv, 10-13.

5. “And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations ; and then shall the end come.”—Matt. xxiv, 14.

II.

1. “ But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains ; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out : and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”—Luke xxi, 20-22.

Post-Millennial Advent

2. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—Matt. xxiv, 23-28.

3. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword; and shall be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—Luke xxi, 24.

4. "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are

Post-Millennial Advent

coming on the world ; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”—Luke xxi, 25-27.

5. “And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”—Matt. xxiv, 31.

III.

1. “ But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads ; because your redemption draweth nigh.”—Luke xxi, 28.

2. “And he spake to them a parable : Behold the fig tree, and all the trees : when they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh. Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.” Luke xxi, 29-31. “ Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”—Matt. xxiv, 34, 35.

3. “ But of that day and hour know-

Post-Millennial Advent

eth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."—Matt. xxiv, 36.

4. "And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field: one is taken and one is left; two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh."—Matt. xxiv, 37-42.

5. "But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, . . . There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matt. xxiv, 43-51.

IV.

1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins. . . . Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour. For it is as when a man,

Post-Millennial Advent

going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents. . . . There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matt. xxv, 1-30.

2. "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep and the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."—Matt. xxv, 31-46.

1. In the beginning of this apocalypse our Lord predicts

Post-Millennial Advent

the destruction of the temple. This meant a great deal to the Jew ; and therefore, in his discourse, Jesus often returns to the *tauta*, the “these things,” that refer specially to the temple and city—to the external overthrow of Judaism.

2. The disciples have now been with their Master for three years, and must have been taught many things concerning the purposes of God and must have known the bearing of their leading questions about the “these things,” the Second Coming, and the end of the world, or *æon*. This phrase, “the end of the world,” is used in the parable of the tares so as to define its meaning. “The harvest is the end of the world. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire ; so shall it be in the end of the

Post-Millennial Advent

world." "So shall it be in the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the righteous."—Matt. xiii, 39, 40, 49. There need be no doubt about the disciples as intelligent questioners, though the vast content of the far-reaching answers was not fully apprehended.

I.

1. Jesus began his answers by a caution against false Christs. This was necessary. Milman says that "false prophets suborned by zealots kept the people in a feverish excitement, as though the Deliverer would still appear." In vain hope, the deceived multitudes remained in the city, and on this account there was the unprecedented slaughter of 1,000,000 Jews during the siege. Nothing but our

Post-Millennial Advent

Lord's earnest and repeated warnings caused the Christians to depart when Titus came against the city with his legions, and thus saved the Mother Church of Christendom.

2. Jesus, after speaking of wars and rumors of wars and comforting his disciples, distinctly informs them that "the end is not yet;" or, as Luke expresses it, "the end is not immediately." Some say that Christ here refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. But, taking a general view of this discourse, it would appear that he answers their last question first. In that case the reference is probably to the primitive days of Christianity. Then political commotions were prominent features of history; and though there were persecutions, the Church extended and grew mightily, until

Post-Millennial Advent

in 312 it ascended the throne of the Cæsars in the person of Constantine. At that time Christians might have been deceived—might have imagined that the pretty general diffusion of the Gospel throughout the Roman world was the fulfillment of the prophecies; but Jesus at this place wisely cautions his Church: "The end is not yet."

3. In this paragraph there is a more general statement concerning wars and calamities. The eye of the seer is now lifted to distant events. From the division of the Roman Empire in 328, when Constantinople was made the Eastern capital, through most disastrous periods when Goth, Vandal, and Hun did their work of destruction, to the downfall of Rome in 476 many peoples were in the agonies of military disaster. Then

Post-Millennial Advent

followed the transition from pagan to papal Rome, which was the adding of hypocrisy to all the known wickedness of the world. Well might the Great Revealer say: "And these are the beginnings of travail." This passage in the original is very expressive, and shows that now began the birth pangs of the Church. In Rev. xii, 1-6, there is an explanation of this *travail*. "And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; . . . and she cried out travailing in birth. . . . And the dragon stood before the woman which was about to be delivered, that . . . he might devour her child. And she was delivered of a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: . . . And the woman

Post-Millennial Advent

fled to the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Taking a day for a year, this brings us down through the Dark Ages, when millions suffered death for Christ. Memorable centuries of imminent peril and dire distress ! Amid throes of travail died the martyrs whose blood was the seed of the Church ; and with unutterable pangs the Church brought forth reformers who fought the battles of civil and religious liberty for mankind. During these dismal ages God had a tower of refuge for his people in the wilderness of the Alpine Mountains. Assuredly, the light was set on a hill for illumination and for safety. Though Romanism ravaged all Europe for over one thousand

Post-Millennial Advent

years, yet the dragon was not able to devour our blessed Christianity, the child of the Church and the destined ruler of the nations.

4. In this part, as might be expected, our Lord prepares his followers for great trials. He comforts their minds by a special promise that words and wisdom will be given them when brought before rulers. Then, again, follow very sad predictions. Many shall stumble, false prophets shall arise, hatred shall show itself, iniquity shall increase, and the love of many shall grow cold. But salvation shall be given to them that are faithful to the end of life.

5. Now comes the welcome announcement that the Gospel of the kingdom shall be universally preached for a witness or testimony. There has been discussion on this word "witness."

Post-Millennial Advent

The idea of preaching as a witness against men is quite contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, which is the good news of salvation. On this point Whedon says: "Assuredly God does not send the Gospel to increase man's condemnation." Christ told the disciples that they were *his* witnesses. He did not send them forth to witness against men, but to witness for him. "For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."—John iii, 17. This is emphatically true, and only the coldest and narrowest dogmatism could imagine the dreadful pre-millennial exegesis, which makes the preacher principally a witness against men. Such preachers would not be the publishers of "good tidings of great joy

Post-Millennial Advent

which shall be to all the people.” —Luke ii, 10. But we need not have any doubts on this matter; for the Scriptures themselves plainly show what happy results shall come from this world-wide preaching. Daniel had a vision of a stone cut out without hands—a stone that moved, grew, crushed opposition and filled the whole earth. This vision plainly teaches that the Kingdom of God shall grow and crush all wicked powers; and fill the world with mighty and divine influences.

The all-pervading and all-subduing powers of Christianity are taught in the parable of the leaven. Christ brought truth from heaven and planted it in the hearts of men, and this truth shall leaven the whole world.

Paul throws light on this subject when he affirms: “The

Post-Millennial Advent

Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." — Rom. xiv, 17. This passage sets forth the character of the Church, which is a Holy Ghost Kingdom, which was set up on the day of Pentecost, and which is destined to universal sovereignty. This kingdom is present among us and is in us. It is under the gracious and infinitely powerful ministry of the Third Person of the glorious Trinity. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and his ministry is more to be desired than even the incarnated presence of the Saviour. Jesus himself knew this, and said it was expedient for him to depart that he might send the Comforter. This blessed Spirit will renew the earth, so that all nations will in due time join in the trium-

Post-Millennial Advent

phant anthem : " The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."—Rev. xi, 15.

Trusting in the Holy Ghost, one may safely conclude that the preaching, the witnessing, is unto salvation, and that in the good time coming the world will be full of testimony for Christ, and full of believers. This state of things will surely give humanity a thousand joyous years of a highly Christian civilization. " And then shall the end come," according to the words of the Great Prophet. In the foregoing paragraphs is the divinely given order of events, and the Second Advent is not placed before the general diffusion of Christianity among the nations.

Post-Millennial Advent

II.

1. Having just given in outline the history of his Church, Jesus begins again at Jerusalem, and more fully explains certain matters of paramount importance. Urging his followers to make good their escape, he pathetically utters predictions of sorrow and slaughter attending the siege by the Romans.

2. There is here a return to the subject of false Christs, and that his followers may know how to detect them a certain sign is given. The Lord tells them that when he comes it will be with inimitable celestial manifestations. Merely to fully inform his disciples against deceivers, without reference to the chronological order of events, at this place is introduced a description of the *parousia*. It was

Post-Millennial Advent

needful for the Jerusalem Christians to have this sign in reference to the manner of the coming, that they might be in no danger from deceivers, and in no danger of perishing in the destruction of the city. That such was the purpose in mentioning the *parousia* in this connection is evident from the context. In the very next verse, which must refer to the Roman army, are these words: "Where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Evidently the destruction of Jerusalem, false prophets, and the necessity of enabling his followers to detect deceivers are the great thoughts now in our Lord's mind; and his reference in this place to the coming is merely explanatory. Thus understood, the passage is quite plain, and does not disturb the order of events.

Post-Millennial Advent

3. There is foretold in this part the destruction of the city, the saddest captivity of the Jews, and the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles. But it is intimated that this, the longest captivity, will have an end. Is it not in harmony with the idea of a universal Christian civilization that wealthy converted Jews should take an interest in the Holy Land, and should build beautiful homes amid the precious memorials of the prophets, priests, and kings? They will love the sacred places that hold blessed memories of their long-rejected, but now lovingly accepted, Prince of the House of David. Railways are already taking people to the Holy City, and Christianity will bestow beauty and plenty, peace and happiness, upon the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and

Post-Millennial Advent

Jacob for an everlasting possession. Why should not our holy religion make the world in general, and Palestine in particular, bloom as the rose and flow with milk and honey?

But we must return to our subject and give attention to the latter part of Luke's statement: "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." These words are of such large import that they must be interpreted by the Scriptures themselves. Happily Paul gives us the content of this passage in Romans, where he says,

"Now, if their fall is the riches of the world and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness."—Rom. xi, 12.

Again, in verse 25:

"For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hard-

Post-Millennial Advent

ening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved."

Paul states that the fall of the Jews meant Gospel riches to the world, that the loss of the Jews meant bountiful outpourings of grace to the Gentiles. But how much greater blessings, Paul intimates, will be bestowed on humanity when the Jews, beholding the triumphs of a world-wide Christianity, shall be constrained to read the New Testament and to accept their own Messiah. Now these fulfillings of God's gracious purposes, these fullnesses of blessing to Gentiles and Jews, can mean nothing less than the conversion of the world by the blessed Gospel. And what is a converted world? Will it not be the happy home of the millennial reign of righteousness? Now, observe, the Sav-

Post-Millennial Advent

our places these times of fullness before his Second Advent.

4. To aid the student it may be suggested that the wickedness of the Jews after Pentecost foreshadowed the little season of apostasy which will follow the millennium, according to Rev. xx, 3 ; that the portents which Josephus declares appeared in the heavens prefigured the indescribable concomitants of the *parousia* ; and that the destruction of Jerusalem represented the final catastrophe of the world. However, it is plain that after the fullness of Jews and Gentiles there will be wonderful appearances in the heavens, distress among the nations, and finally the coming of the Son of man. This order of events which is given by Luke is the same as that given by John in Revelation. After the millen-

Post-Millennial Advent

nium—sad thought!—part of humanity will relapse into wickedness. Then strange astronomical signs will appear, and fear and apprehension will overtake the backslidden nations. And finally shall be seen the infinitely glorious presence of the Judge Eternal.

5. After the solemn and dreadful declarations of the previous predictions, another comforting and gracious promise is made to the faithful. Amid the universal consternation and confusion their precious dust shall be remembered and shall be gathered from the four winds of the earth.

III.

1. Once more the Saviour comes back to the *tauta*, the "these things," that refer to Jerusalem, and comforts his lis-

Post-Millennial Advent

tening followers. He returns again to what particularly interested them. Lange says: "In harmony with apocalyptical style, he exhibited the judgments of his coming in a series of cycles, each of which depicts the whole futurity, but in such a manner that with every new cycle the scene seems to approximate to and more closely resemble the final catastrophe." Remembering that Jesus returns more than once to Jerusalem as a starting point, aids in explaining these symbolical passages. Again the listening apostles are instructed and inspired, and are informed that the deliverance of the Kingdom of God from Judaism is nigh. The Master was a patient Teacher and knew that oft-repeated lessons are seldom forgotten.

2. In the parable of the fig

Post-Millennial Advent

tree is another guiding sign concerning the then near future. Jesus, moreover, tells them plainly that "these things," the *tauta* of their first question which referred to Jerusalem and the city, are nigh at hand—that "this generation shall not pass away till all *these things* be accomplished." That generation did witness the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost, the overthrow of Judaism, and the destruction of city and temple. Note that the *tauta* is in the first question and has no reference to the Second Advent.

3. Jesus further teaches men that the times are in God's keeping, and that men especially must be contented with only a dimly outlined knowledge of the great future.

4. The suddenness of the

Post-Millennial Advent

parousia is also emphasized. In the days of Noah the flood overtook the unprepared. Likewise at the Second Coming consternation will overwhelm the wicked ; but as God took Noah into the ark, so he will take the good men and the good women, and will leave the bad to destruction. Well might the Church watch through all the ages for her Lord.

5. Earnest exhortations are given that God's people may not be found unprepared at last.

IV.

1. These parables of the virgins and of the talents inculcate watchfulness and diligence. The parable of the talents shows also that a considerable time may elapse between the departure and return of our Lord ; for the master mentioned went into a

Post-Millennial Advent

foreign country—into a “far country,” according to the Authorized Version. This fact should prevent any from placing undue stress upon such words as *immediately*.

2. We now approach the closing part of this glorious Apocalypse; and reverently would we listen to the awful sentences that are so easily understood. Here the Divine Majesty speaks in sublimest and simplest language, and settles the question under discussion. The Saviour finally and plainly states to his disciples that when he comes in all his glory, with the holy angels, there will be the general judgment of all nations, and the appointment of all human beings to their final states. These most solemn declarations closing the Apocalypse unmistakably show that the Second Advent and the Judgment

Post-Millennial Advent

of *all* mankind will take place at one and the same time.

Thus this prophetic discourse, beginning with Jerusalem and ending with the consummation of all things, when its parts are placed in their order, outlines in simple language the history of the Church, and proves that Christ will not come until after the millennium—until the last day; until the end of the world; until the general judgment. Notwithstanding this, the bride through all the centuries longingly and lovingly looks forward to the appearance of the bridegroom. Also, often in her loneliness and afflictions has she exclaimed, “Come, Lord Jesus!” But the bride must wait in patience, must attend to the duties of the hour, and must guard against false announcements and false bridegrooms.

Post-Millennial Advent

It is apparent that the Great Prophet in this wonderful Apocalypse gives a simple and straight answer to our question. He has arranged the leading events of Church history in their true order, and has placed his coming after the millennium. Our question is really answered. Still, it may be well to show that the general trend of Scripture is in harmony with this Apocalypse and to explain certain misunderstood passages.

In accordance with the foregoing post-millennial conclusions are the plain eschatological declarations of Scripture.

Hear Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."—Dan. xii, 2. The prophet evidently believed that there will be only *one* resur-

Post-Millennial Advent

rection, and that it will take place at the time of the general judgment.

Listen to the Saviour : “ Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.”—John v, 28, 29. Can there be any reason for not understanding this emphatic statement? The Saviour is very definite: “The *hour* cometh in which *all* the dead,” the good and the bad, “shall come forth.” It is impossible to explain away such passages. They are unanswerable proofs that there will be but *one* resurrection previous to the one judgment.

Mark Paul's declaration be-

Post-Millennial Advent

fore Felix and the assembled Jews and Gentiles: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."—Acts xxiv, 15. In similar language the Apostle warned the Athenians: "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness."—Acts 17, 31. These are noteworthy expressions—a resurrection for both the just and unjust; *a day* for judging the world.

Observe Peter's explicit prediction: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."—2 Pet. iii, 10. This clearly shows that "the day of the Lord," which is the *pa-*

Post-Millennial Advent

rouisia, will witness the utter destruction of the Kosmos; not the inauguration of the millennium.

That these points may be forever put to rest in our minds, turn to one more passage: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."—Rev. xx, 11-13.

Post-Millennial Advent

From the foregoing quotations it must be inferred that Daniel, our blessed Lord, Paul, Peter, and John believed in post-millenarianism. We are, therefore, warranted in concluding that the whole drift of Scripture favors the synchronizing of these four eschatological events; namely, the *parousia*, the resurrection, the end of the world, and the judgment of the whole human race.

1. There will be only one resurrection.

2. It will take place at the Second Coming.

3. The Second Coming will be at the end of the world.

4. At the end of the world will be the general judgment.

These conclusions cannot be set aside, because they are clearly and repeatedly revealed in Holy Writ. Even if two or three

Post-Millennial Advent

passages were found that could not be harmonized with them, still one would be compelled by the just principles of hermeneutics to accept the above statements. Let us examine the two or three passages upon which premillennialists lay so much stress.

There may be some misapprehension about Paul's meaning in 1 Thess. iv, 16, 17: "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with him be caught up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." All this is quite simple. The righteous dead will be raised before the living are changed.

Also, there is no harm in supposing that as a matter of precedence the righteous will come out of their graves before the

Post-Millennial Advent

unrighteous. But all these events will take place in a very brief space of time. "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible."—1 Cor. xv, 51, 52. These verses present no difficulty. In truth, they favor Post-millenarianism.

But the next passage for consideration has caused a good deal of trouble, and one should approach it in a reverent and prayerful spirit. In Second Thessalonians Paul instructs his erring brethren and tells them not to be beguiled—tells them of "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," that will sit "in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." Now comes the crucial difficulty—"And then shall be revealed the lawless one,

Post-Millennial Advent

whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming.” —2 Thess. ii, 3-8.

In commenting on Second Thessalonians, Mr. Wesley states that “this epistle was written soon after the former, on account of some things therein which had been misunderstood,” and adds that Paul “corrects their mistake concerning the coming of our Lord.” They had taken superficial views, and it was necessary to set them right, by showing that the Second Advent was not imminent, because “the son of perdition” must be revealed before the *parousia*.

But who is this “that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshiped?” Mr. Wesley’s comment

Post-Millennial Advent

is doubtless correct. "In many respects," he says, "the Pope has an indisputable claim to these titles. He is emphatically the man of sin." Of late some have been giving a pitiably insignificant explanation by calling Nero "the man of sin"—Nero, who was merely one of the despicable emperors of Rome. But Romanism, the vile mother of unutterable monsters and unparalleled crimes which darkened long ages into blackest night—Romanism, "mystery of iniquity," somewhat adequately corresponds to the stupendous and appalling metaphors of Scripture. The old commentators knew this antichrist better than we do, and were assured that only the diabolism of Romanism could answer this description of the "son of perdition."

Now, Paul states that this

Post-Millennial Advent

“man of sin,” this antichrist of all the antichrists, will have his period before the *parousia*. This is generally believed. And, if Romanism is tottering to the fall, which appears to be the case, may not the Second Advent be expected at any moment? In answer, observe, the apostle states that by “the breath of his mouth” Christ shall slay this “man of sin.” The Authorized Version reads: “The spirit of the mouth.” But this breath or spirit of his mouth can mean nothing else than the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. According to Isaiah: “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”—Isa. xi, 4. It is plain, therefore, that by preaching, which is the two-

Post-Millennial Advent

edged sword that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord, "the man of sin" will be slain. Yes, Christianity will destroy the papacy. This prediction accords with the signs of the times. What vast triumphs have been won since the days of Luther! In no country can the Inquisition now burn a Christian, and only in the very darkest parts of the earth can priests burn Bibles. Indeed, at the present time under the very walls of the Vatican the Holy Scriptures are sold. Moreover, public sentiment is so generally Christianized that the Pope is beginning to talk patronizingly of the Word of God. The temporal power has gone, the influence of the priesthood is going, and the mother of abominations is becoming such a noisomeness in the nostrils of nations that soon

Post-Millennial Advent

an indignant and outraged humanity "shall slay" this most gigantic hypocrisy.

Still this difficult passage needs further explanation. What is the meaning of the next clause—"bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming?" Dean Alford's rendering is very expressive—"annihilate by the appearance of his coming." After all, is there not here a difficulty for pre-millennialists? Is Romanism to be destroyed by two agencies, namely, the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming? How explain this? You cannot do it satisfactorily except on the post-millennial theory, which theory teaches that there will be a world-wide preaching of the Gospel, and that the sword of his mouth shall slay this dragon and inaugurate the millennium. Then

Post-Millennial Advent

after the thousand years of peace and righteousness there will be the "little season" of apostasy when loosened Satan will revive the spirit of antichrist ; and then the Lord will forever annihilate that resuscitated "man of sin" by his glorious coming. This seems to be the proper exegesis. It gives full significance to the whole passage and brings it into perfect harmony with other portions of Scripture. Our premature brethren err badly in ignoring the first clause, which shows that the "son of perdition" is to be slain not by the coming, but by the preaching of the Word. Some good people seem to overlook everything but the *parousia*, and in consequence fall into grievous mistakes.

There remains another passage to which pre-millennialists always refer with much confidence.

Post-Millennial Advent

Turn to Rev. xx, 1-8 : " And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished : after this he must be loosed for a little time.

" And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand ;

Post-Millennial Advent

and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : over these the second death hath no power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

“ And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”

Will pre-millennialists kindly answer a few questions that are naturally suggested by this extended passage ?

Post-Millennial Advent

1. What sort of persons will be those raised-up saints and those raised-up sinners?

2. What intercourse will the glorified saints have with these resurrected sinners?

3. How does Satan deceive the nations?

(a) If they are glorified saints how can he deceive them?

(b) If they are raised-up sinners why need he deceive them?

It must be confessed that the literal interpretation of this passage presents manifold difficulties, and really violates both human reason and Scripture usage. In this Book of Revelation especially does one expect to find glorious truth veiled in mystic metaphor. In no other literature of earth are found such elaborate symbols and such stupendous figures of speech. Why attempt to literalize this

Post-Millennial Advent

one passage and thereby contradict many plain passages and run into inextricable difficulties?

But how naturally these declarations disclose their divine meaning to a spiritual interpretation. Call this first resurrection the happy change which God works in man when he raises him from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. Is not the preacher orthodox when he proclaims: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light?" The whole host of the Church Militant has already "passed from death unto life." All believers must yield themselves "unto God as those that are alive from the dead." The forgiving father said truly, "Thy brother was dead and is alive again." The Saviour is resur-

Post-Millennial Advent

rection and life to both soul and body.

Is it not highly scriptural to say that this first resurrection is the raising of the soul from death to life? Truly blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection. Verily, on him the second death, which is separation from God and heaven, has no power. Thus beautifully revealed is the gracious mind of the Spirit, and we are enabled to understand these resurrections and deaths. There are two resurrections, one of the soul and one of the body; as there are two deaths, one of the body and one of the soul.

Thus far all is plain. But there is another difficulty in this passage. What is meant by the martyrs and confessors living and reigning with Christ a thousand years?

Post-Millennial Advent

On a certain occasion Pope Adrian used this language: "The heretics Huss and Jerome are alive again in the person of Martin Luther." A similar use of speech is found in the case of Elijah, concerning whom Malachi made a prediction: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."—Mal. iv, 5. Jesus explained this when in speaking of John the Baptist he said, "This is Elijah which is to come." These are not orientalisms, but common figures of speech.

Here, then, is the explanation of this much-misunderstood passage. The martyrs and confessors will live again in their godly successors, and in the doctrines for which they suffered. The glorious company of the reformers, like their ascended

Post-Millennial Advent

Lord, will live through all ages in the grateful memory of a saved world. In the same way the wicked will live after the millennium. The Neros and the Borgias will be reproduced in the Gogs and the Magogs.

It does appear that this very imperfect outline gives somewhat of the content of this marvelously graphic vision. After all, these dark passages are luminous, and inspire the Church of Christ with faith and hope. The future has blessed days in store. We believe with the Chiliasts in a period of about ten centuries when the Gospel will hold benign sway over the nations: for the Word of God proves that the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit will produce the millennium. Zion is putting on her beautiful garments, and upon her is resting

Post-Millennial Advent

the glory of God. Of the coming splendors of the Church wise Solomon caught a glimpse and uttered his welcome. "Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" — Song vi, 10.

Summing up the foregoing, it may safely be concluded that the great coming events of human history will be in the following order:

1. The millennium, a period of divine blessing and material prosperity, brought about by the present ministries of the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel.

2. The little season of apostasy when Satan shall be allowed for a short time to deceive men.

3. The Second Advent of our Lord in indescribable glory.

Post-Millennial Advent

4. The resurrection of all the dead, good and bad.

5. The end of the world, which will be consumed by fire.

6. The general judgment of all mankind.

7. The eternal states of happiness and misery.

In all plainness and fullness, and repeatedly, we think that the Scriptures have answered our question. The Church may expect the Second Coming of Christ after the "little season" of apostasy which will follow the millennium.

We would most earnestly entreat all Christians not to be disturbed in mind by any predictions declaring that the world is getting worse and worse, that the Gospel will not save the nations, and that our principal duty is to look for the speedy coming of Christ.

Post-Millennial Advent

By misplacing the predictions concerning the apostasy that will follow the millennium, certain would-be prophets, imagining that the present time is the "little season," are loud in their outcry about the decadence of Christianity and the prevalence of evil. This is one of Satan's mighty deceptions. He is doing his utmost to discourage the righteous, knowing that disheartened men are easily defeated. Let the Church therefore shake off this dejected and doleful spirit. The signs of the times are most hopeful and inspiring. The Sacramental Host of God is moving forward everywhere. To prove this the reader has merely to compare the missionary reports of last year with those published fifty years ago. Beware, then, of this nightmare of pre-millennial pessimism which

Post-Millennial Advent

is utterly ruinous to individual believers and highly inimical to missionary zeal.

For a long time the wicked one has predicted that the Gospel would be a failure, and even some good people have fallen into the snare, and have become very faint-hearted about missions. This cannot be denied. All know that the great Protestant organizations, whose Creeds and confessions are post-millennial, are doing nearly all the missionary work of the Church Militant. In Japan, China, India, and South America you find hundreds and thousands of godly men and women who are working and believing that the Gospel will convert the world. But where are the missions of the so-called Second Adventists? Of course there are some missionaries and some societies that

Post-Millennial Advent

are infected with Pre-millennialism. But the believers in this doctrine are doing very little to save the world. And this is natural; for who would wish to be a witness against men and to represent a dying cause?

At present our chief duty is not to indulge in fanciful expectations about the *parousia*; but to obey our Lord's command, "Occupy till I come." — Luke xix, 13. Let our motto be like that of the Salvation Army, "The World for God," and let our faith be as large as the Abrahamic covenant and embrace "all families." How the deceiver tries to circumscribe the promises! He would fain limit the Lord's predictions to the Roman Empire, or to the world as known by the Apostles. Emphatically repudiate all such

Post-Millennial Advent

God-dishonoring minimizings of heaven's gracious and comprehensive announcements. Surely, our Lord's great heart and thought included America as well as Europe, the islands of the sea as well as the cradle of humanity, in the Gospel provisions.

It may be well to give the genesis of the pre-millennial notion. This is the same error that troubled scribes and Pharisees, and caused them to reject the Nazarene. The unconverted Jew has for a long time been looking for an earthly material kingdom over which the Messiah in Solomon-like splendor should reign. Even the disciples were troubled with expectations of pomp and state, and the Saviour found it necessary to correct their ideas. He told them plainly, "My kingdom is not of this

Post-Millennial Advent

world.”—John xviii, 36. Again, he said, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”—Luke xvii, 20. Is it not a pity that to-day we are troubled with this leaven of the Pharisees? When will people cease this desire for some visible, imposing imperialism? How wicked to reject the manna of the Gospel and seek after some ill-defined wonderful display at Jerusalem.

We must never allow Satan to destroy our faith in Christianity. Do we want a better book than God’s inspired Word for the instruction of men? Can any atoning sacrifice be more precious than the blood of Jesus? Can there be a more glorious ministry than that of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of men? You may rest assured that any teaching which undervalues or sets aside this infinitely glorious

Post-Millennial Advent

salvation is not of God. In the sacrifice of Christ and in the Holy Spirit heaven has done the utmost for mankind. Thus we see that Pre-millenarianism offers a most serious affront to our blessed Lord and to the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this error is one of the most subtle and therefore one of the most dangerous of the present day. It becomes all good Christian people to renounce it, and to pray, work, and believe for the conversion of the world.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Amen.

THE END.

10





