That Blessed Hope
The Second Coming of Christ

Considered with
Special Reference to Post-Millennial
and Pre-Millennial Discussions

Also an Appendix
Treating of Related Topics

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ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἥζει, καὶ οὐ χρονιεῖ
—Heb. 10:37

Philadelphia
American Baptist Publication Society

Boston Chicago Atlanta
New York St. Louis Dallas
PREFACE

The particular object of the following treatise is to mediate somewhat between post-millennialism and pre-millennialism, especially as to the time of our Lord's second coming. The discouraging view taken by the former doctrine, namely, that before Christ comes there must intervene yet a thousand years or more of time, or a millennium of such extraordinary nature that it cannot be regarded as having, up to the present date, even begun, this notion is, and in some shape, always has been, unsatisfactory to thinking Christian minds, and even to minds not much given to thinking. Consequently that view has never been able to obtain universal and prolonged recognition. On the contrary, it has always had reactions appearing against it, usually in the form of pre-millennial or other chiliastic schemes—any doctrine that could furnish relief from the discouragement and lack of interest connected with the idea of our Lord's delaying so long his advent.

So also, on the other hand, the pre-millennial doctrine of the Saviour's setting up and ruling over a kingdom more or less materialistic in its nature, and a kingdom that should occupy the same
territory with sin and sinners, this notion too, is so contrary to the general Christian conception of the final outcome of Christ's redeeming work, or to the facts connected with his parousia, that it has never been able to obtain, and persistently hold, anything like a universal assent of the Christian world. Besides, the pre-millennial scheme naturally tends to fanatical over-expectation, and often teaches matters that are extravagant, or simply absurd.

Especially in these times, therefore—so it seems to the writer—there are not a few persons (and is not the class a growing one?) who are dissatisfied both with post-millennial and pre-millennial views. Certainly objections can easily be made to at least one or two items of post-millennialism, and also to nearly the whole pre-millennial doctrine—all of it, we may say, except its earnest protest against putting off the coming of our Lord to so distant a date. Such being the case with the two general views mentioned, it must, after all, not be concluded that because neither of these views has, as a whole, been universally received, therefore there is no truth in either. On the contrary, this very fact of only a partial reception of each of the views, is conclusive proof that there must be at least some truth, as well as error, in them both. That is the position taken by this work.

The truth in pre-millennialism is undoubtedly, as has been said, its vigorous and persistent protest
against interjecting yet so long a period of time—a thousand years or more—between the coming of Christ and our day. And the truth or truths in post-millennialism are, first, its teaching relative to the spiritual nature of our Lord's kingdom; and secondly, its doctrine respecting the purposes for which Christ will come the second time—to raise the dead, judge the world, and "restore all things," or usher in his everlasting kingdom.

In this way it is attempted to reconcile at least some of the teachings of pre-millennialism with those of post-millennialism, and thus deduce a doctrine respecting the advent of our Lord which shall be both more comforting and inspiring to the Christian heart and mind, and also more scriptural in its character, than is either of the common or well-known doctrines we have been considering.

To accomplish this purpose it was found necessary to eliminate from the time-determining factors of the second advent, that malum discordiae which has always been so prominent in eschatological discussions, namely, the millennium, or Christ's reign of a thousand years with some of his saints, as is prophesied in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. The reign there spoken of we understand to be an insolvable mystery, which no interpretation ever yet proposed has been able so to explain as not to come into conflict with other and clearly taught doctrines of Scripture; the best interpretation of that passage probably being that it refers to some
privileges which were to be enjoyed only by certain of the saints, *i. e.*, the martyrs and confessors, who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," etc. But whether those privileges were to be experienced on earth or in heaven, or what was to be the time of Christ's millennial reign, or just what should be its peculiar character—respecting all that, revelation is silent. We regard, therefore, this whole matter of the millennium as a mystery; and we affirm of it only that it cannot be used as a time-determining factor with which to figure out the date of our Lord's second coming. Consequently we dismiss the millennium from our discussion of that particular; and by so doing we have been able, we think, not only to avoid the difficulties into which pre-millennialism and post-millennialism necessarily fall, but also to construct a doctrine respecting the second advent which embodies, in a consistent and easily to be understood whole, the various teachings of Scripture on the subject.

The most distinguishing feature, therefore, of this treatise, is the disposition which it makes of the millennium, and also its reconciliation of post-millennial views with those of pre-millennialism. Its design being pacificatory, the work may properly be termed an irenicicon.

In an appendix quite a number of related topics have been considered; which addition is believed to be particularly important as bringing the work more up to date, and making it more complete. Also
from the examination given to some of these special topics it can be seen how thoroughgoing and fundamental recent discussions, on one side and another of our Lord's *parousia*, have been in their work.

And it might still be remarked, in explanation of certain features connected with the form and general arrangement of the main portion of this work, that this part was originally prepared, and appeared as articles in a religious newspaper, in which shape also it was widely read.
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(For Index to Appendix see pp. 173-176.)
"The Redeemer's second appearing is the very pole-star of the church. That it is so held forth in the New Testament, is beyond dispute. Let any one do himself the justice to collect and arrange the evidence on the subject, and he will be surprised—if the study be new to him—at once at the copiousness, the variety, and the conclusiveness of it."

—Dr. David Brown (post-millennial).

"Bickersteth affirms, after careful examination, that one verse in thirty of the New Testament relates to the second coming of Christ. If to these are added the numerous references in the Old Testament to the same momentous event, surpassing the allusions that are made to his first coming in the proportion of at least twenty to one, some conception may be formed of the prominence given in the word of God to the doctrine here advocated."

—Dr. James H. Brookes (pre-millennial).

"It is moreover, in the New Testament, the great event that towers above every other. The heaven that gives back Christ, gives back all we have loved and lost; solves all doubts and ends all sorrows. His coming looks in upon the whole life of the church, as a lofty mountain peak looks in upon every little valley and sequestered home around its base, and belongs to them all alike. Every generation lies under the shadow of it, for whatever is transcendently great is constantly near, and in moments of high conviction it absorbs petty interests and annihilates intervals."

—Rev. John Ker, of Scotland.
THAT BLESSED HOPE

I

PRELIMINARIES

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11.

THAT Blessed Hope. The hope of the second coming of Christ is one of the strongest and also one of the most widely operative of all that belong to our Christian faith. Moreover, this hope is one that acts not merely at present, or upon our own day and generation; but also in times past it has commanded the attention and interest of multitudes of people, and so undoubtedly it will continue to do in the future. Generations yet unborn will be stirred more or less widely and deeply by this great expectation of the Lord's coming, as has been the case with not a few generations now dead.

One peculiarity of this hope is the fact that, notwithstanding it has often failed in the past, or has so frequently disappointed expectations regarding
itself, it yet has always survived these disappointments, and despite all its failures or seeming failures, it again comes to the front, and is to-day as active and wide-awake a topic as ever before. Indeed it is, as an eminent writer on the subject has called it, "the very pole star of the church"—the star not only directing and prompting our Christian activity, but the object also of our aspiration and desire. For the realization of this hope it is that we labor and pray. For its realization it is that all our missionary operations are undertaken and carried forward; and for the attainment of this same great end of the Saviour's second advent it is that all preaching and praying and all other religious exercises are, at least in a measure, conducted. Indeed, all our religious endeavor circulates, it may be said, more or less around that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," as the apostle terms the matter.

To be sure, there are now-a-days, as there have been always, persons who, like the scoffers of whom Peter speaks, tauntingly ask: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were": but after all, the number of those who do not believe in the coming of Christ at some time is comparatively small. In all the ages, and wherever Christianity has been, the great majority of persons who have been willing to confess to anything whatever of a positive nature
respecting the facts or doctrines of our Christian religion, have been willing, and have rejoiced, to confess to this doctrine of Christ’s advent. So, for example, in that oldest of all the creeds formulated in Christendom—the creed known as the Apostles', it reads not only “I believe” that Jesus Christ “rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father,” but also that “from thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead”;—and because this symbol so states, it is able to add, “I believe also in the resurrection of the dead, and in the life everlasting.”

History of the Doctrine. But now, when we look over the history of this doctrine as it has been in the past, we see that there have been times when the subject has taken, so to speak, a wider and more inspiring lodgment in the minds and hearts of men than it has at others, or that there have been special movements in the interest of this topic, and movements that have generally been connected with the idea of Christ’s coming speedily. So, for instance, it was even in the days of the apostles. Indeed, it would seem that scarcely had the words of the angels who—as in the quotation at the head of this chapter—promised the disciples on the mount of Olives, as they stood there gazing after their ascended Lord, that “this same Jesus who was taken up from them into heaven, would so come again in like manner as they had seen him depart”; scarcely,
it would seem, had these comforting words of the angels died away in the hearing of the disciples, before they, or at least some of them, began to indulge the hope of Jesus' speedy return. For we read that "with great joy" did these disciples return to Jerusalem, after having witnessed the ascension. But be this as it may, we know from other sources that, very early in the history of the apostolic church, there occurred quite an extensive movement in the interest of the idea that Christ would come soon, possibly even in the days of the apostles; and especially was this movement ripe in that portion of the church which had come into it from the ranks of the Jews. To overcome this tendency, and to give the churches better ideas in general respecting the matter of Christ's coming again, it was that Paul wrote, e. g., his second letter to the Thessalonians, besides other words of his in the same line. Also similar efforts were made by some of the other writers in the New Testament.

But of course Christ did not come in that period; and the next we read of any special interest being excited as to the matter of his advent, is in the second and third centuries, and perhaps also in a part of the fourth. At this time great and widespread interest took place not only regarding the matter of Christ's coming speedily, but also and especially regarding this idea as connected with that of the millennium, or the literal personal reign
of the Saviour on earth for a thousand years. So, under the excitement of these two ideas obtaining at once, the movement became very general, and numbered among its adherents many learned teachers of theology. So much was this the case, or so general did the movement become, and so respectable was it in character, that the period of it has been called the golden or flowering one in the history of the doctrine, and especially of this doctrine as related to the millennium.

The next manifestation of special interest in this subject took place away down the centuries, or in the Middle Ages at about the year 1000, and also some considerable time after that, in connection with the first Crusades. The year 1000, it was thought, indicated not only that the first thousand years of Christian history was past, but also that—inasmuch as this period might, by being properly regarded, be identified with the millennium—it indicated also that the time for the end of the world had come, and so also, of course, for the return of Christ. Because of such belief, therefore, a widespread feeling of uneasiness existed at the time. Moreover, in connection with the victories at first achieved by the Crusaders, it was thought that these extraordinary events portended others still more extraordinary and glorious—perhaps even the coming of the Lord. This belief—or rather it was a kind of vague apprehension—seems to have spread all through Europe and in other parts of the world,
wherever Christians dwelt or happened at the time to be.

But the period passed, and even yet Christ did not make his appearance; and so we are brought down to the time of the Protestant Reformation. At this period there sprang up, in connection with the great successes achieved by Luther and his coadjutors, and especially in connection with the widely spread popular belief that the pope was Antichrist, or the opposing wicked power which was to be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, quite a number of movements in the interest of this same idea of the Lord's coming speedily. Also since that day there have been several movements, more or less extensive, of a similar nature. The Millerite excitement, which occurred, or came to its end, in 1843, and which was so disastrous in many instances, was a movement of this kind.

A New Eschatological Movement. But now again, in these times of ours, despite all the failures which have taken place in the past, and despite the fact that all attempts at locating or prophesying the time when the Lord would appear, have, so far at least, proved utterly futile and in vain—even yet we have, here at the beginning of our century, a movement in progress respecting this same idea of Christ's speedy coming. It is a movement which has spread far and wide among the different denominations of Christians, and which, so far as enthusiasm is concerned, is or has been perhaps
the equal of any of those which have preceded it. Now, we are assured, the Saviour will come without failure. Notwithstanding that, in time past, there have been so many disappointments, there will be none now. Not only is it certain that our Lord will come soon, but he may be expected at any time. This is a view held, not simply by a few fanatics, but by great numbers of people, and by many who are earnest and sober-minded scholars, persons standing high in the church and in some of our theological schools, and noted both for their scholarship and good judgment. This being the case, of course the movement must be pronounced a very respectable one; and it has stirred up a good deal of interest, even outside of itself, in the general subject of our Lord's coming. When will Christ make his appearance? That is the question now engaging the attention of many minds. Men are anxious, earnest, wistful about this matter. They have been looking out eagerly into the spiritual heavens, to see if they could discern from the signs of the times when that great event will take place. And not only this, but they have been looking also into the Bible for its promises, to see if they could find in these anything that would direct them in their study, or at least confirm them in views already formed.

1 The enthusiasm and general interest connected with this view does not seem to be as great now (1907) as was the case a few years ago, when the above was written.
Perhaps some persons who may read this are connected with that movement, or have adopted some of its notions. However that may be, certainly all Christians can unite in the desire for the Saviour's speedy coming. All can earnestly say, in the words of the well-known hymn:

How long, dear Saviour, oh, how long
Shall that bright hour delay?
Roll swiftly round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the appointed day!

Or they can say, in the words with which John, closing his Revelation, responds to the Master's promise that he would come quickly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"—come quickly!

Now, whatever may be one's opinion respecting the movement which we have noticed, or whatever ideas he may have respecting the speedy coming of Christ, or of that coming as being yet away off in the future, certainly the movement itself is, as we have said, a very respectable one, and equally certain is it that the subject which is thus brought, so to speak, afresh to our minds, is of no little importance, and one that is well worthy of study. If it is so, as they tell us, that we are now living near the borders of a new and most extraordinary era in the history of our world and of ourselves, then surely we ought to know all we can about that matter; and whether this is true or otherwise, the general topic of Christ's second and glorious
appearing is surely one to which attention and study can be profitably given.

Differences of Opinion. Coming then to the general theme of our Lord's second advent, we may remark of it, yet in a preliminary way, that probably no one of all the doctrines connected with the general system of our Christian faith has been or is now more under discussion, or has had connected with it more differences of opinion than has been the case with just this one. Opinions here differ not only regarding the doctrine as a whole, but seemingly also regarding every individual feature of this doctrine. For example, there are differences of opinion with regard to what may be called the manner or the form of the Saviour's appearing. On the one hand is the orthodox doctrine, which we think is also the true one—that Christ will come in person, or that, as his first advent was made by himself physically, so it will be also with his second advent. But now, as opposed to this view, the rationalistic theory teaches that the coming of our Lord will be, or is, only one through intermediate agencies, by his word or Spirit, or in "the clouds of events," as the matter has been worded. Then, again, as to the purposes, or concomitant events, of the Saviour's advent there have been the widest differences of opinion. For example, the pre-millennial theory, instead of accepting the more commonly taught doctrine, that Christ will come to raise the dead, judge the world, and usher in his
everlasting kingdom, teaches that at least one purpose of that coming will be to bring about what in pre-millennial language is called the rapture—that is, a catching-up of the saints to dwell with the Lord for a time in the air, during which period the judgments of God will—so the pre-millennialists tell us—be poured out upon the wicked. Then after the rapture, this theory teaches, there will come a thousand years of literal personal reign by the Saviour on the earth with his saints, or the millennium; and then, after the millennium, comes the judgment of the ungodly, and lastly the end of the world. In many points this pre-millennial scheme is different from the theory which, being more generally received, we will call the reigning view.

The particular feature of our doctrine, however, regarding which there have been most different opinions, or at all events, regarding which opinions have differed most widely, and seemingly with most irreconcilable opposition, one from another, is that feature which has to do with the time of the Saviour's advent. Is that time away off in the future? or is it to be regarded as near? The answers given to these questions have differed so much, and have been so directly in contradiction one to the other, that all attempts at reconciling them, or at coming here to any satisfactory and definite conclusion, would seem to be in vain; and therefore many people have come to look upon this part of our subject as involved in hopeless confusion or uncertainty.
What, then, are we to do with this matter? Is there no way of coming to a solution of the time when our Lord will make his appearance? or is this whole subject to be dismissed as an inscrutable mystery, one respecting which nothing can be really known, and therefore as a thing all study spent upon which must be spent in vain? Not a few people take this view of the matter. To them it seems that neither in the Bible, nor out of the Bible, nor from any source whatever, is there to be derived any important light that will elucidate this dark and insolvable problem; and so they just dismiss it—pass it by without investigation. Then there are others who seem to have a kind of superstitious feeling toward this particular subject; and because they read in their Bibles that "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only," therefore they look upon this matter of the time of Christ's coming as something that is sacred or forbidden, and hence as something all studying of which would seem to be almost wicked.

But neither with one nor the other of these views do we sympathize. Our position is that nothing in the Bible is too sacred for investigation, otherwise it would never have been placed there, nor would we be told, as we are in the Apocalypse, respecting this very matter under consideration, that this book of John's prophecy was "a revelation which God gave to Jesus Christ, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." And on
the other hand, we do not sympathize with the view which regards the whole subject of the time when our Lord will appear as an inscrutable mystery; for we think there is given to us from the Bible, from human history, and even from the natural world round about us, no small amount of light, that will very largely at least elucidate this mystery. What we mean is, that there are facts in the Bible, and in human history, and even some in nature, all bearing upon the topic of the world's end, or of the time when Christ will make his appearance; and by using these facts rightly, ascertaining what they are, and comparing some of them with others—facts in the Bible with those outside of the Bible—we can in this way come to some conclusions respecting the matter in hand that will be both definite and satisfactory. At all events, we can thus come to some convictions of our own; and so far as these convictions are intelligent or well founded, so far they should be also both satisfactory and definite.
II

MATTERS CLEARLY REVEALED

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:16.

In our last chapter we spoke of some differences of opinion respecting various items belonging to the Lord's second coming. But there are some other matters connected with that great and important event which are so clearly and fully revealed in Scripture that no doubt can be entertained regarding them. One of these matters is the

Certainty of the Advent. That our Lord will most surely come at some time is a matter very abundantly taught in the Bible. Indeed, it would seem that, even from the light of nature, one might here come to a definite and positive conclusion. For even a scanty examination of facts belonging to nature, is sufficient to show that, as our world very evidently had a beginning, so it must also have an end; and in the usual theological way of thinking the end of the world means the same thing as the second coming of Christ. When the one occurs the other will occur also, or the two events are simply concomitant. Any line of argument, therefore,
which establishes the event of the world's termination as one that is sure to occur at some time, establishes also, and with equal certainty, the second coming of Christ.

Testimony of Science. But as we have already said, there are facts appearing in the natural world which justify the belief that it, or at least the present order of things belonging to it, must at some time end. So, for example, the great epoch-making facts revealed in a geological study of our globe—these teach us that, in the past at least, there have been great changes occurring in the physical formation of our earth, changes which have amounted to real beginnings and endings; and if such has been the case in times gone by, why shall not the same state of things continue in the future? In other words, geology testifies to the effect that the same laws continuing in the future which have been operative in the past, then an end to the present order of things belonging to our world must certainly occur. And so we have a doctrine taught by natural science that, to say the least, is not at variance with the teaching of Scripture, namely, that there is an end of the world coming, which is inwrought as it were into its very structure, and so also that Christ's advent will take place.

The same, or a very similar doctrine, is taught by facts connected with what may be called the science of political economy. If in the future the population of our globe continues to increase at the same rate
as it has in the past,¹ then evidently the time must come when, notwithstanding all the improvements made in obtaining and in economically using the necessaries of human life, the whole earth itself will, as a producing power, be insufficient to furnish these necessaries; and when that state of things arrives, then, of course, the existence of man upon this planet is doomed. So here again we have prophesied, even by some of the facts of nature, the second coming of our Lord as an event concomitant with the world’s termination.

But the most numerous and convincing testimonies of a physical order, which have a bearing upon the topic under consideration, are those which can be gotten from the study of astronomy. Here the facts teach us not only that other worlds, like ours, have already ceased to exist—or at all events, such were the appearances of things occurring in the heavens—but also that, if the nebular hypothesis is to be accepted as correct, then perhaps there is something in the nature of things requiring worlds, once having an existence, to return, after a long

¹ According to Malthus, population increases in geometrical progression, while food-supply increases only in arithmetical progression; which law, if correct and universally applicable, would soon fill the world so full of human beings that general starvation would necessarily result. Hence nature provides checks in the way of wars, plagues, etc., for keeping down population. Still, with all the checks, the population of the earth continually grows; and it is estimated that during the last one hundred years it has about doubled, or increased from some six or eight hundred millions to, perhaps, over fifteen hundred millions.
period of years, to their original nebular, or more or less chaotic, state of being. To explain this idea more fully: there have, we are told by astronomers, disappeared from their places in the heavens, during the last two or three hundred years, something like thirteen of the fixed stars—that is, stars all of which were suns; and the evidence of this being the case is that these stars, once having been seen, are now seen no more. A remarkable instance of the kind occurred in the time of Tycho Brahe—or in 1572-1574—when there shone out in the northern heavens (in the constellation Cassiopeia), for some considerable time, a star that attracted a good deal of attention. It was so bright and large that even in the daytime it could be seen with the naked eye; and one peculiarity of its light was that it changed its color, at first appearing as a dazzling white, then turning to reddish yellow, and lastly to a pale ash. These phenomena continued with the star for some sixteen months, and then it wholly disappeared.1

1 Grant, in his "History of Physical Astronomy," mentions quite a number of similar instances; where, apparently, stars have for a time shone out with extraordinary or unusual brilliancy, and then, by gradual changes in appearance, have seemed to become extinct. But now whether in such cases an actual destruction occurs, or whether the changes are due only to some causes making the phenomena periodic—about this astronomers are not agreed. Prof. G. W. Hough, director of the Dearborn Observatory, at Evanston, Ill., to whom we referred for the latest knowledge or settled opinion on the subject, informs us that no fully satisfactory theory with regard to the matter has yet been advanced; but that nothing is known or believed among astronomers subversive of the idea that the phenomena in question are really worlds
Now, from the peculiar appearances connected with the object Tycho Brahe supposed that in the first place it originated from an ethereal substance, of which he imagined the Milky Way to be composed, and that afterward it was dissipated by the light of the sun and of the other stars, or by some cause acting internally. But a more modern theory is that the phenomenon was a world in conflagration—an idea which would seem to be supported especially by the changes of color mentioned.

Whatever the interpretation, certain it is that such phenomena agree not only with what would seem to be the requirement of the nebular hypothesis—namely, that a burning gaseous form of existence is the original state from which all the worlds have derived their being, and also the state to which they all will return—but also with the Scripture doctrine, that “the heavens and earth which are now, are reserved unto fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:7-10). Hence even on a theme so peculiarly Christian as that of our Lord’s second advent, there is at least confirmatory evidence from good scientific sources.

*Scripture Declarations.* But, of course, all this testimony about the end of the world is at best only a far-off and an indirect deposition in favor of the
subject which we have in hand; the only positive and thoroughly convincing evidence is, after all, that which comes from the Scriptures. The Scripture testimony, however, is thoroughly convincing, and exists in greatest abundance.

To select from the mass only here and there a specimen, we have, for example, away back in the Old Testament times, the words of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, which words are preserved in the book of Jude (ver. 14, 15). Enoch says, "Behold, he cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds." So Moses also, living in the older period of the world's history, says, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of his saints" (Deut. 33:2). Job too, one of the Old Testament worthies, deposes in favor of the Lord's coming, as a matter connected with the resurrection of the body. Says he, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25, 26). Very plainly also does David—as, for instance in the Ninety-sixth Psalm (ver. 11-13)—testify and rejoice concerning the Lord's advent, saying, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, before the Lord; for he cometh, he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and
the people with his truth." So also in many other places of the Old Testament there are testimonies and prophecies, some of them very glowing and grand, respecting the Messiah's coming; only one of which we will mention. It is found in the book of Malachi, at the very end of the Old Testament revelation. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord"—words which refer undoubtedly to the last coming of Christ as judge of the world, as well as to his first coming as a Saviour.

But it is especially the New Testament affirmations that exist in abundance, as well as that they also are most conclusive. Says the Saviour himself, respecting this matter of his second advent, "I will come to you" (John 14:18); and "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself" (ibid., 2, 3). So, in reference to his coming in judgment, he says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). So also Paul and Peter, and other of the apostles, or writers in general who speak to us in the New Testament Scriptures—they assure us again and again, and in language unmistakably clear and positive, that the Lord, as certainly as he was taken up into heaven, so certainly will he come again. Peter is enthusiastic about the matter, saying, "We have not followed cunningly
devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16). Hebrews also emphasizes the matter, declaring, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (10:37).

The second coming of our Lord, therefore, is as well established by Scripture testimony—to say nothing of the argument which we drew from facts in nature bearing upon the end of the world as a concomitant event—as it is possible for a matter thus to be established.

*Personal Form of the Advent.* Christ will, then, most surely come; and that the form of his coming will be a *personal* one, and not simply a coming through intermediate agencies, in events, or by his word, or Spirit, is a matter as to which we have the clearest and most abundant proofs from the Bible. His first advent was a personal one; and the prophecies relating to it are no clearer, and no more of a personal nature, than those which relate to his second advent. Moreover, it is the same Jesus who ascended into heaven that will come again, and in like manner as he departed. "I go away," said the Saviour, "and come again unto you" (John 14:28). The acts and experiences attributed to Christ in connection with his second coming, such as the part he is to take in the scenes of the judgment, are all of too intensely a personal nature to admit of any dispensing with his real presence. Besides, the very fact that at his coming
our Lord is to appear, or come in such fashion as that he can be seen, implies not only his bodily presence at that advent, but also that he will come himself in the body. "Every eye shall see him," says John, "and they also which pierced him" (Rev. 1:7). Also in another place, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Christians are described as those who are "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). And "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"—so promises the author of the letter to the Hebrews (9:28). Paul also, if possible to make the matter still stronger, says not only that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4), but also that it is "the Lord himself" who "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16).

If it is possible, therefore, by the use of the most intense personal pronouns, and by the use of other such descriptions and words as can mean the Saviour and no one else, to signify that Christ will surely come in person, that is the very thing abundantly taught in the Scriptures.¹

¹For a discussion of the theories of Christ's coming in the destruction of Jerusalem, by his Spirit, and like views, see Appendix.
Jesus' Return Not a Coming at Death. Moreover we are to understand, by the Scripture representations, that our Lord's second advent is a different thing from his coming to individuals at death. In the last chapter of John's Gospel there is an account of nearly the last meeting that Jesus had with his disciples. It was after the resurrection, and the meeting took place on the shore of Lake Genesaret. At this solemn and interesting interview, some conversation took place between Jesus and his disciples relative to the death of John. Already Jesus had intimated to Peter that he (that is Peter) should die by crucifixion. Then Peter, turning about, and seeing John stand near-by, says: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" That is, what shall be the manner of John's death? The answer which Jesus gives to this question marks a very clear distinction between death as a human experience and his return to our world. Said he, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" These words imply not only that John might survive all the other disciples, and live until Jesus came, but also that, in the mind of Jesus, his return was not connected, or to be connected, with death as experienced by the other disciples, or by any person whatever. For it is not to John as dying, but as living, as tarrying until after the other disciples were dead, that this promise of experiencing Christ's return is obviously made by the words under consideration. The two things therefore, death as a human experience and
Christ's second advent to our world, cannot mean the same thing. Other testimonies in the same line could be easily adduced.

*Other Items as to the Manner.* Certain it is, then, not only that Christ will come and that his advent will be one of a personal nature, but also that, as we have just seen, there is a very great difference between his coming to individuals at death and his coming to the world the second time. These are all items, as we conceive them, belonging to the general manner of his appearance.

Other such items are, first, that the Lord will come in a *glorious fashion.* Not the second time will he appear as a little child lying in a manger; but he will come seated high upon a throne; he will make his appearance "with power and great glory"; "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God"—in that glorious fashion will he descend.

Moreover, he will not come alone, but attended by "all the holy angels" (Matt. 25:31), and by "ten thousand of his saints." "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thess. 4:14); and John saw, among the redeemed, "a great multitude, which no man could number."

Also he will make his appearance very suddenly. "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). And his appearance is compared to a thief stealing upon one
in the night; also to travail coming upon a woman with child. Moreover, it is likened to Noah’s flood destroying the world, and to the destruction of Sodom by fire coming down from heaven. “They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17: 28, 29).

Still one other item it may be well to notice as connected with the general manner of Jesus’ coming. It is that, as Zechariah says (14: 4), when he comes, “his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,” an expression which may signify that, as the Mount of Olives was the place from which he ascended into heaven, this may be also the place first visited by him on his return to our world. But how this is we will not attempt to say, not believing much in the materialistic or literal method of interpretation.

Special Objects of the Parousia. There are still the special objects or designs for which it is that the Lord will make his appearance; and these also, we believe, are so clearly indicated by the Scriptures that no doubt need be entertained in their regard. There are three such objects, as we understand them from the Scripture representation. One of them is the raising of the dead, or to accomplish what is called the general resurrection. “The hour is com-
ing," said the Saviour, "in the which all that are in
the graves shall hear his voice (that is, the voice of
the Son of God), and shall come forth; they that
have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and
they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of
damnation" (John 5:28, 29). Daniel also, in
nearly the same form of expression, says there will
be a resurrection both of the wise and the unwise
(12:2, 3). And that this general resurrection will
occur at the same time with the Lord's coming, is a
matter that is taught in various Scriptures; for ex-
ample, in the last part of the fourth chapter of First
Thessalonians, and also in the last part of the twen-
tieth chapter of Revelation. (See Rev. 20:11-15,
1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:22, 23. Also as con-
ected, indirectly through the Lord's coming, with
the final judgment, Matt. 24:30, 31; 25:31-46;
2 Thess. 1:7-10.)

Another object of the Lord's coming, is to judge
the world. "For we must all appear," says Paul,
"before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one
may receive the things done in his body, according
to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"
(2 Cor. 5:10). There is then to be a general judg-
ment, as well as a general resurrection.1 These two
things go together. And that the general judg-

1 Pre-millennialists teach that there are to be two resurrections,
one of the righteous and the other of the unrighteous; but the
post-millennial doctrine is that the first one of these resurrections,
that mentioned in Rev. 20:5, 6, is to be understood spiritually,
ment will take place in connection with the second advent, we have, as proof, any number of Scriptures. "Let both grow together"—says Jesus in his parable of the tares—"until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:30, 40-43). So also: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his

and so the only or literal resurrection is what they conceive to be a general one, as described in verses 12-15 of the same chapter. A more correct interpretation of these two Scripture passages, however—more correct because more literal—is, we believe, that the two resurrections mentioned or described are to be understood literally. But the first resurrection is evidently only one of a certain class of the saints—the martyrs and confessors—who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus" or "had not worshiped the beast," etc. This class of saints were not only to be raised from the dead, but were also to enjoy the privilege of reigning with Christ for a thousand years. To include among these the whole number of the saints, as the pre-millennialists do, is certainly doing violence to the plain teaching of Scripture. So also, on the other hand, to interpret the first one of these resurrections in a spiritual sense, as is done by the post-millennialists, is not only doing violence to Scripture, but is, more especially, to prefer a figurative interpretation to a literal one, which, when a literal interpretation is possible, is not good exegesis.

But what this literal resurrection of the martyrs and confessors, in connection with the thousand years' reign, really signifies, is not definitely or fully stated in Scripture; consequently that point must be left undetermined.
Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27). Paul says, “Who (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ) shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:1). Also, “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come” (1 Cor. 4:5). And John, near the close of his Revelation, gives us the words of Jesus, saying, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be” (22:12).

Two concomitant events, therefore, of our Lord’s second advent are, first, the resurrection of the dead; and second, the general judgment. These are purposes for the accomplishment of which it is that he will come. But now there is still another such purpose, or concomitant event, which we wish to consider. It is what in Scripture language is called “the restitution of all things.” That expression, as used by Peter (Acts 3:21) and as it or expressions similar to it in meaning are found in the Scriptures, does not, as we understand, signify merely a restoration to Israel of any position or privileges that may have been lost by that people as a nation. Neither does it mean altogether, or in its whole significance, a re-establishment of our entire race in Edenic privileges and condition, or in such a state of happiness and virtue as was that enjoyed and lost by Adam. But these words, in their widest and most particular reference, mean, we think, a re-instatement of the whole order of nature in its
pristine condition. In other words, the meaning is, that this whole earth of ours and all its surroundings, so far as these things have been affected by human sin, shall be cleansed from that sin, and from all its consequences; so that the result will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and where God will wipe all tears from human eyes.

This, it seems to us, is what Paul means by those great words of his in the eighth chapter of Romans: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For the creature," says he, "was made subject unto vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." That is, the whole order of nature was made subject unto sin and death, because of human transgression. But then, Paul tells us, "The creature itself also shall be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." In other terms, the law of necessity and death, which for so long a time has been ruling over all our natural world because of man's sin, shall be removed; and then nature will be changed and glorified, and made in its being like unto the glorified bodies which we shall have after the resurrection, or as is now the raised and glorified body of the Saviour. This, it seems to us, is what Paul means by the words which we have mentioned; and the idea is the same as that
expressed elsewhere in Scripture by the words "a new heaven" and "a new earth."

So also Peter speaks of the same thing, in his second letter. He says, "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. Nevertheless," says he, "we, according to his promise, wait for new heavens and a new earth" (3:10, 13). And John says that in his apocalyptic vision he "saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Or, as he has it in another verse of the same chapter, "The former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

This great renewing of things, moreover, will occur at the time of the Saviour's advent. Thus, e. g., Peter indicates, several times, in the chapter from which we have quoted (see ver. 4, 7, 10, 12).

Now we come to the most difficult and obscure part of our subject. It is the time when our Lord will appear. That will, from here on, form the special subject of our discussion.
Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Matt. 24: 36.

Learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Matt. 24: 32, 33.

The most difficult item connected with the whole subject of Christ's parousia is the one respecting the time at which that event will occur. There are so many different opinions obtaining with regard to this particular, and withal there is so much real obscurity covering the matter, that any attempt to come to definite and satisfactory conclusions here would seem to be almost hopeless, or even a kind of foolish temerity. But the topic is, after all, one well worthy of study; or, at all events, it is full of interest, and there is even a kind of fascination belonging to it that is peculiar.

Then too, as to whether the Lord's coming is to take place away off in the future, or whether he will appear at a date not distant from us—this if answered either in one way or the other, determines also matters of no little practical moment in our experience. For just as we regard the advent of
Christ—far in the future or nigh at hand—in that way also do we order conduct; not only our expectations and desires, but also our prayers and efforts. No man, for example, is going to do much for the salvation of the world, and especially of the heathen, who believes that to-morrow, or in a very short time, Christ will make his appearance. And, on the other hand, no man who expects that the coming of the Saviour will not take place until at a very distant date, is in condition either to appreciate the grandeur and importance of a nearer expectation, or to prepare himself and his immediate surroundings as he ought for the event. A mistake, therefore, on either the one side or the other, is fraught with real evils; and in this discussion of the time when our Lord will come, the practical bearing of matters must, with other considerations, be taken into account.

Two Leading Views. There are, then, as we have intimated, really only two main or leading views that are, or have been, taken with reference to the time of Christ’s advent. One of these views is that he will come at a very distant day, and the other is that the date of his appearance is near. Nigh at hand or away off in the future—these are the two poles between which the question ranges, and the answer is given sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other. To be sure, there are more than two views taken with respect to the particular time of the Saviour’s advent; but yet a division among them may be made in the manner we have suggested.
That is to say, there are what may be called long-range views, and others of a shorter range.

Let us look at each class somewhat more particularly. The long-range views, then, however they may differ in other respects, yet all agree in one particular, viz., that the coming of Christ is, as to time, distant from us. And on the other hand, the shorter range views agree generally in locating the time as near. On the one side it is said, before the Lord comes some other events must take place, such as the conversion of the Jews, the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles, and possibly also a return of the Jews to the Holy Land and their re-establishment as a nation. And among other matters that, it is affirmed, are sure to occur, is the intervention yet, before the second advent, of a long period called in theological language *the millennium*.

On the other hand, the shorter range views generally agree in saying: The coming of the Lord is nigh. Most or quite all of the prophecies have already been fulfilled. And as to the millennium, that is either located in the past or interpreted in some mystical or spiritual sense; or else, as is done by the pre-millennialists, it is put not before, but after Christ's coming. The one point on which all these views are agreed is that the second advent must be regarded as near, while different interpretations are taken of the millennium. And so it is with the two more general classes of views: one looks away into a distant future for the coming
of the Lord, and the other beholds that event as nigh. What divides them one from the other is mostly the millennium, although other matters come in here with some determining effect.

_The Millennial Controversy._ But the principal cause of difference between these two sets of views, as also the great occasion for difference of opinion as to the time of the Saviour's advent, is what is called the millennium. That period of a thousand years during which Christ shall reign on the earth, is the great bone of contention, or subject of controversy, between different parties. Take this matter, or the customary notions respecting it, out of the way, and there exists no longer any very great cause for dissension. But just so long as the millennium, differently interpreted and located as it is, exists as a fully defined doctrine among men, so long, of course, will differences of opinion exist, and so long too, will the whole matter of Christ's second advent—respecting which, if with regard to anything, there should be peace among Christians—be the occasion not of peace, but of strife. Is there any way, then, of overcoming this difficulty? We think there is. At all events, the millennium can be so interpreted as that, whatever there is in it according to the Scripture representation, it need not interfere with a practical determination of the time when our Lord will come. That is to say, it is practicable to leave the millennium, either wholly or in part, out of the question.
But before indicating any solution we may have of the difficulty or difficulties mentioned, it may be advantageous for us to observe a little more fully the nature of the millennium, and to notice how it operates in affecting the views held respecting the coming of Christ. As the word itself signifies, millennium means "a thousand years"; and the theological idea attached to it is that Christ with his saints shall reign on the earth during that period of time. So far all eschatologists are agreed. But now whether this reign shall, on the part of Christ, be one of a literal personal nature, or whether he will rule through influences, or in a spiritual sense—here it is where opinions differ; the old, or at least the most commonly received view being that this dominion is to be interpreted in a spiritual sense, and the other, or the pre-millennial notion, being that it is to be understood in a temporal or literal sense.

But, however these views may differ as to the nature of Christ's reign, it is rather the location of the millennium that creates the trouble in eschatological matters, particularly so far as they relate to the time of our Saviour's advent. Put the millennium or any long period of time during which Christ is to reign on the earth, put anything of this kind before his coming, and, of course, you have removed his second advent far away to an indefinite period; at all events, to a period a thousand years or more still distant from us. And on
the other hand, if you put this period of a thousand years after Christ's coming, then you find it to the interest of your theory, to locate the advent just as near as possible to the present time.

Objections to Pre-millennialism. To both of these views respecting the date of our Lord's coming we object; and in the first place, we object to the pre-millennial notion for the following reasons:

1. The doctrine of a literal, personal reign of Christ in our world, constituted as it now is, is nowhere taught in the Scriptures. The kingdom of the Messiah which was to be set up and become universal on the earth, and then to last forever, is explained by Scripture itself as being not a material, but a spiritual kingdom. "The kingdom of God," says Paul, "is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). So he also says: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). And the Saviour adds, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; it is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). It is therefore something that is not material or temporal, but spiritual in its nature.

2. This doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth for a thousand years is only an old Jewish notion revived. Even up, as it seems, to the very day of Christ's ascension, the disciples, who were Jews, appear to have carried with them this notion of a material kingdom, so deeply was it imbedded in their nature; and Jesus had, so to speak, to rebuke
them for it. "Lord," said they, "wilt thou at this
time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts
1:6). But Jesus, answering, showed them that it
was not for them to know the times or the seasons
which the Father had put in his own power, but by
directing their attention to the Holy Spirit, as a
power that was to be received by them, he thus
taught them the spiritual nature of his kingdom.

3. This notion of a material kingdom, and of
Christ's reigning in it, includes also the idea of sin
and sinners existing in the same territory with
the kingdom—a conception that is totally repugnant
to the whole spirit and teaching of the gospel. It
was enough for the holy Saviour that he endured
the contradiction of sinners once. When he comes
the second time, he will come "without sin unto sal-
vation" (Heb. 9:28). He will do no more aton-
ing for sin after that; but his coming will be for the
purpose of accomplishing in his saints complete re-
demption, and also for the purpose of punishing or
destroying the ungodly. (See 2 Thess. 1:7-10;
also Rom. 2:5-10.)

Moreover, as represented in the Scriptures (Matt.
25:31-46; Rev. 22:11), Christ's second coming
will be the end of all mediatorial work; but the pre-
millennial scheme continues the work of saving
men, all through the period of a thousand years.
Besides it introduces, or finds in its theory the neces-
sity of introducing, new means of grace, as though
the present forces of redemption were insufficient
for accomplishing the world’s salvation! These and still other notions, utterly foreign to the teaching and spirit of the gospel, are taught by pre-millennialism.

4. But if there were no other reason for rejecting that theory of Christ’s second coming which locates it as an event before the period of years called the millennium, whatever may be signified by that word, then the fact that this pre-millennial notion wholly misconceives of the purposes or designs of Christ’s *parousia* is, of itself, a sufficient and a decisive reason. According to pre-millennialism, our Lord will come, not, as we saw when especially noticing the objects of the advent—to raise the dead, judge the world, and accomplish “the restitution of all things”—but simply or primarily for the purpose of setting up a temporal kingdom. He will re-establish, so pre-millennialists say, the throne of David, and from Jerusalem as a center, he will rule even to the ends of the earth. But this idea, besides being Jewish and materialistic in nature, is thoroughly contradictory to the Scripture teaching as to what are the purposes of Christ’s coming. Those purposes, are very different from the setting up of a temporal or worldly kingdom.

For these reasons, and others that might easily be adduced, we reject, for the most part, this pre-millennial scheme; accepting only of its teaching, that the coming of our Lord must not be regarded as so very far away.
Then, on the other hand, as to post-millennialism, which locates the coming of the Saviour so distantly from us—this theory also, it seems to us, cannot be fully accepted; for the reason that it does not in all respects accord with Scripture teaching.

*Objection to Post-millennialism.* However, this post-millennial view does, in our judgment, accord mostly with Scripture; and therefore, as a system of doctrine, it is much preferable to pre-millennialism. It agrees with the Bible so far as the nature of Messiah's kingdom is concerned, and also as to the form and manner, and the special purposes, of our Lord's coming. But when it comes to locating the time of the advent, here is where we object to post-millennialism as being in error. It is, we think, in error here for the special reason that, contrary to the Scripture representation, it interjects a long and more or less definite period of time yet to elapse before the Saviour will come.

According to the teaching of the Bible, Christ may be expected at almost any time. His coming, no matter how long it may be delayed, should always be regarded as near.1 "What I say unto you, I

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1 Dr. James H. Brooks, in his "Maranatha" (p. 75), says the proper attitude of the believing soul is to look for the Lord's coming as "possible every hour, and not improbable any hour"—to the latter of which assertions we object, as also to his view that Christ will probably come during the present generation. There are a number of events which seem to be quite clearly foretold in Scripture, that must take place yet before the advent; and surely Christ will not make his appearance before all things which are prophesied to occur beforehand shall have been fulfilled. Hence we think the pre-millennialists are wrong in saying that Christ
say unto all," said the Saviour, "watch" (Mark 13:37). "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42). Moreover, we are told that Christ will come "quickly" (Rev. 22:20); and that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). Also, that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5); and that "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7). Hebrews says, "So much the more as ye see the day approaching" (10:25). These and many similar Scripture teachings are too clearly worded and too positive in their nature to be passed by, without one's gaining from them the idea that, according to inspiration, the coming of Christ should be regarded as a near event, and not as one remote in the future. Moreover, the Bible makes abundant practical use of the doctrine. Christians are told to look for, and hasten unto, the coming of the day of God (2 Peter 3:12). Also they are described as those that are "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7). "Now we beseech you," says Paul, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him" (2 Thess. 2:1); and in another place he promises a reward to "all them that love Christ's appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

There is, therefore, a practical interest connected with our Lord's parousia; and this, as well as a
regard for Scripture teaching, should be taken into the account in our attempts at determining the time of that event. But now, as we have already said, the post-millennial programme interjects between the coming of Christ and the present day a very long period of time, called the millennium; and it says that before the Saviour can come this millennium must all take place. In this way the advent is pushed far into the future, and post-millennialism puts itself on record as opposed to plain Scripture teaching, or at all events, to some of the practical instruction of the Bible. The Bible tells us that our Lord's coming should be watched for as a thing that is nigh; post-millennialism, with its thousand years or more of time necessarily interjected before the advent, practically destroys all, or nearly all, interest in the doctrine, and makes the coming of Christ a mater of little or no concern to our world. "My lord delayeth his coming," is what the "evil servant" said in the parable; and because he so thought, he "began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken," or, in other words, to be careless. With a thousand years or more of time put in yet before our Lord's return, it is just impossible for any one, Christian or impenitent man, to be very attentively interested in it. Hence we say, there must be something wrong somewhere in this post-millennial doctrine, opposed as it is directly to some of the plain teachings of Scripture.
The Millennium More Fully Considered. The whole difficulty is again connected with the millennium. This period of a thousand years put in before the Lord makes his appearance—it is this that creates the trouble. But is there no way of avoiding this interjection of a thousand years? Let us see. To be sure, we desire to be scriptural; and so, turning to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, we have there all that is known for certain respecting the millennium. This passage teaches that during a period of a thousand years Satan shall be bound with chains, and shut up in the bottomless pit, so that during this time he cannot go forth to deceive the nations; also, that during this same period the saints, or at least some of them—those who “were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands”—that these saints lived again and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But now whether this living again and reigning is to be regarded as taking place in heaven or on earth, or exactly what is to be the scene of the events named, the revelator does not tell us. Neither does he give us any indication as to what will be the character of that thousand years’ reign, save that during this period Satan shall be bound, and as a consequence, the nations shall not be deceived by him.

This is all that can be learned from the Bible, of
a definite and positive nature, touching the millennium regarded as a period. There are many other facts indicated in Scripture as belonging to the Saviour's reign—some of them referring to his dominion on earth, and others to his rule in heaven, or in the future world. But now whether these facts or how many of them, can or should be assigned to the millennial period of Christ's reign—this is a question regarding which there can be, and have been, very different opinions held. The fault, we conceive, of the post-millennial view, is that it takes all, or nearly all these facts—and especially the glowing descriptions of Messiah's kingdom found in the Old Testament—and not only puts them together in a period by themselves, but says that this period is the same as the thousand years mentioned in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. In other words, it takes all the scattered scriptural notices respecting the glories and other extraordinary features of Messiah's kingdom, and then applies them, without discrimination, and without any authority from Scripture, to a period mentioned in only one or two verses of the Bible, and these verses confessedly very obscure and highly figurative in their language! But it does not follow that, because a period of time is mentioned in one part of the Bible, therefore all the events, or any events mentioned elsewhere in the same book, are to be assigned to this period. On the contrary, the extreme likelihood is that at least a large number of these events
belong to some other period, or will take place outside of that particular one. So we say regarding the millennium, it does not follow that because there are extraordinary events and very great glories mentioned here and there in the Scriptures as belonging to Messiah’s kingdom, that therefore they all belong to the millennial period of that kingdom. On the contrary, there are at least some of these events and glories which are best understood as belonging to a period which comes after, and not before, Christ’s second advent—that is to say, to the eternal kingdom of the Messiah. So it is with the everlasting continuance of Messiah’s empire, and also with the universal reign of peace, and the

1 Scholars have noticed some four differences between the millennium as described in Rev. 20 and the general picture of the Messianic era as given especially by the Old Testament prophets. First, that era was to last forever; whereas the millennium is described as enduring only for a thousand years. Second, the Messianic age was to be characterized by universal holiness, righteousness, and peace; but the binding of Satan, as mentioned in Rev. 20, may signify only a partial restraint put upon the power of evil in our world; and some have thought that this restraint is put only upon Satan’s persecuting power, because after the millennium he is represented as stirring up the nations, by his deceptions, to persecuting the church. Third, according to the prophetic descriptions of Messiah’s reign, he was to subdue all nations under him. He should reign from the river to the ends of the earth, and the nation or people that would not serve him should perish; but during the millennial period wicked nations, or peoples, as the progenitors of those who were stirred up to rebellion and persecution, seem to have existed, perhaps everywhere in the world, alongside of the saints. Lastly, an important difference is that after the thousand years’ reign of the martyr saints with Christ, a great rebellion and persecution breaks out against the church, which is a thing utterly unknown to the prophets, as connected with Messiah’s empire.
all-pervasive righteousness, to be accomplished in the world by it. Moreover, some of the Messianic events are surely being accomplished now in the world, and others will continue right on in the regular way to be accomplished, so that although we may look for largely increased victory given to the church, and very great glory to be experienced by Christianity in its latter-day rule, yet the writer does not find that any period of a thousand years' glorious reign of the Saviour on earth, to come in yet before his second advent, is anywhere taught definitely in the Scriptures, or at all events, so taught as that some other interpretation of the matter cannot to be legitimately taken.¹

Solution of the Difficulties. For the reason above given, as well as for perhaps the stronger one that the practical representation of the Scriptures de-

¹ Doctor Wordsworth, with Augustine and others in ancient times, holds that the millennium began with Christ's first advent. Grotius advocated the notion of its commencing with Constantine's accession to power in the Roman empire. So also, in more recent times, Bush, Lord Napier, Forbes, Prof. C. A. Briggs, Dr. I. P. Warren and others. Over Constantine's palace-gate there was a picture of the emperor holding above his head the labarum, or banner of the cross; and underneath his feet Satan was represented as a serpent, pierced with arrows and falling into the abyss; this being intended to convey the idea that Constantine's elevation to power and the consequent ceasing of heathen persecution, was the overthrow of the great Adversary, which notion afterward was understood as denoting also a beginning of the millennium.

The Reformers, in general, did not believe in any millennium; considering the church to be the proper kingdom of God on earth, and the whole matter of the thousand years to be one of those "opiniones Judaicae" which have often appeared in Christian history.
mands that Christ's second advent be regarded as nigh, and not as an occurrence away off in the future, we propose to omit, from our computation of the time when the Lord will come, at least so much of the millennium as necessitates yet the intervention of a thousand years, or of any similarly long period of time, before the scriptural prerequisites to the advent shall have taken place. In our view, then, the millennium is not a scriptural prerequisite to the Lord's coming; or at all events, it is not a prerequisite so clearly taught that, where it comes into conflict with the practical representation of Scripture, that the second advent should always be regarded by the church as near, it ought not to give way before this more clearly, and in the Bible far more generally taught practical doctrine.¹ Leaving, therefore, the millennium, or at least such part of it as requires yet before Christ comes the inter-

¹ In all Jesus' utterances he says not a word about his reigning for a thousand years, either literally or spiritually, in our world. But he teaches positively that when his gospel shall have been "preached unto all nations for a witness," then "the end"—that is, a complete end of all earthly history—will come. So also, in none of the apostolic letters, nor indeed anywhere in the Bible, except in Rev. 20, is there any mention made of a millennium. That idea of a thousand years' reign by the Messiah seems to have originated in some of the Jewish apocalypses composed before the time of Christ; which idea John adopted in his Revelation. But he sheared it of its peculiarly Jewish and sensuous features, made it more spiritual in character, and limited its enjoyment especially to certain classes of the saints—those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, etc.

Semisch, in the Schaff-Herzog encyclopedia, pronounces the millennium, as depicted in Rev. 20, "a hieroglyph whose meaning has not yet been satisfactorily solved."
vention of any long period of time—leaving all that out of the computation, we are able, the writer thinks, from other data furnished by Scripture, to make some estimate, more or less definite, of the time when the Lord may be expected.

Time Estimates. That is to say, we can approximate the time, not in absolute figures, but in figures which may be regarded as correct within certain limits. It is in this matter a good deal as it was with the estimate made by a celebrated humorist with regard to the teachings of phrenology. When asked, at one time, whether he believed in phrenology, he replied: "Yes, I believe in it to some extent. I believe in it so far as the great continents of the head are concerned. And I am willing also to accept its teachings with regard to the cranial political divisions, perhaps even respecting the states and counties. But," said he, "when you come, with such teachings, down to the townships and school districts, then I shall have to be excused."

Somehow so it is with the matter under consideration. It is not very difficult to estimate in a general way about how far off or how near at hand the Lord's coming may be yet; but when any exact determination of the time is attempted, then comes even an impossible task. To make another comparison, this determination of the time of the Saviour's coming is much like those computations which astronomers make with regard to the distance of the fixed stars from our earth, or the return of
some of the comets in their orbits—matters which cannot be determined exactly, but only in a general or approximative way.

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," said the Saviour, "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). So he also said: "Learn a parable of the fig tree, when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things"—matters of which he had previously spoken—then "know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:32, 33). He was speaking of his own second coming, together with the destruction of Jerusalem; and the signs he gives respecting both those events, are the encompassing of a city with armies and the unfolding of the leaves on a tree. By such events or signs it could be told how near, or far off, were the great events in human history that were prophesied. So, more particularly regarding the event of our Lord's second coming, we understand it to be the Saviour's teaching that here something positive can be known with regard to even the time or date. We can at all events tell, from the signs given us in the Bible, whether that greatest of all events yet awaiting the history of our world is near at hand or away off in the future.
TIME OF THE LORD'S COMING—THE SUBJECT CONTINUED

When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? Matt. 24:3.

THE Millennium Again. It was remarked in our last chapter that, as the writer views the millennium, it is not a scriptural prerequisite to our Lord's second advent. By this observation it was intended to say two things: first, that nowhere in the Bible is it taught definitely, and with such clearness as not to leave room for difference of opinion, that before Christ comes the second time he must reign (spiritually, of course) upon our earth for a thousand years; and secondly, that the word millennium as used in this connection means particularly a long period of such exceeding religious prosperity, or of such triumph and glory to the gospel as that it cannot properly be conceived of as having yet commenced. This double view of the matter is the one taken by Drs. Charles Hodge, Albert Barnes, Daniel Whitby, Rev. David Brown, and other like eminent authorities on Christian eschatology. Moreover, it is the common post-millennial notion.

But that this idea of the millennium must be
incorrect, or that in some respect post-millennialism needs to be considerably modified, is evident from the fact already insisted on in this treatise, that according to the biblical representation Christ's second advent should be regarded as nigh, and not as distant from any Christian age. This practical representation of the Bible, we say, makes it imperative that no period of one thousand years shall, in one's conception of the time of the Lord's parousia, come in between that date and the time in which the person lives. Moreover, in order to preserve to our idea of the future glories of Christianity, everything that in the Scriptures is really prophesied as such, it is not necessary to regard all these glories as belonging to a millennial period, to come in either before or after Christ's advent, nor to regard these glories as all of so extraordinary a character that, at least some of the number may not be conceived of as having already begun, or even as being now matters of the past. For these two reasons, therefore, we propose, if it is necessary to accept any millennium, to so modify the old post-millennial notion that at least a part of the period, and perhaps a good part, may be considered as having already elapsed. We can therefore regard ourselves still as believers in the millennium, even though we do not assent to all that post-millennialism teaches.

Furthermore, we wish to say yet, before closing this part of our examination, that inasmuch as the millenary reign of Christ with his saints (or rather
of the saints with Christ—that is the way the words stand in Rev. 20:4) is a matter spoken of only in a single passage of Scripture—and that, as most scholars confess, a highly figurative and very obscure passage—it may not be well to build up, overconfidently, either post or pre millenary theories upon it. Surely, one would think, if a great doctrine, affecting many other Christian teachings and interests, is to be grounded only on one Scripture text, that text ought to be at least unmistakably clear, to say nothing of its being in harmony with others. But such is not the case with this passage in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. It is both an obscure text, and one, so far as the period of time mentioned in it is concerned, not supported by any other text of Scripture. We shall, then, for the various reasons indicated, dismiss this passage, or what is virtually the same thing, the doctrine of the millennium, very largely from our consideration; believing, that in attempts generally at determining the time of the Lord’s coming, this doctrine has figured too extensively, or widely out of proportion to its slight mention in the Bible.

Looking, then, at the time of the Saviour’s advent rather in the light of other data, than of the millennium, we see in these data no sufficient reason for locating that time so very far in the future. On the contrary, in these data we think we see some very good reasons for regarding the time rather as somewhat nigh. But before giving our final determina-
tions, let us examine, at least briefly, the *special facts*, or the events and figures which are furnished in the Bible as bearing upon a solution of the problem before us.

*Time-determining Facts.* The first of these time-determining data that we will notice is one of rather a general nature. It is what may be called *the progress of fulfilled prophecy*. As was the case with the prophecies appertaining to the first advent of our Saviour, so it is with these also which relate to his coming the second time, there is, and has been connected with them a gradual fulfilment. Without here attempting to catalogue, or to mention in any great number, these prophecies, it may be said that such predictions, for example, as the destruction of Jerusalem; the triumph and success of the gospel in heathen lands, as well as among the Jews; the downfall of the Roman empire; the rise of the papacy; the irruption into Europe and other Christian countries of the Saracens, and later of the Turks, these and other like announcements made in the Bible of events which would come to pass before the end of the world, these have already occurred. And so we have, in the history of fulfilled prophecy, not only a pledge of the fulfilment of other predictions recorded in Scripture, but also an exhibition of the gradual manner in which Bible prophecy has already come to pass.

Just where in the general programme of events predicted to occur before our Lord's coming human
history is now, it would be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to determine. Some students in eschatology think they can locate our particular time. It is, they tell us, the period described in Revelation (11:14) by the word "quickly," in the interim between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh trumpet. Six of the trumpets, they say, have already sounded, and six of the seals have been opened, and six of the vials poured out; and so there only remains the seventh one of these three symbolic acts to take place, and then, of course, comes the end.¹ But whether this is so or not, or whatever one of the prophecies is at present being fulfilled, certain it is that in the fulfilment of prophecy there is progress, and certain also that we are now so much nearer the time when the Saviour will come, as there have been from the beginning prophecies wrought into history.

In the material heavens there is evidence that our whole solar system is moving in a northerly direction. The evidence is the constant increase of the spaces between the stars in that portion of the heavens, or particularly in the constellation Hercules, a fact that for a considerable time has been

¹ This general reckoning is in accordance with what is known as the synchronous-historical theory of interpreting the book of Revelation. We prefer the continuous-historical theory as being more natural. Or rather we prefer both the preterist theory and the continuous-historical; the one furnishing the historical setting of the book and in part a key to its interpretation, and the other furnishing a sufficiently extensive and varied series of facts to cover the different prophetic symbols.
well known in astronomical circles. Now from this circumstance it is argued, not that there is an absolute separating of the stars, but, as with the masts of a number of vessels lying in a harbor to a person coming in from the sea, so those stars appear, the nearer we get to them, to separate more and more, one from another. This fact is sufficient to prove that our entire solar system is moving in the direction indicated; and not only that, but moving also in a mighty orbit around some central point in the depth of the universe. But where we are at present in this great revolution, or just how near to the stars mentioned, it would be difficult, yes, impossible, to determine; we only know, from the evidences at hand, that for the present we are moving toward the constellation Hercules. So also, from the evidence given us in the spiritual heavens, we know that we are moving toward that object of great desire in the church, the "glorious appearing" of our Lord. We know moreover, from the same evidence, that we are nearer now, ever so much nearer, that event, than we were when the first one of the prophecies respecting his coming began to be fulfilled.

PROPHETIC NUMBERS

Line of Jewish Tradition

6000 years, less 4004 B.C., give A.D. 1996

Times of the Gentiles

2520 years, less 721 B.C., give A.D. 1799

" " " 588 " " " 1932
The 2300 Days of Daniel

2300 years, less 457 B. C., give A. D. 1843
" " " 425 " " 1875

Time of the Papal Supremacy

1260 years, added to A. D. 533, make A. D. 1793
" " " " 606, " " 1866
" " " " 752, " " 2012
" " " " 1073, " " 2333

The above table is intended to represent the principal lines of numbers that different persons have discovered—or at least they have so thought—in the Bible, as having a bearing upon the time when Christ's epiphany will occur. There are four such lines, as we have given them; and of the whole table we wish to say, that our responsibility extends only to the limit of its being a correct representation of the ideas of others. Whatever value is to be attached to the results of the calculations made, or even to the correctness of the data assumed upon which such calculations are based, we will not attempt to determine; but we simply give the whole table, with its data and results, for what it is worth.

As said, there are four lines of these prophetic numbers. The first one is, or may be, called the

Line of Jewish Tradition. Not much importance is to be attached to it, because it rests mostly upon mere Jewish speculation, though it has some basis also in analogy. The whole period of time here assumed is six thousand years. That is to say, according to this line there are six thousand years in the
entire history of the world, and this period of time is arrived at by analogical reasoning. There were—so the argument goes—six days of creation, and then after these days came a seventh day, which was the Lord’s Sabbath; and therefore, since a thousand years are in the sight of the Lord as one day (Ps. 90:4), the six days of creation may stand for six thousand years in the secular history of the world, and then after these will come the eternal Sabbath, or the end of the world. The same result is reached by a different method of calculating. It is that, as the rabbis said, there were two thousand years before the law, and two thousand years of Israelitish history under the law, so there would be also two thousand years’ reign by the Messiah, and then would come the end. Some interpreters have thought that the words in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews—“there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (that is, a Sabbath rest, as the original word means, when properly translated; and it is so rendered in the new version)—that these words contain a reference to the Jewish notion of an eternal Sabbath following a period of secular history; and therefore that the idea we are considering derives from these words some scriptural support. But be this as it may; the six thousand years, which we will take then as the entire period for the history of our world, this, less the four thousand and four years which, according to the received chronology passed before
the coming of Christ, fixes the year A. D. 1996, for the ending of all things earthly, or in more Christian expression, for the advent of Christ.

Of all the prophetic lines in our table, this we think to be the least worthy of credit; resting, as it does, principally upon Jewish tradition or speculation.

*Times of the Gentiles.* Another of these lines, and one that we think is at least somewhat more important, is one that has for its period of time two thousand five hundred and twenty years. This line is indicated in the Scriptures by the words, "Times of the Gentiles." It is the period during which God has punished, and will continue to punish the Jews because of their sins. In the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and the eighteenth verse, it says: "If ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins." That is to say, God will punish the Israelites for their sins seven times not merely in the sense of succession, nor of making the chastisement perfect, but rather in the sense that the punishment would last for a long period, or during a certain number of years. The word *time*, as used in Bible prophecy stands, we are told, for a year. At all events, it often does so, and consequently the words *seven times*, as used in the passage of Leviticus, mean really seven years. Not only that, but according to the well-known theory of having a day stand for a year, these seven years
would mean seven years of days, or seven years of years, which would be three hundred and sixty (the number of days in a Jewish year) multiplied by seven, or two thousand five hundred and twenty years. This is the period of time during which the Jews should suffer by having the Gentiles triumph over them. And now, if we date their punishment from the first captivity, or the time when the ten tribes were carried away by Shalmaneser, which was the year 721 B.C., we have, by subtracting this last date from the two thousand five hundred and twenty years, the year A.D. 1799, as the time when this punishment coming from the Gentiles should end. Consequently, if that reckoning is correct, the punishment has already passed. But now if, instead of 721, we take the year 588 B.C., when the tribe of Judah was despoiled and carried away to Babylon—if we take this latter date as the one to be subtracted from the two thousand five hundred and twenty years, then we get the year A.D. 1932 as the time for the cessation of the penalty threatened. Then too, the second coming of the Saviour, which, according to the theory we are considering, is an event intimately connected with the ending of this Gentile domination, will occur at about the same date, or the year 1932.

The Two Thousand Three Hundred Days of Daniel. The third line, as given in our table, represents a period of two thousand three hundred years. This is a period that is derived from words found in
Daniel. In the eighth chapter of his prophecies, the thirteenth verse, one saint is represented as speaking to another saint, and asking the question: "How long shall be the vision of the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Then in the next verse the answer is given: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." But these two thousand three hundred days mean not simply that period of time literally considered; but, according to the theory of regarding a day as standing for a year, which we noticed under our last heading, they mean two thousand three hundred years. This two thousand three hundred years is, therefore, the period of time at the expiration of which the Jewish sanctuary should be cleansed, and this cleansing undoubtedly signifies a delivering of the Jewish religion, and perhaps also of Jerusalem, and even of the temple area, from the defilements which have been brought upon these holy places and worship in consequence of long Gentile, and especially Mohammedan, occupancy and dominion. At all events, at the end of the two thousand three hundred days, or years, there is to take place in connection with the Jewish sanctuary, whatever this word may mean, a cleansing experience that will be important; and when that has occurred, or in connection with the cleansing itself, it is expected that the Lord will appear.
But now, in order to know just when the two thousand three hundred years will terminate, it is necessary also to know from what point in time we can date their beginning. To find out that, we have to look into the next chapter of Daniel. There, in the twenty-fourth verse, it is said that seventy weeks are determined upon the Jewish people, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, etc.; and it is believed that this vision is only a part of the longer one of two thousand three hundred days. If that is so, then in the next verse there is furnished a date from which both visions may start. It is there stated that “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks”; and now, if we take the year 457 B. C. as the date when the last commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was issued, then, by subtracting this period from the two thousand three hundred years, we get, as the time when the sanctuary would be cleansed, the year of our Lord 1843. This was the date, as will be remembered, that was fixed upon by Mr. Miller and those who believed like him, for the end of the world; and the course of reasoning they followed was much the same as that above given. But some there are who tell us that Mr. Miller failed in his theory, because he made the seventy weeks of Daniel end with the crucifixion; he should have continued them until the destruction of Jerusalem.
So taking another date, the year 425 B.C.—the process of arriving at which we need not here indicate—as the starting-point for our period of two thousand three hundred years, we find this period exhausted in the year 1875; and this also has been one of the dates around which expectations of the Lord's immediate or speedy coming have circulated, and upon which, moreover, they have been wrecked. Other dates of a similar character, based upon Daniel's two thousand three hundred days, have been selected by different parties; such, for example, as the years 1868 and 1880.

Time of the Papal Supremacy. But there is still one other line of these prophetic numbers, perhaps the most important one in the table.

It is a line that defines the time of the papal dominion. Here the period of years taken is one thousand two hundred and sixty. They represent the whole time during which the papacy as a ruling power is to continue in our world. In some of the last chapters of Revelation (13:5; 12:6, 14; 11:2, 3), as also in the book of Daniel (7:25; 12:7), this period is represented under a variety of terms, such as "a time, and times, and half a time," "forty and two months," "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," and not only during this period will the papacy continue in power, but God's two witnesses will prophesy clothed in sackcloth, and other important events will occur. But at the end of these one thousand two hundred and
sixty years Christ will come. So at least it would seem from the prophecy of his destroying Anti-Christ—which is the same thing, many think, as the papacy—by the brightness of his coming. Consequently, if we take, as the starting-point of the papacy, the year 533, when Justinian by public decree constituted the Roman bishop head over all the churches, we get, by adding to this date the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the papal continuance, the year 1793 as the time when that power will end. Some think that then the papacy did virtually terminate as a worldly power. But if we take the year 606, when Phocas granted about the same privileges as before had been granted by Justinian to the Roman bishop—if we take this date as the point from which we shall start the papacy in history, then, by adding the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, we have, as the date of the papal downfall, the year 1866. Or if we choose, we may select the year 752 as the date of the rise of the Roman supremacy, this being the year during which Pepin conferred upon the pope his first temporal estate; then we get the year 2012 as the ending period. Of if we select yet the year 1073, when the greatest of all the popes, Hildebrand (or Gregory VII.), came into power; selecting this as the historical starting-point of the papacy, we get, as the date when that institution will, according to prophecy, become extinct, the year 2333.

Value of These Prophecies. Now, looking over
these prophetic numbers, arranged as we have seen them into lines, we are tempted to ask the question: *What is their value?* To be sure, with the whole number of eschatologists, or with many of the more sober-minded among them, this value would not be esteemed great. And yet there are, and perhaps have been in all the ages of Christian eschatological inquiry, persons standing high in point of biblical knowledge, as also of good common sense, who have put considerable confidence in just such numbers—giving them, of course, their own interpretation, which sometimes has been like ours in the table, and sometimes very different. As for ourselves, we have already said that, in this connection, *our responsibility ceases with a correct representation of the opinions of others.*

There are, however, two or three points connected with the results of this table to which we wish to call special attention. One of them is, that all the dates in the last line (that is, the line as running up and down) are very nearly equal; showing that from, or with, whatever prophetic number we start, the result is about the same. So also another item of at least some little interest, is that the average date in each of the four sets is about equal to that in each of the others; and the average date of them all, being about the year 1900, is a time that has only recently passed.

One other thing to which we wish to call attention is that it is especially such dates as the year
1843, the year 1875, 1793 and 1799, that have been in these later times the particular rallying points for the parties or movements which have obtained in the interest of Christ’s speedy coming. Moreover, it is these dates, or others like them perhaps, though not so definite and fixed, which generally furnish particular inspiration to the great eschatological controversies. They are therefore of interest to us, if for no other reason, than because they have more or less profoundly, and to a greater or less extent, interested others.
V.

TIME OF THE LORD'S COMING—THE SUBJECT CONTINUED

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. Luke 21:25, 26.

FROM what has been already said, it is doubtless understood by the reader that we place little confidence in any time-calculations based upon what are called the prophetic numbers of the Bible. Yet unquestionably there are such numbers; and whatever value belongs to them certainly ought to be allowed, whether the computations which we have given are right, or whether some others would be more nearly correct. In any case, allowing all that we can for the worth of these calculations, there are still other data far more determinative, or at all events, far more important, bearing upon the time of our Lord's appearing.

These other data are certain events prophesied in the Scriptures to take place before Christ comes. But prior to examining these, let us give a hasty glance at some other matters which are in their character somewhat like the prophetic numbers,
perhaps, though an advance upon them in the way of time-determining or chronological value.

*Symbolical Beasts.* What we allude to are the "Symbolical Beasts" and other objects, animate or inanimate, which are mentioned in the Old Testament or the New, or in both, as having a connection with the Lord’s epiphany, or rather as matters which must go before that event.

There are mentioned especially in the Old Testament the "four beasts" and the "little horn" of Daniel’s prophecy; also "the ram" and "the he goat" with four horns, out of one of which there came another "little horn"—this also in Daniel. And, besides, there is also Daniel’s great metallic image, representing the four successive world monarchies; and then the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image, destroying it, and becoming itself a great mountain, thus filled the whole earth—this representing the kingdom which the God of heaven would set up. All these peculiar objects undoubtedly have some connection with the Lord’s advent, signifying as they do, under an enigmatical form, events and institutions which must exist in the general history of the world. Moreover, these symbolical objects have, each one of them, their own special teaching with reference to the subject under consideration, that is, the coming of Christ. So, for instance, it is with the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and filling the whole earth; this represents
very strikingly not only the littleness of Christianity at the beginning, but also the greatness of its influence before its work in our world is done, that is, before the Saviour comes. And so also the little horn that came up among the ten others on the head of the fourth beast, and had in it "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things"—this may be conceived of as representing the papacy, or Antichrist; and inasmuch as according to the symbolical teaching this horn was destroyed and consumed away after "a time, times, and the dividing of time," we have here perhaps even a matter of chronology, by which something may be determined as to the date we are seeking.

So too, it is with each and all of those many symbols which are found in John's Revelation; they have connected with them each its own peculiar teaching respecting the advent of our Lord. "The great red dragon" (chap. 12), for example, is, as many scholars understand, a symbol of persecuting paganism, or of the Roman government as a destroyer of the church; the time for the existence of which power, however, was limited, since "there was war in heaven"—Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon and his angels; the result of which engagement was that the dragon with his angels, or the Roman dominion, was cast out, that is, out of the political heaven, and after that the persecution was continued in a different form. From this symbol, therefore, we learn not only of the
existence and cruel persecuting character of the Roman empire, but also something as to the time and manner of its end. When it did come to extinction, its power would be merged into another dominion very much like itself in persecuting spirit and act. This would be, as is understood, the papacy, which is further represented for us in the two symbols which are next given in this same book of Revelation (chap. 13), namely, the beast which rose up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and crowns upon the horns; although this would seem to be a combination of the papacy and the different governments into which the Roman empire was divided. And then after this beast there was another, perhaps more distinctively representing the papacy, that is, the two-horned beast, one of the horns standing for the papacy's temporal power, and the other for its power of a spiritual nature. These two dominions it is—that is, the papacy in its distinctive form, and the papacy as connected with the ten kingdoms into which the Roman government was divided—that, as many think, are symbolized for us by the two animal forms which we have just noticed. Moreover, we are told that the time during which one of these beasts was to have power, if not both of them, was "forty and two months," giving us thus a time-indication which may have some bearing upon the date of our Lord's return. Besides these, there is still the "scarlet woman" riding a beast having seven heads and ten horns;
this symbol, perhaps, again showing the union of the papacy as a seductive power with the kingdoms of the world. And the end of all is that they are finally destroyed; this event taking place, it would seem, only directly before the coming of Christ, or "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:2-9). Thus again we have a time-indication that is, perhaps, of advantage to us in our problem of the date when the second advent will occur.

The Seals, Trumpets, and Vials. Perhaps, though, of all these apocalyptic symbols the most significant are the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials. Whatever interpretation may be given to these three chains of prophecy, they certainly seem to span the entire distance between the time of the Apostle John and the second coming of Christ. Moreover, in our view these chains are best understood as representing a continuous history of the church in conflict with the great world-powers around it—this history, indeed, sometimes seeming to have great interruptions, and even to recede in its course, but still ever moving forward, like a mighty river, and bearing all opposition before it, until finally it ends in complete triumph with the advent of Christ. Or if we would divide this history into periods, then it might be said that the first period—the one represented by the seals—began with the days of the Revelator John and continued until the downfall of pagan Rome, or the conversion of Constantine the Great. And the second period—the
one represented by the trumpets—beginning with the Christian dark ages, continued on until the opening of the Protestant Reformation. And, according to the same method of interpretation, the last period in church history—the one represented by the vials, or bowls—is the period now going forward, or the one which began with the Protestant Reformation and will be continued until the actual parousia of our Lord.

This, in brief, would seem to be perhaps the best interpretation that can be given of that long line of prophetic symbols, in their application to the actual history of our world; and what is to us of especial interest, in connection with the problem of the time when Christ will come, is the fact that the whole series of symbols ends, as we have said, with the second advent. Indeed, there seem to be no less than three or four, or perhaps even five, different endings of the world prophesied in the Apocalypse of St. John (see 6:12-17; 11:15-18; 14:14-19; 16:17-21; 20:11-15); but these terminations can, we think, be most properly understood as indicating not, all of them, the final coming of Christ, but only his coming in such events as would virtually do away with a previous stage of history, and cause a new one to be ushered in. However, these decided breaks in the historic course of our world must be regarded as prophetic of that greatest of all interruptions which will come to pass in connection with the Lord’s descent from heaven, when as is
prophesied, a wholly new order of things will be established.

From these prophetic symbols, therefore—the seals, trumpets, and vials—we get what seem to be important data for determining the time of our Lord’s *parousia*, especially since all those chains of prophecy end with the final coming of Christ. Moreover, since each of the chains is divided into seven different parts, each of these parts must, of course, represent a special period in human history; and therefore if we can tell just the symbol, or subsection of the general prophecy, under which we are now living, then we shall be able also to tell something about the date of our Lord’s coming. Suppose, *e. g.*, we say, with the pre-millennialists, that we are now living under one of the last symbols in the last chain of apocalyptic prophecy, then, of course, the second advent must be regarded as very near. But suppose, with a class of interpreters called the Futurists, we understand that much the larger portion of John’s prophecy refers to matters which are still to take place, then the section of this symbolism under which we are living must be regarded as proportionally farther from the end. For the determination therefore, from these data, of any precise time for our Lord’s return, is a matter respecting the practicability, as well as the results of which there is, and always has been much difference of opinion. If from these data the time of the advent is to be determined, it will be only with a
greater or less degree of uncertainty. Hence, after all, it must be admitted that it is only a kind of conjecture we get from these three chains of symbols; and so also with respect to all the other symbolical objects which have come under our consideration.

*Matters More Specially Determinative.* But if from all the matters thus far noticed we obtain no very reliable and satisfactory conclusion as to the time we are seeking, there are still other data, which will yield more definite, and consequently better results. These data are such events as are clearly prophesied in the Bible to take place yet before, or in connection with, our Lord’s coming. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Jesus gives us what perhaps may be called a complete list of all such matters. We are there told that before the end of the world and Christ’s appearing there will be (partly also taking place in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem) wars and rumors of wars; nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. Also the sun shall be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken; false Christs will appear, and the love of many will, because of persecution and of abounding iniquity, wax cold, and there will be great tribulation. Moreover, what is perhaps the best, because it is the most determinative, of all these signs, is that the “gospel
of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

There are, to be sure, other phenomena or events, predicted in various Scriptures, which must take place prior to the coming of Christ; such, e. g., as the conversion of the Jews, and perhaps their return to Palestine; the revelation of the "man of sin," or "Antichrist"; an increase of knowledge, and a running to and fro of many (Dan. 12:4—possibly referring to increased traveling facilities); more righteousness and a wider-spread reign of peace on our earth than at present exists. But all these things are virtually embraced in the list given in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. So, taking that list as at least the most widely inclusive statement of the events which we are considering, and classifying these events, whether found in Matthew's twenty-fourth chapter or elsewhere in Scripture—taking these data somewhat in the order of their importance as determinative of the time of the advent, we have:

1. Wars and rumors of wars; political disturbances, changes and commotions among the nations.

2. Increase of knowledge, and of traveling facilities, if this last is what is meant by Daniel's expression, "many shall run to and fro." Also a general advance in all matters appertaining to culture and industrial interests.

3. Startling natural phenomena, such as a darkening of the sun and moon; a falling of the stars,
and a shaking of the powers of heaven; earthquakes, and as Luke adds, "the sea and the waves roaring." Moreover, here might be located those occurrences of a distressful nature, which more particularly affect human life—the famines and pestilences, and other matters of the kind, for fear of which, in their coming upon the earth, men's hearts shall fail them (Luke 21:26).

4. The gathering-in of the fulness of the Gentiles, or a universal proclamation of the gospel, with its attendant effects. Righteousness and peace existing to a greater extent than now in the world.

5. Conversion of the Jews as a nation. Possibly also their return to the Holy Land.

6. The first great apostasy, believed by many Protestant scholars to be the Roman Catholic departure from the true faith, or, as an institution, the papacy. Sometimes also known as Antichrist.

7. Possibly also a second apostasy, and connected with it, great tribulation. (See Rev. 20:7-10; Matt. 24:29; taught also, as some think, in Rev. 17:8-17; 19:19, 20.)

Now, looking hastily over the above numbers, any one can see that the first three of them, being matters only of common occurrence, do not signify anything very definite or precise, in the way of determining time. For wars and rumors of wars, and matters of that kind, have occurred in all the ages past, and, doubtless, will continue to occur; so that, being so very common, no particular one of
those events can be taken as a date from which to estimate chronology. Still, admitting such to be the case, these matters do, after all, have no little interest as connected with the problem before us. For they serve, whenever occurring, as reminders and assurances that the great event which they precede will come to pass in time; and also as to the exact date itself they may be considered as furnishing corroborative testimony, even if their evidence is not definite enough to be a principal or independent deposition in the case. Moreover, these events, although they are common, or only of ordinary occurrence, may yet be, in their magnitude or quality, so extraordinary, and of such uncommon nature, as to serve, after all, as real way-marks on the road toward the coming of Christ. So, for instance, the great wars that took place in connection with the downfall of the Roman empire, the clashing of nation against nation, and the collision of kingdoms which then occurred—these matters being so prominent and conspicuous in their nature, they form, by themselves, a kind of special event, and so from them may be reckoned time toward the Saviour's coming. So also, the great universal war, which seems to be so widely expected among certain classes of eschatologists, as a matter that will take place somewhere in the East, and perhaps in connection with the Mohammedan religion—called the war with Gog and Magog, sometimes also Armageddon (Rev. 20: 8, 9; 16: 14-16)—this too, if it really
does occur and the prophecy respecting it is not to be interpreted in a spiritual sense, will surely be a date having very close reference to the end of worldly history and to our Lord’s coming. For, immediately in connection with that conflict, and, indeed, taking part in it, the Lord himself, according to the prediction (this, though, may be interpreted spiritually), seems to be present; and directly afterward he appears in judgment upon the great white throne (Rev. 20:11).
VI

TIME OF THE LORD'S COMING—THE SUBJECT CONCLUDED

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matt. 24:14.

Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. Rom. 11:25, 26.

Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. 2 Thess 2:8.

INGATHERING of the Gentiles. But the really and unmistakably determining events are those which remain to be considered, viz., the last four in our list. The first one of these is what we have, a number of times elsewhere, called the gathering-in of the fulness of the Gentiles. It has been also termed—with reference to the words of Jesus, in Matt. 24:14, that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”—the universal proclamation of the gospel. Of all the time-determining events this, it seems to the writer is, from our standpoint, the most serviceable as bearing upon the date of the advent. For it is not only an event that is clearly prophesied to take place
before the coming of Christ, but it is also one that
is now going forward, and will continue so to do
until it is all complete. Therefore, standing as we
do in the midst of this progressive event, or in its
presence, we are able, with some definiteness, to
forecast the time when it will be finished; and so, of
course, since the “end” comes directly afterwards,
when our Lord may be expected.

The important question, therefore, now is, how
long before this prophecy of a universal proclama-
tion of the gospel, or if we choose to take the other
idea of the gathering-in of the fulness of the Gen-
tiles, how long before either or both of these pre-
dictions will be fully accomplished? Regarding
that matter, any number of different opinions may
obtain, and the question will be decided somewhat
by the view taken of the work to be done in the way
of converting the world. If, with the pre-millen-
nialists in general, we say that there is not neces-
sary any particular increase in the number of people
converted, or that the gospel has already been
preached in all the world, as the Saviour said, *for a
witness to the nations*, and this is about all that is
required to be done; then, of course, accepting this
view, the work may be looked upon as already ac-
complished. But if on the other hand, we, with
the post-millennialists, affirm that the in-gathering
of the nations, or, as is the Scripture expression,
the *coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles* (Rom.
11:25), is the experience to be had by the world,
and, in effect, the same as that intended by the Saviour's words about a universal proclamation of the gospel for a witness, then, to be sure, here is a work that has not yet, it would seem, been accomplished, or even nearly accomplished. Far from it. According to the usual post-millenary conception, the part of the world now converted is very small when compared with that part which still remains to be converted; or, in other words, the great bulk of humanity is yet to be brought in faith and obedience to Christ, whereas that portion of it which now occupies such relation to him is comparatively small. According to this view, then, a large share of the work still remains to be done; and all that has thus far been achieved is, in reality, only a beginning of the great work still before the church.

The question again arises, what, according to the Bible, is the truth in this regard? A considerable share of the world would seem to be converted. The question is, must the great mass of humanity, as post-millennialists affirm, be converted before the work preparatory to the coming of Christ will be all achieved? As said, post-millennialists affirm this; pre-millennialists deny it. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between the two positions taken; that is to say, between the view that it is not necessary for the nations, or at all events, for the great mass of the heathen world, to be converted, but only for the gospel to be preached to these people
for a witness, and the view held by post-millenarians in general, that the great body of the people in all nations must be brought to Christ before his second advent can be expected. Suppose we say, the gospel must indeed be preached to all nations for a witness, but also there are legitimate results to be expected from this preaching—the same results, in truth, as those which Paul had in view in his expression about the fulness of the Gentiles coming in. But, on the other hand, suppose we say that the "fulness of the Gentiles" does not mean every individual belonging to all the heathen nations, nor to the nations now Christian, nor even the great mass of these peoples, but only that portion of them which God intends shall be brought in, or the elect? Then in each of these two ways of stating matters we get about the same idea. Carried out more fully, this view would be that the conversion of the world means about the same thing as bringing the heathen into a similar moral and spiritual state to that now existing on the inside of Christendom—a conversion which is, to a great extent, merely nominal. When all the heathen nations shall be converted to a recognition of Christianity as the dominant religion among them, and when the proportion of converted people in these nations is as large as that now existing among the so-called Christian peoples, then perhaps, without doing violence to the Scripture prophecies and representations, it may be expected
that Christ will come; because then all the evangelizing work required to be done before his advent would seem to be accomplished.

To be sure, even with this limited view of the work, there is still much evangelizing necessary. But if the gospel continues to have as great triumphs in the future as it has in the past, especially if during, say, the next one hundred years, missionary operations continue to multiply as rapidly, both in the extent of territory occupied and in the appliances used, as has been the case for the last fifty years, who shall say that the time just specified is not sufficient, perhaps more than sufficient, for accomplishing all the evangelizing work necessary? Years ago Doctor Hodge, of Princeton, said: "The wonderful success of missions in our day goes to prove that the conversion of the Gentile world is a work assigned to the church under the present gospel dispensation. Barriers deemed insurmountable have been removed; facilities of access and intercourse have been increased a hundredfold; hundreds of missionary stations have been established in every part of the world; many thousands of converts have been gathered into churches, and hundreds of thousands of children are under Christian instruction; the foundations of ancient systems of idolatry have been undermined; nations, lately heathen, have become Christian, and are taking part in sending the gospel to those still sitting in darkness; and nothing seems wanting to secure
the gathering in of the Gentiles but a revival of the missionary spirit of the apostolic age in the churches of the nineteenth century” (“Systematic Theol.,” Vol. III., pp. 804, 805). Since then, as is known, very extraordinary advancement has been made in all lines of mission work.

In the same line, but more recently, Dr. Justin A. Smith, in his “Commentary on Revelation” (p. 280), observes: “It has been said that in twenty-five years more, if the present rate of progress continues, India will become as thoroughly Christian as Great Britain is to-day; there will be thirty millions of Christians in China, and Japan will be as fully Christianized as America is now. The old heathen systems, they tell us, are honeycombed through and through by Christian influence. It looks as though the day may soon come when these systems, struck by vigorous blows, will fall in tremendous collapse. Meantime every weapon formed against Christianity breaks in the hand that holds it. Already the Lord’s right hand hath gotten him the victory.”

The prospect, therefore, would seem to be peculiarly encouraging. But, of course, all our reasoning in this case goes on the presumption that the tares are to continue with the wheat, or in other words, that the world is not all to be converted before Christ comes. This, we hold (though not in the sense of the pre-millennialists), is the correct view. For proof we refer not only to the
parable of the tares and wheat above alluded to, and to the general teaching of that parable, but also to the clearly asserted fact in Paul’s description of Antichrist, or “the man of sin,” that this power is to continue until the very coming of Christ; for it is to be destroyed by “the brightness of his coming.” Also, the Saviour’s expression, “When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” would seem to imply that in his view the world would be far from being all Christian at the time of his coming; a fact which is also very clearly taught in another of the parables,—that of the drag-net, where the good and bad fish are both not only caught, but kept in the net until the general assorting; then each class is dealt with by itself. “So shall it be,” says the Saviour, “at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just.” The fact, therefore, would seem to be definitely established, that the world, instead of being all converted at the time of Christ’s coming, will have in it a great many impenitent and unbelieving people. Many tares there will be; and many bad fish, as well as good ones. If this is so, then the glowing descriptions of abounding righteousness given respecting Messiah’s kingdom in the Old Testament must be tempered by opposite descriptions found elsewhere and particularly in the New Testament—by Paul’s description, for example, of Antichrist, and of the continuance of this
wicked power in the world, notwithstanding the existence and all the widespread effects and triumphs of the gospel. Certainly, the cause of Christ is to attain supreme control in the world; Satan, also, during the thousand years mentioned in Revelation, is to be shut up in the bottomless pit, and bound with chains, so that during that time, the nations will not be deceived by him. Still, the fact of Antichrist's existing during the same period, would seem to indicate that the binding of Satan must admit, to a certain extent, also of his going free; and so it is with the other one-sided descriptions found in the Bible of the triumphs and influence of Christianity in our world. These glorious features must be so toned down by other and darker matters, which are revealed with equal clearness in the Bible, that the picture we get will be correct—correct, we may say, because harmonious, and because inclusive of all the colorings and shadings.¹ For want of observing so simple and yet

¹ Two views are presented in the Bible regarding the state of things to exist directly before the end of the world, or the coming of Christ. One of these views is that the period will be one of triumph and glory to the church, a period of the universal spread of the gospel, of Christ's putting all enemies under his feet, and of his reigning from the river unto the ends of the earth; also a period of abounding righteousness and peace, and even of material prosperity. Then, on the other hand, the Scriptures give us quite a contrary picture; namely, one of apostasy from the truth, of carnal security in the church, of more or less extensive ungodliness, of persecution and great tribulation—such tribulation, says the Saviour, "as was not since the beginning of the world" (comp. Matt. 24:21 with ibid. 29; also see Dan. 12:1; Rev. 16:18; 20:7-9). Now, of course, these two views cannot be regarded as
so rational a principle, not a few eschatologists have made blundering work; and so, moreover, the two schools of interpreters—pre-millennialists and post-millennialists—have come into dissension with each other.

Conversion of the Jews. Also the conversion of the Jews is a matter that is clearly revealed in the Scriptures to take place yet before the coming of Christ; and therefore it is an event determinative, in this relation, of time. This doctrine of the Jews becoming converted is a very old one in the church. So far back even as the times of the apostles, the question, what would be the position of the Jews as a nation to Christ, was a very interesting one, and one often discussed one way and another by the apostles. Many of that people did accept Jesus as the true Messiah, but many of them also did not accept, and would not accept him in that relation. To this very day the great body of the children of Abraham stubbornly refuse to acknowledge our Saviour as their Saviour—or as their prophet, priest, and king. The inquiry, therefore, is still a pertinent one: Will this people, so unanimously having rejected Jesus, come back yet in repentance and faith, with equal numbers or proportionate numbers, to him?

There are many Scriptures, both in the Old Testament and the New, which speak positively

mutually contradictory; but they are rather complementary one to the other, and a complete picture is a combination of both.
on this point; but to notice only one fragment of the argument, we may say that Paul's words in the eleventh chapter of Romans establish the matter in question beyond a peradventure. We are there told, under the general figure of an olive tree in relation to its branches, that the Jews are the natural branches broken off from the original tree, and that the Gentiles are branches taken from the wild olive, and grafted into the parent stock; and that after a time the natural branches will be restored. For "blindness in part," says Paul, "is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so"—that is, after the Gentile fulness has been reached by the gospel—"all Israel shall be saved." No question, therefore, about the Jews being converted; and here, moreover, we have a precise indication as to the time when that event will occur. It is after the fulness of the Gentiles—that is, the required number of heathen—have been reached and saved by the gospel. Then, says Paul, all Israel shall be saved. But the difficulty here is that, after all, we make no advance in our argument. For again, all depends upon the time when the Gentiles will be converted; that being the date indicated, from which will begin the conversion of the Jews.

Still some advantage is gained by the discussion we are having; for even if there is no independent or special Scripture indication given us as to the time when the Jews will be converted—save the
conversion of the Gentiles—yet, any facts, whether occurring now or in the past, that have a historical bearing upon the conversion of the Jews in any numbers, would seem to have a bearing also upon their final conversion, or their coming as a nation to Christ. These facts, moreover, which indicate, or might indicate, a national conversion of the Jews as at any time occurring, would, with equal certainty and definiteness, indicate the time of the coming-in of the fulness of the Gentiles. For this time of the Gentile fulness being reached, is the same as that of the conversion of the Israelitish nation to Christ.

Are there any evidences, then, in facts occurring, or that have occurred, in connection with the Jewish people, which indicate, or would seem with any degree of clearness to indicate, a conversion of the Jews from their abandonment and rejection of Christ to a practical acceptance of him? Only two such facts we will endeavor to point out. One of them is a widespread rationalistic movement that is known to be obtaining at present, and for some time past to have been working, in Jewish theology and in the Jewish religion generally. This movement of late has made itself apparent by public conferences held, and by very liberalistic declarations adopted by these conferences, which look toward an abandonment of many of the essential features of ancient Judaism; such, for example, as the expectation of a Messiah yet to come, an exclusive
observance of Saturday as a day of rest and worship, and many distinctions between things lawful and unlawful in matters of a sanitary and dietary nature. In other words, the Judaism of to-day, being, as it seems, largely under the control of this rationalistic movement, threatens to do away with most or nearly all the distinctive features of that religion as it has existed in the past, and to be preparing for a general shipwreck; it being in essence already only a kind of Deism or Unitarianism. Thus the way seems to be opening for this people, by an abandonment of its own faith, to come to a better one, which will be, of course, Christianity—this being the only religion that can satisfy either the mind, the heart, or the conscience, when once these powers have emptied themselves of a false content, and thus have come to appreciate their needs. There is, therefore, still some hope of the conversion of the Jews, even, as it would seem, from the standpoint of facts occurring at present on the inside of their faith; although this argument, drawn from the workings of rationalism, we do not, of course, esteem a very strong one.

The other fact which we wish to mention is the frequent agitation that takes place, both on the inside of Judaism and in various Christian circles, as to a return of the Jews to the holy land. To be sure, these agitations generally amount to very little; they are simply temporary disturbances of human thought and feeling. But the interest taken
for some reason, so long and often so widely, both by Jews and Gentiles, in the matter we have mentioned, would seem to indicate that there must be something in it—something perhaps bearing upon the actual return of that people yet to the land of their fathers, and so, of course, bearing upon the subject of their conversion. The conversion of the Jews, however, can take place, for aught there seems to be in the Scriptures against it, just as well outside of Palestine as in it; and the mere fact of this people being in the holy land, or of their returning to it, would, one would suppose, have but little practical effect in the way of bringing them in repentance and faith to Christ. Still, as there is nothing decisive in the Scriptures favoring the return under consideration, so there would seem to be also nothing forbidding it. The matter is one regarding which an argument can easily be built up either for or against, according as the Scriptures selected and considered, are either on the one side or the other.

But when it comes to all that the pre-millennialists affirm regarding a restoration of the old Jewish economy, the reestablishment of that people as a theocratic nation in Palestine; the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple; and a re-institution of the long since abandoned sacrifices and other ceremonial observances belonging to the Jews, then, in the name of a correct or reasonable interpretation of Scripture, we protest against all such notions. "Type and shadow," says an able writer, "have
passed away, never to return. To introduce them again, would be to light a candle at noonday for the purpose of finding by means of it the sun.” That would be a “return to the weak and beggarly elements of the earlier worship.” If there is anything clearly taught in the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament, it is that God is no respecter of persons, and that the old economy was but a transitory one, to give place on the coming in of the new.¹ (See Heb. 8:7-13; 9:1-14; Gal. 4:9, 10; 6:15; Col. 2:16-23; Acts 10:34, 35; 11:17.)

Antichrist, or the Great Apostasy. In our list of the events which have a more determinative bearing upon the date of Christ’s return we have put down two apostasies; one of them being so clearly revealed or mentioned in the Bible as to be certain, and the other only so mentioned that its occurrence is possible. These two apostasies may perhaps be considered as one, or as a single apostasy appearing under different forms, although the one begins its career much earlier than the other. They both, however, have the same ending in human history, which is at the second coming of Christ. Mention is made of them not only in the New Testament, but also in the Old, as for instance, particularly of the first, in Daniel, seventh chapter (ver. 7, 8, 23-26); also in Jesus’ great eschatological discourse recorded in all the synoptics; in Paul’s second

¹ See Topic G, in Appendix.
letter to the Thessalonians (2:2-10); in the first Epistle of John (2:18, 22; 4:3); and in Revelation (see especially chap. 13, 17, 18 and 19). Also if the second apostasy is to be regarded as an event distinct and separate from the first, particular mention is made of this in the last part of Revelation twenty (ver. 7-10; see also Dan. 11:21-45; Matt. 24:29).  

According to these Scriptures each one of the apostasies under consideration is a great persecuting power, partly secular and partly ecclesiastical in nature, opposing and exalting itself defiantly against God, making war upon the church, and attempting especially to usurp the place and influence of Christ in the world—hence called Antichrist; its actuating spirit being hatred of the gospel, or opposition to everything that is truly Christian.

So, at all events, it is with that evil power, "the man of sin" and "the son of perdition," described so fully by Paul, in Second Thessalonians. There the power or principle of evil, or whatever it is that is referred to, is set before us, first of all, as a great departure from the faith. Secondly, it is represented as a person, "the man of sin" and "son

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1 Some scholars distinguish between the beast coming up out of the bottomless pit, as mentioned in Rev. 17, and the first and second beasts which are described in the thirteenth chapter. The latter, they say, represent the papacy, but the former stands for some historical personage yet to appear. Many modern interpreters, of the preterist school, hold Nero to be the real Antichrist of Revelation.
of perdition,” opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; “so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Next, this same power is represented as a “mystery of iniquity” already working; and finally, as “that Wicked,” whose “coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” Moreover, we are told that this opposing agency shall be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord’s coming, and shall be consumed with the breath of his mouth. Now this whole description answers so exactly to the leading characteristics of the papal power, as that institution has been known in history, that most or at least many Protestant scholars have been in the habit of identifying the apostasy or Antichrist of Paul with the papal religion and polity. If the pope is not Antichrist, it is observed, what power or principle is there, or has there ever been in the world, that deserves so well Paul’s description, or that answers so fully, not only in the general features, but even in its details, this portraiture which Paul depicts for us? The truth is that even papists themselves have discerned in this description of the man of sin and the son of perdition as given by Paul, so striking a likeness to their own system that some of them in the Middle Ages admitted the resemblance to exist; and later Catholic theologians have exerted themselves not
a little in attempts at turning away the odium which comes upon their ecclesiasticism because of the fact that so generally in the minds of men this religious, or rather religio-political system has been identified with the Antichrist of Scripture prophecy. Some there are, and modern Romish theologians among the number, who look upon the Antichrist of the Bible not as an institution or corporate power, but as a single individual, one whose doing and existence in the world is yet to appear; and thus it is that the advocates of the papacy's not being Antichrist, would establish that point—by saying that this antagonistic power is one yet to come. Also some try to make a distinction between mystical Babylon as described in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation, and Antichrist, which they say is the beast mentioned in the last part of the seventeenth and nineteenth chapters.

But be this distinction, and many other things that are said about Antichrist, correct or otherwise, certain it is that there are very good reasons for regarding the Church of Rome, especially in its religio-political aspects, as the apostate power described by Paul in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians; and certain also that this power is, as to its extinction, immediately connected with the advent of Christ. For we read of "that Wicked" who was to be revealed, that the Lord "shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming";
also, that “that day (which is the day of Christ’s advent) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed.” The manifestation, therefore, of Christ, from heaven, will be directly connected with the destruction of Antichrist, or, if we have interpreted this matter rightly, of the papal power.

The only question therefore now remaining which must be answered before we can with reasonable certainty and even with some definiteness, announce the time of the Lord’s coming, is the date of the destruction of the papacy, or how much time must yet elapse before Romanism comes to an end. Unfortunately here for our problem, no one can give us a definite and satisfactory reply. Some who have examined the matter, tell us that the power of Rome was first broken by the Reformation in the sixteenth century; that moreover it received a deadly wound, at least as to its rule over the Latin nations, and so, in a measure over the world, in 1793-1798, when the French cast off the pope’s authority, and the pope himself was made a prisoner and carried into captivity by Napoleon’s soldiers; also, that in 1870, when Victor Emmanuel took possession of Rome and deprived the papacy of its temporal dominion, then also it received a very serious wound, and ever since has been in a dying condition. All this, of course, would argue that the coming of the Saviour is near; or at least, that the papacy is consuming away—an experience which, according to
Daniel (7:26), is the method in which the power we are considering seems likely to expire. At any rate, the commencement of its decline may be in that way, and its complete extinction be brought about more suddenly, by the coming of the Lord, as declared in the prophecy.

So, also, if we are to accept a second apostasy as yet to occur—a doctrine which would seem to be warranted by the words in Rev. 20:7-10—then too, as may be seen from the scripture immediately following, this event and the second coming of the Lord have an immediate connection. So in either of the cases, the termination of the apostasy gives us a mark for determining something about the time of our Lord’s coming. Only in the case of a second apostasy occurring, inasmuch as such an event has not yet commenced in history, of course, we cannot prophesy from appearances anything about its end. To us, therefore, no serviceable time-indication comes from this source.¹

¹For a fuller discussion of who or what Antichrist is, see Appendix, Topic E.
NOW, looking back over our entire discussion and the points we have established, we name the following as such points, or general conclusions:

1. A literal, personal, visible and glorious coming of our Lord is clearly prophesied in the Scriptures. This event is, therefore, to be expected with positive and unwavering faith.

2. The objects, or concomitant events, of Christ’s appearance are (1) a general resurrection of the dead; (2) the judgment of the world, or of every man, good and bad, according to his works; and (3) the “restitution” or consummation of all things, which includes the final conflagration, the bringing into existence of a new heaven and a new earth, and the perfecting by Christ of his mediatorial kingdom.

3. As to the time of the advent, we have learned, from a considerably extended examination of what is called the millennium, that this matter of the thousand years, as mentioned in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, is not to be regarded as a necessary event to occur before the Lord’s epiphany; or in other words, that the millennium is not one of the scriptural data upon which a calculation of the time of the Saviour’s coming is to be based.
4. On the other hand we learned respecting the millennium, that it is not necessary to abandon belief in it altogether, in order to hold the view of its being not a prerequisite to the Lord's coming. For that, it is only necessary to give such an interpretation of the thousand years as that at least a part of the period can be considered as having already elapsed. It is, therefore, the post-millennial notion of the millennium, or of a very long period of such exceeding triumph and glory to the gospel as that it cannot properly be considered as having yet commenced, that is to be given up, not necessarily the millennium itself.

5. The position, then, taken in these pages, regarding the millennium, is: first, that it is a mystery, or a matter that seems to be too indefinitely revealed to form a definite article of faith, especially when opposed as it is by other and plainer Scripture teachings; secondly, that whatever of the "thousand years" it is necessary to retain, in order to give some interpretation to the passage in Rev. 20:1-6, the period must be so interpreted as that at least a large part of it can be considered as belonging to the past; and thirdly, that some of the glories, especially those mentioned in the Old Testament, which are usually included in the millennium, would best be referred to the eternal estate of Messiah's kingdom, or to his glorious rule in heaven, rather than to any condition of things on this side of the advent. Furthermore touching the
millennial reign it may be said that, inasmuch as other data than it are the ones customarily taken in Scripture for estimating or visioning the time of the Lord's coming (see Matt., chap. 24, and 2 Thess. 2:1-10), we may best follow this customary example, and so leave the "thousand years," at least very largely out of the account.

6. Doing thus, or attempting to estimate the date of our Lord's appearance from other time-indications than the chiliad mentioned in Revelation, twentieth chapter, we get from these data, that is, from the evident progression in the fulfilment of prophecy; from certain prophetic numbers; from certain beasts and other object symbols given to us in the Bible; also, and especially from various events which are clearly prophesied to take place before the advent—from all these sources we obtain, we think, sufficient information regarding the point we are considering to say that, as matters look, the coming of our Lord cannot now be so exceedingly distant from us, but rather is somewhat nigh. At all events, this is the better way to regard it.

7. Just how near though, that event may be, there are no means furnished us for deciding. Luther thought, away back in his day, that in about three hundred years from then the Lord would come. Perhaps that period, or a shorter one, would be a good limit for us still to put before the mind. However that may be, sure it is that the advent is
nigher now than it has been in any day past, and nearly nineteen centuries nearer than when Jesus ascended from Mount Olivet to heaven.

As to the practical improvement of our subject, we need only to observe that the second coming of Christ to the wicked ought to be a source of alarm and an instigation to immediate repentance; to believers, on the other hand, it is an event for which they should be constantly and fervently looking with all holy conversation and godliness, trying to prepare both themselves and others for it. "What I say unto you, I say unto all"—said the Saviour—"Watch." "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Watch, ye saints, with eyelids waking,
Lo! the powers of heaven are shaking,
Keep your lamps all trimmed and burning,
Ready for your Lord's returning.

Nations wane, though proud and stately,
Christ his kingdom hasteneth greatly,
Earth her latest pangs is summing,
Shout, ye saints, your Lord is coming!

Watch, for the time is short;
Watch, while 'tis called to-day;
Watch, lest temptations overcome;
Watch, Christian, watch and pray!
Watch, for the flesh is weak;
Watch, for the foe is strong;
Watch, lest the Bridegroom knock in vain;
Watch, though he tarry long.
APPENDIX
TREATING OF VARIOUS KINDRED TOPICS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the foregoing pages has been presented what is believed to be the regular scriptural, or common orthodox view of our Lord’s *parousia*. It is that his return will be literal, personal, visible, and glorious in form; and that it will be accompanied by various most extraordinary events, such as a dissolution of nature, a resurrection of the dead, a general judgment, and the ushering in of Christ’s everlasting kingdom. Now in connection with this general doctrine, there have appeared various questions and topics, which, because of their being intimately associated with the general subject, may be termed side issues or kindred matters; and it is the especial purpose of this appendix to treat of these.

As the case now stands, it is, at least with certain classes of scholars, not so much a question whether, according to the teachings of Scripture, pre-millennialism or post-millennialism is correct, but it is rather whether there is to be expected any real return of our Lord from heaven. In other words, it is whether, with the evidences now obtainable and that may be used, the old orthodox view of our
Lord's second coming can be any longer retained, or whether it should be abandoned, in favor of some other, preterist, non-personal, or figurative view, that really does away with the whole orthodox doctrine. Is there then, or is there not, yet to be such an event in human history as orthodox Christians have always believed would be the final and real coming of Christ? or is this great hope and expectation of God's people to be abandoned as a dream or an error; while some other view, now stigmatized, perhaps, as heretical, shall take the place of it?

This is one of the considerations prompting to the discussion of these side matters, in an appendix; and another reason is, that a proper understanding of these kindred topics will help to a proper or a better understanding of the general subject itself. What these kindred topics are, will appear to the reader as he goes forward; and we need only to say of them additionally, that they might have formed a second or more constituent part of the treatise; but owing to their miscellaneous character we have preferred to put them in an appendix.

TOPIC A

"NEW-THEOLOGY" AND RATIONALISTIC VIEWS OF THE ADVENT

Among the various non-personal or merely figurative views that have been taken of Christ's
parousia there are especially two, or rather two classes of views which, because of their wide-reaching and destructive import, and also because of their having been put forward with no little show of learning and confidence, deserve to be examined with some care. The question regarding them is, whether they are in accordance with Scripture, and are therefore true—or are they to be rejected as unscriptural and false?

One of these peculiar views, or classes of views, is a conception of Christ’s return which has been called the spiritual view, but under the words “spiritual view,” as used here, there are embraced really two different doctrines.

I. The Older Spiritual or Unitarian View. One of these doctrines is that by the second coming of Christ we are to understand only a kind of dispensation of the truth. Jesus promised his disciples, we are told, that “if he went away, he would come again unto them”; but he only meant that he would come in a fuller propagation and influence of his gospel in the world than had been accomplished during his life. In other words, he identified himself with the truths which he had proclaimed, and he believed that after his death these truths would become “the criteria of Divine judgment, according to which all the righteous would be distinguished as his subjects, and all the iniquitous should be separated from his kingdom. Then it would be seen that he was the Messiah, and through the
eternal principles of truth which he had taught he would sit upon a throne—not literally, in person, as some of his hearers supposed, blessing the Jews and cursing the Gentiles, but spiritually in the truth, dispensing joy to good men and woe to bad men, according to their deserts.”

This is essentially the theory as advocated by Mr. W. R. Alger, in his “Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life”; and we may say of it, that it is a notion which has often been taken by Unitarians and others of so-called liberalistic belief. But that this view is wholly contrary to the general teachings of Scripture with regard to our Lord’s second coming, does not perhaps need any proof.

We will only quote against it some of the positive, clear, and decisive utterances of Christ. For example, in those words already referred to, about Jesus’ promising his disciples that if he went away, he would come again unto them, it should be noticed that it is the same I who was to go away that would return; so that if Christ died in person, and in person ascended to heaven, it was also in person that he would return to his disciples. So also in Jesus’ promise, given to his disciples (John 14:2, 3), that he was going away to prepare a place for them in the heavenly “mansions,” and that if he prepared such a place he would come again and receive them unto himself, that where he was, there they should be also; from these words
it certainly is evident that our Lord’s entire conception of his future return was that of a great objective, external fact, and not merely of some internal subjective experience, in the hearts and lives of his disciples. Not to give any further proofs, therefore, this doctrine of the older Unitarians and other “liberalists” is, surely, to be rejected as wholly opposed to Scripture and consequently untrue.

II. The Later and More Common Spiritual View. But another form of this same spiritual conception is one that, in recent years, has been taken by some “new theology” men, and also by some of the “higher critics.” Its original promoter, or at least the man who first, in English, put the theory into elaborate shape, was Dr. I. P. Warren, a New England divine. In one of his books, entitled “The Parousia” and published more than a quarter of a century ago, he put forward a theory of our Lord’s advent which in some respects resembles, and in others differs from, the notion we have just considered. According to Doctor Warren the coming of our Saviour must be understood, surely, as a spiritual coming, but spiritual in a different sense from that taken by the older or Unitarian doctrine. What this more recent theory would have us to understand by the word spiritual is that Christ promised to return to his disciples, not merely in a dispensation of the truth, but rather in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, by
which means his gospel should be made operative in the world. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, being with the disciples, would act toward them as a Comforter and Helper. This gift of the Holy Spirit, which was promised to the disciples, began to be bestowed on the day of Pentecost, but it has since been given more fully not only to those earlier followers of Christ, but to all true disciples in every Christian age. Consequently this gift is to be understood as a continuous or abiding one; and because of that gift, Christ himself may be conceived of as always abiding with his disciples.

As an additional feature of the theory, it might be mentioned that Doctor Warren connects the fall of Jerusalem, as a providential coming of Christ, with his more spiritual coming at Pentecost; and in that way he enlarges, and, as he thinks, perfects his doctrine.¹

But as was shown in our examination of the old Unitarian view, so we can also here very easily demonstrate the opposition of this newer theory to the general teachings of Scripture. For instance, in those words of our Lord in which he tells his disciples that if he went away, he would send the

¹This view, in both of its peculiar features, is held also by Dr. William Newton Clarke, who says of it, in his “Outline of Christian Theology” (p. 442), “The destruction of Jerusalem may be called his (Christ’s) advent on the negative side.” But Christ “came positively in the Holy Spirit of power.” Also various other American teachers of theology seem to have adopted this view, e. g., Drs. William Adams Brown, C. A. Beckwith, and J. W. Buckham, author of “Christ and the Eternal Order.”
Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who would lead them into all truth, etc.—by these words, surely, Christ makes a clear distinction between his own place of abode and the scene of the Spirit’s activity. The Spirit was, according to the representation given, to do his work on earth, in the experiences of the disciples; but Christ’s abode, according to other words of his, was to be in his Father’s house, or in heaven. This being the relation of Christ to the Holy Spirit, of course it must be seen that the two great personalities are very clearly distinguished one from the other. The Spirit abides with the disciples here in our world, but Christ, who sends the Spirit, has his home up in heaven. Besides, it could easily be shown, from many other passages, that our Lord’s advent is to be looked upon as external, objective, and not merely as an internal presence with his disciples.

Then too, it could be demonstrated that the 
parousia, when properly understood, is not an often repeated act or a process, as is taught by the theory under consideration; but it is one single event, which will take place at the end of time, and in connection with various other events, such as have been already indicated.¹ Moreover, it might still be added, that our Lord’s second coming, as represented in Scripture, is not to be a quiet, unobserved internal reception of the Spirit, or even such a reception as was granted on

¹ Review of the process theory at close of this Topic.
the day of Pentecost, but an open, widely observed, and even a universally beheld event; when he shall descend from heaven, as the description is, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God; or as the lightning which, appearing in the east, shines even unto the utmost part of heaven. “All eyes shall see him,” it is said, and even “they which pierced him shall look upon him.” Then moreover shall “all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Surely, this description, given in the Bible, of our Lord’s second coming has never yet been realized in human history, and is not likely to be realized before the end of time.

We might say yet, before concluding this part of our discussion, that in one sense we believe, with the holders of this spiritual theory, that Christ has already, by his Spirit, come into human life, and will do so more fully even unto the end of time; but while the Scriptures clearly seem to teach this doctrine, they also teach, just as clearly and far more abundantly, that the real, full, or final coming of our Lord will not take place until the end of the world.

III. The Past-Historical or Preterist View. But the most destructive of all these partial, or rather, unscriptural views of the second coming of Christ, is one yet to be noticed. It is a theory that was elaborated quite a number of years ago, in an English publication, styled again “The Parousia,” and
of which the author was Mr. J. Stuart Russell. In that book the position is taken—and the same view, at least in part, has been advocated by others, as, e. g., Dr. Milton S. Terry in his "Biblical Apocalyptics"¹—that all the prophecies appertaining to our Lord’s *parousia* had their complete fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus, in the year 70. That one single historical event, we are told, realized all the peculiarities and various incidents which, according to a proper interpretation of Scripture, constitute the second coming of Christ, incomparably great and grand as this latter event would seem to be. But the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem, this theory teaches, was so very great, as bearing both upon general history and especially the history and even essence of Christianity, that all the vast import of our Lord’s *parousia* was really accomplished by that event. According to this theory, therefore, the second coming of Christ has already taken place; it is now a past event, having become a fact considerably more than eighteen centuries ago. But surely, such a conception, so wide-reaching in its scope and so destructive both of old orthodox notions and of orthodox expectations, ought

¹ Doctor Terry teaches what he calls the “preterist and historical” view, which is that Christ’s *parousia* really began with the fall of Jerusalem; and since then it has continued as a process, and will doubtless thus continue until the end of time. See his "Bib. Apocalyptics," pp. 218, 223, 251, 478, 480, 481, et. al. Also Ezra P. Gould, in the "International Commentary on Mark" (pp. 240-255), holds the preterist view.
to be well established by Scripture, if it is to be received as true.

But what is the evidence to support this theory? Are there many passages in the Bible, or any passages, that really and truly, and without difference of opinion among interpreters, support this view? The truth is that in all our Christian Scriptures not one single passage can be found that clearly and unmistakably gives support to this theory. Whatever indorsement it has, comes only in the way of inference, or by a strained, forced, and unnatural interpretation of just a few Scripture passages scattered throughout the synoptic Gospels, or found, more particularly, in Jesus' great eschatological discourse as recorded by Matthew, and less fully in the other synoptics.

In the thirty-fourth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel we have these words: "This generation," says the Saviour, "shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled." By this utterance the preterists would have us understand that our Lord, in his view of his own second coming, so fully identified that coming with the destruction of Jerusalem that to him the two occurrences meant the same thing, and therefore they are to be regarded as occurring at the same time. According to this view, therefore, the words "all these things," as used in this passage, include all the matters of which Christ had been speaking to his disciples—not merely "these things" as in the form
of the disciples' question and as found in verse 3, but each and every other matter also contained in the previous part of Christ's discourse. But a common orthodox interpretation of this same passage is rather to make the words "all these things" refer back to the question of the disciples, when they inquired of Jesus, just after his prophecy relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, "when shall these things be?"—evidently alluding to the event just mentioned. This, we say, is a common interpretation given to that difficult passage by orthodox scholars; but what the passage really and unmistakably means, no mortal has ever yet been able fully and decisively to explain. Perhaps the best way to treat this passage is to regard it—taken with its context—as a kind of mystery, or as one of those peculiar utterances found in the Bible, which, with our present knowledge of Scripture matters, is incapable of full and exact exposition, and therefore can best be handled, perhaps, by leaving them alone.¹

¹Perhaps the best interpretation of this difficult passage, and of others like it (see foot-note, p. 126), is to say that the destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning of the end of the world, or of that long series of judgments which finally would overwhelm the entire world in destruction. With such a view, therefore, it would be proper enough to regard Jerusalem's downfall as both a type and a prophecy of the great world catastrophe which is yet to happen; also it would not be improper to say that Jesus did actually come, in a judicial way, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army. But this is far from admitting that in the conception of Jesus his final coming, regarded as an event, was the same thing as the downfall of the holy city of the Jews, and therefore that those two events should occur simultaneously. For, in the first place, Jesus in various ways distinguished very clearly between the
Suppose, then, that we act upon this suggestion; and now omitting from our consideration not only this one difficult passage found in Matthew, but also all other passages that can be adduced by preterists to establish their view — then the question arises whether there are any other passages of Scripture that, in clear, unmistakable language, set forth the doctrine of our Lord's second coming. Most certainly there are. The Bible is full of such passages, and one peculiarity belonging to them all is, that they know absolutely nothing about any connection existing between the destruction of Jerusalem and our Lord's parousia. Indeed, these other catastrophe which should befall not only Jerusalem but also the Jews, and his own final coming. Then also, by two expressions which he used, viz., "the times of the Gentiles" and a prediction that his gospel would be preached for a witness among all nations, before the end came (see Matt. 24:14, and comp. Luke 21:24 with ver. 27 in same chapter)—by these two expressions Jesus seemed to put off his second coming to a distant time, while he seems also to have always looked upon the threatened destruction of Jerusalem as being near.

Now, putting these two ideas together, Jesus' postponement of his parousia to a distant day, and his distinguishing clearly, as he did, between the fall of the Jewish capital and his own second coming, the conclusion would seem to be inevitable that the destruction of Jerusalem could not possibly have been regarded by Jesus as in any sense fulfilling really the prophecy of his final coming, or the parousia. It may be conceded that Jesus came judicially to our world when Jerusalem perished in consequence of a divine judgment, but to say that in that catastrophe Jesus also came in the fulness of his personality, and accompanied by all the events that are prophesied to take place in connection with his parousia, is going away beyond the bounds of any warrant from Scripture, and also beyond all reasonable interpretation either of Matt. 24:34 or of any other like passage of Scripture.

1 Note especially parallel passages to Matt. 24:34 in Mark and Luke; also Matt. 16:28; 10:23; Mark 9:1; Matt. 26:64.
passages very rarely so much as even mention Jerusalem; much less, then, do they connect the downfall of that city with that great final event in the history of our world which is known as Christ's second coming, or the *parousia*.

Now all these things being true, or at least capable of proof, it follows as a corollary, that the vast preponderance of Scripture testimony lies not on the side of the preterists, but rather supports the old orthodox view of our Lord's return. Moreover, if this is so, then it also follows that no reasonable or even sane believer in Scripture, should be long in deciding with which of the two eschatological views just mentioned the great probability of truth lies.

Or to state the case in somewhat different terms, we might say that the various Scripture arguments which can be adduced against the preterist notion of our Lord's second coming, are about as follows:

1. This notion contradicts all that is said in the Bible about the personal, bodily, visible, and glorious form of the Saviour's advent.

2. It forgets the fact that, according to the teachings of Scripture, our Lord's *parousia* is to be accompanied by certain most extraordinary events, such as a resurrection of the dead, a general judgment, the dissolution of nature, a new heaven and a new earth appearing, and finally the surrender of Christ's mediatorial rule to the Father, so that God may be all in all.
3. This theory forgets also that quite a number of occurrences—such as the conversion of the Jews as a nation to the Christian faith, the full revelation of Antichrist, the preaching of the gospel for a witness among all nations, and some others—must come in yet before Christ makes his appearance.

4. Still another item that can be used against the preterist notion, is that, if Christ really did return to our earth in the destruction of Jerusalem, an event which occurred now nearly nineteen centuries ago, then it has been impossible for the great multitude of Christ’s disciples to celebrate, with its full meaning, the ordinance known as the Lord’s Supper. For in instituting that observance Jesus said, “This do until I come.” But now, if Christ came so long ago, then none but the disciples living in or near Christ’s own time, could possibly celebrate the ordinance with the fulness of significance originally connected with it, or which Christ commanded.

5. Once more, the fact that according to nearly all the older authorities, and to the general trend of the latest scholarship (e. g., Harnack, Bousset, Frank C. Porter), the Revelation of John was published after the fall of Jerusalem, or about the year 95, and also that probably Luke’s Gospel, and certainly John’s Gospel and his First Epistle, were written after the year 70—in all of which writings Christ’s parousia was looked to as a coming event—this fact would seem to prove that, in the disciples’ view at
least, the fall of Jerusalem was by no means a fulfilling of the prophecy respecting our Lord's second coming.

6. And now, going back to the vast predominance of Scripture testimony which, we saw, lies not on the side of the preterist view, but against it; and then connecting that testimony with the result of the various lines of argument just followed, we have, as our final conclusion, which is sure and strong, simply to say, that this entire preterist theory is utterly contrary to Scripture, and is therefore both heretical and false.

Speaking only of Paul's description of the advent, as given in First and Second Thessalonians, Dean Alford remarks: "All these preterist interpretations [which he had just described] have against them one fatal objection—that it is impossible to conceive of the destruction of Jerusalem as in any sense corresponding to the parousia in St. Paul's sense of the term." (Greek Test., Vol. III., Proleg. on 2 Thess., Chap. VI., sec. v., par. 24.) And again: "The destruction of Jerusalem is inadequate as an interpretation of the coming of the Lord here [2 Thess. 2:1-12]. He has not yet come in any sense adequate to such interpretation; therefore the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled." (Ibid., par. 28). And if such is the case with Paul's description, the same and even more can be said with regard to the New Testament representation in general.
SPECIAL REVIEW OF THEORY THAT THE PAROUSIA IS A PROCESS OR DISPENSATION

A modification of the last or preterist view, which we have just discussed, and also an element contained in each of the two other or more spiritual views, is a doctrine respecting our Lord’s parousia which may be called the continuous-historical view. It represents the coming of Christ to be not a single event, but rather a long series of events—a process or dispensation.

This view seems just now to be especially popular with some of the so-called “advanced” theologians, higher-critic interpreters of the Bible, and others who are rationalistically inclined. The doctrine appears to have originated either in the German rationalism itself or in some branch of that kind of thought. In our own country it is represented by such men as Dr. William Newton Clarke, Dr. William Adams Brown, Dr. Clarence A. Beckwith, professor in the Chicago Theological Seminary (Congregationalist); Dr. John Wright Buckham, professor in the Pacific Theological Seminary, and others, whose writings show that their authors either openly teach this theory or are favorably inclined toward it. Indeed, this doctrine seems in these times to be growingly popular with the classes of persons mentioned, particularly in the United States and Great Britain. On that account especially we desire here to give it some special notice.
As already indicated, this doctrine teaches that our Lord's *parousia* must not be regarded as a single event, nor even as a few events, but rather as a long-continued process, beginning, as some teach, with the resurrection of Christ, and continuing on, as is the common notion, down through the pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, and many other like events, even to the end of time. Nay, the German Professor Beyschlag teaches that, as a fellowship with the disciples, this *parousia* of our Lord continues even in eternity.

**Objections to the Doctrine.** 1. Now looking upon this peculiar theory from the standpoint of the Scriptures and of our orthodox faith, we may say of it, in the first place, that it contains some truth, but a vastly greater amount of error. The truth contained in this view is especially one which we have already acknowledged, in our examination of the second of the two spiritual theories. It is that there is such a thing as a real spiritual coming of Christ. This spiritual coming began, as we understand it, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and since then it has been enlarged in its manifestations, and perhaps also in its intensity, and has spread over all the earth, so that it is to-day the one great Effective Force for building up and extending Christ's kingdom in our world. This spiritual force is not only now at work, but will continue its operations until the end of time. It is, as we have said, a real second coming—or
perhaps it may be called a kind of *parousia*—of our Lord.

But now, while we thus readily concede this much of truth to be embraced in the doctrine under consideration, or that our Lord's second coming may be regarded as a process, we by no means are willing to admit that such a doctrine contains the whole truth respecting the *parousia*. On the contrary, we affirm that the most important, the most specific, the most scriptural truth connected with any correct theory of our Lord's return from heaven is that when he comes it will be in *literal, personal, and visible form*. He will not return in merely a dispensation of the truth, nor in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, nor by such judicial events as was the overthrow of ancient Jerusalem; but it will be in his own personality. The same Jesus who ascended to heaven will return, and in the same manner as he ascended—that is, with his full glorified personal being. This is the doctrine taught everywhere in Scripture—to some extent even in the Old Testament, but much more fully in the New. We have already given the Scripture proofs of this doctrine (see especially pp. 34, 35 in main part of book), consequently they need not be repeated here. We will only say that in the original Greek the word *παροῦσια*, translated usually, in our English Scriptures, "coming" or "presence," means, when applied to a person, that he *is now present* in contradistinction to his having been
absent; and as used in the New Testament, Prof. J. H. Thayer says, in his Greek-English Lexicon, that it means "the future visible return from heaven of Jesus the Messiah." It is, indeed, a kind of technical term that seems to have been coined very early by the disciples for the express purpose of setting forth their conception of what our Lord's return would be. It would be a *parousia*—that is, a "presence" in our world of the Saviour who had before been absent.

This is our understanding of what is the Scripture idea of Christ's second coming; and if we are correct, then of course, the other doctrine which teaches that Christ's coming is only a spiritual process or a succession of Messianic judgments upon the world, must be rejected as incorrect, or false.

2. This is, then, our first objection to the doctrine under consideration. A second objection is that, in the Scriptures everywhere Christ's *parousia* is represented to be, not a process, but a *single event*. In proof of this we call attention to all those Scripture passages which give us to understand that the second coming of Christ will occur but once. Only once do we read will the Lord descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, etc.; only once will he sit upon the throne of his glory, and all the nations be gathered before him; and only once will he distribute his rewards and penalties to every man, according as his works have been. Furthermore, we may say, the Scriptures set definite
bounds both before and after our Lord's *parousia*. Before that event there will take place a universal preaching of the gospel among the nations, a treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, and still other occurrences; and after the *parousia*, or immediately in connection with it, there will take place the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, and other extraordinary matters. Christ's *parousia* is, therefore, in Scripture prophecy, bounded by events coming both before and after it; and it is thus definitely fixed as an event in time. And still more definitely in time is the *parousia* fixed by those Scripture teachings which represent the final coming of our Lord as taking place, not in a long period, but in a "day," an "hour," or *suddenly*, like the lightning, which, shining in the east, is immediately seen in the uttermost part of heaven; or the coming of Christ is compared to a thief stealing upon a person unexpectedly in the night; or it is like travail coming upon a woman with child. In these various illustrations the idea is very evident, that our Lord's second coming will be an event more or less *instantaneous* in its character, and therefore that it is impossible to conceive of it as a process, or an event protracted through an indefinitely long period.

3. Still another argument that can be easily made against this continuous-historical view is that in various passages of Scripture Christ's abode is
represented to be now in heaven; whereas if the spiritual-process theory is correct, that abode should be now on the earth—at least as literally as it is in heaven. “Whom the heaven must receive,” says Peter, “until the times of the restitution of all things”; and since that restitution has not yet occurred, to be sure, Christ must be regarded as still in heaven—in heaven both in a bodily and spiritual sense. Certainly he cannot be at the same time and in a bodily sense both on earth and in heaven.

4. But perhaps our most conclusive argument against this theory of Christ’s parousia being a long process is that in various passages of Scripture the second coming is represented to be an event that will not occur until the end of time. In John 6:44 Jesus says: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” And again in John 12:48 he says: “He that rejecteth me . . . hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” From these two passages of Scripture it is very evident that both the general judgment and the resurrection of the dead shall occur at the last day; and in other Scriptures which we have already in other places quoted (see e. g., pp. 38, 39, in main part of book) it is clearly taught that these two events, the resurrection and the general judgment, shall take place coincidentally with our Lord’s second coming. Consequently the inference is inevitable that Christ’s
parousia also shall occur, as do the resurrection and the general judgment, "at the last day"; and therefore, as said, this parousia will not take place before the end of the world. If that is so, then the continuous-historical theory, which represents the parousia to have commenced away back in the past, and to be now going forward as a process, must certainly be wrong.

Moreover, in this connection we desire yet to examine an affirmation often made, that the phrase "end of the world," or "last day," does not mean a real termination of all things earthly, or the ending of time, but only the end of the age, or more particularly, the end of the Jewish age, as the matter is often worded. By referring to 1 Peter 4:7 the reader will notice that the Apostle Peter uses this expression, "The end of all things is at hand"; and then, by turning over to 2 Peter, last chapter, he will see what the apostle means by that expression. For in this chapter Peter describes a real termination of all things earthly, in the form of a great conflagration, which shall melt and dissolve even "the elements" themselves; and then out of this conflagration, Peter affirms, there will emerge "new heavens and a new earth." So also Paul, in 1 Cor. 15:23-28, teaches that the great final summation of all things is what should be understood as being the end of the world. For in ver. 23 of this same chapter it reads: "Christ the first-fruits (of the resurrection), afterward they that are
Christ's at his coming." And in the next verse it reads, "Then cometh the end, when he (that is, Christ) shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father," after having put down all rule and all authority, and even having, at the resurrection, destroyed death itself. Very evidently, then, both with Paul and Peter the phrase "end of the world," or what is the same thing, "the end of all things," or simply "the end," does not mean, as some of the interpreters say, only the ending of an age, or more particularly, of the Jewish or Old Testament dispensation; but it surely means something far different. As Paul and Peter use this phrase, it can signify nothing else than the great consummation of all things, the final dissolution of nature and the appearing of a new heaven and a new earth; and if that is so, then of course the interpretation which makes the phrase mean only the ending of a certain age, or period in the world's history, must be incorrect.

As a practical conclusion we will yet remark that there is not much hope for man in any of these merely rationalistic doctrines respecting our Lord's second coming. For it is not consistent with the teachings of any of those doctrines to furnish conditions such as must necessarily banish sin and sorrow completely from our world. On the contrary, according to the teachings of these rationalistic views, sin and sorrow, death and many other evils, as connected with a material universe, still remain,
despite all the triumphs and future achievements which may be expected of the gospel of Christ. With such a prospect put before man, therefore, he surely cannot entertain, with respect to the future, a very inviting hope. At the most, he can only anticipate a world growing, for an indefinite period, somewhat better than it is now. But the material and sinful conditions of this life, which produce all our misery, are never fully abolished, according to the teachings of rationalistic theories. On the other hand, with our old orthodox or fully scriptural view of Christ's second coming, these evil conditions of sin and of a material universe are all banished; and instead of a material world with sin and sorrow in it, the orthodox view gives us, as our future abode, a new spiritual world, in which sin and sorrow and all other evils are utterly unknown; but where God shall wipe away all tears from human eyes, and where there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain," because all the evil conditions of human life have forever passed away. Then, moreover, Christ with all his saints in heaven and his saints on earth, will form a reunion, in the perfected kingdom of God, that shall last eternally.

Such is the picture which the old orthodox or truly scriptural theory of our Lord's second coming puts before the entire human race; and it does not need any special comparison of this view with others to establish the conviction that of all theories
known to man respecting the end of the world, or Christ’s second coming, this one is incomparably the most attractive, the most inviting, and the fullest of hope. Let us, therefore, hold fast to this theory, lest by being deprived of it we lose also, really, the chiefest pearl among our expectations as to the future. For the hope of the second coming of Christ is, as Paul affirms, “blessed” in its nature, as his real personal appearing is also “glorious” in its form.

**TOPIC B**

**WERE THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS MISTAKEN?**

Whether in their expectation of an early return of the Saviour from heaven the apostles and evangelists were mistaken, is a question that can, perhaps, be answered either Yes or No. If only the earlier beliefs of those disciples are taken into consideration; and if, moreover, attention is given only to individual expressions of this or that writer in the New Testament, it will not be difficult to conclude that these followers of Christ expected him to return very soon, perhaps within their own lifetime; and therefore, since he did not come during that period, they certainly were mistaken. But if, on the other hand, a more general examination is made of those early testimonies respecting our Lord’s *parousia*, taking into account not only the first, but also later expressions of the disciples, it
will be found, the writer thinks, that, after all, these disciples cannot so surely be accused of committing mistake.

One thing is certain, which is that the early church in general most confidently believed in a literal return of Christ. They had no idea of any figurative, providential, or judicial coming, such as has been advocated by some modern interpreters. To them the coming again of their Lord to the earth, was as real and positive an event as was his going to heaven. He would come, they believed, “in like manner even as he was taken up.” There existed therefore no uncertainty in the belief of the evangelists and apostles, so far as the real, personal, literal, and future coming of their Lord was concerned.

But now, when we go further and undertake to decide what the general expectation of those early disciples was relative to the time of Christ’s coming—whether it should be earlier or later—a difficulty here immediately presents itself. It is the fact that the documents at hand do not seem to be, in their notices, sufficient to relieve the matter of all uncertainty. The most that can be said, we think, is that representative men among the early disciples, such as Paul and Peter, did not always entertain precisely the same view relative to the time of our Lord’s parousia. For instance, Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, seemed to have held the idea that he himself would live to see the Lord descending from the skies; for he says in his
first Thessalonian letter, "then we which are alive shall be caught up," etc. (chap. 4:17)—evidently expecting to be himself among the living at that time. So also in his first letter to the Corinthians (15:51) he expresses the notion that he, with the Corinthian brethren in general, would be still alive when Christ came; for he says "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," etc. But then, later in the experiences of this apostle, he seems to have considerably changed his view as to an early coming of Christ. For already in his second letter to the Thessalonians he positively affirms that the day of Christ's return would not come, "except there come a falling away first" (2:3); and then he proceeds to describe a great and wide-reaching apostasy which, he declares, must take place before the parousia of Christ. Paul's notion, therefore, at this time, seems to have altered considerably; or at least, he then thought that Christ's return was a matter not to be expected until after the expiration of what would seem to be even a long period of time. Then again, if we turn to Paul's second letter to Timothy (4:6-8), where the apostle describes his expectation as to the future, we can easily see that he no longer hopes to live until the return of his Master; for he writes: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth"—says he; not yet, but henceforth—"there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord
will give me at that day”—his outlook now being evidently toward a somewhat distant future for Christ’s coming. Our conclusion, then, is that the great apostle to the Gentiles went to his death, or execution, without the comforting hope, which he had previously indulged, of living to see his Lord returning in power and glory from heaven.

So, also, if we now turn to the writings of the Apostle Peter, and consult them as to this same matter of the expectation of Christ’s early return, we shall find—whatever may have been his earlier views on the topic; and he seems in his first letter to have expected that “the end of all things was at hand”—yet in his maturer beliefs (2 Pet. 3:8) it appeared to him that “one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”; which expression would seem to signify that, in Peters’ view, the coming of the Lord was an event that might be deferred for some considerable time.

Gathering up, therefore, all the evidence we have been able to examine relative to the topic under consideration, we come to what we think to be two legitimate conclusions. (1) The first one is that the apostles and evangelists did not have any definitely fixed and unchanging opinion with regard to the exact time of Christ’s parousia. Sometimes, and especially during the period of their earlier experiences, they indulged the hope, common to the church of that day, that Christ would come very soon, perhaps within their own lifetime. But this
hope was not strong nor enduring; it vacillated between the expectation of an earlier and a later coming. Accordingly we may say, that such being the uncertain state of their belief, they were not really mistaken in their expectation.

(2) But now, on the other hand, if we notice only some of the individual expressions of those apostles and evangelists, and especially if we confine attention to the seemingly firm belief existing in all the early Christian church as to a speedy return of Christ, we cannot well avoid the conclusion that both the church and the apostles with the evangelists were mistaken in expecting the Lord's return so soon. Perhaps, though, even the apostles and evangelists were not fully inspired as to every matter of faith. (See 1 Cor. 7:10-12.)

**TOPIC C**

**THE TWO RESURRECTIONS**

Besides what has been said in the body of this work and in the foot-notes, respecting the two

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1 A common view taken in these times by many interpreters is that the apostles and evangelists, with the early church, were all mistaken in their confident expectation of a speedy return of Christ. The disciples, it is affirmed, misunderstood or misreported the words of Jesus on eschatological matters; and so, while the correctness of the Saviour's foreknowledge is preserved to him, the wisdom as well as the moral character of his disciples is not left so wholly unaffected. But a difficulty with this notion is that Christ, knowing all about the shortcomings of his disciples, should not at least have undertaken to correct their views, especially on so important a topic as his parousia.
resurrections, we desire here only to add a few quotations from representative authors:

First, On the Pre-millennial Side. Dean Henry Alford (“Com. on Greek Test.,” Vol. IV., p. 732): “It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this Commentary, that I cannot consent to distort words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy [Rev. 20:4], on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole church for three hundred years understood them in the plain, literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are amongst the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain ψυχαὶ ζησαν ["souls lived"] at the first, and the rest of the νεκροὶ ζησαν ["dead lived"] only at the end of a special period after the first—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave, then there is an end to all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual,
then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope."

**Secondly, On the Post-millennial Side.** Rev. David Brown ("The Second Advent, Will It Be Pre-millennial?" pp. 218-259. Mr. Brown's argument is so extensive, we can give here only a condensed summary of its leading points):

*Nine Internal Evidences that the Millennial Resurrection is Not Literal, but Figurative.* 1. If the first resurrection mean rising from the grave in *immortal* and *glorified* bodies, the assurance that on such the second death hath no power (v. 6), or, in other words, that the raised ones shall *not perish everlastingly*, would seem to be superfluous.

2. There are but two alternatives in the prophecy—either to "have part in the first resurrection," or to be "under the power of the second death." Into which of these two classes are we to put the myriads of men who are to people the earth, in flesh and blood, during the millennium?

3. The expression of how long this life and reign with Christ will last, viz., a thousand years, if meant to inform us what a long period of earthly prosperity the church is yet destined to enjoy, is intelligible and cheering. But to say that the risen and glorified church is to live and reign with Christ for a
period of one thousand years, is totally unlike the language of Scripture in every other place.

4. By making the party that shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years to be the entire church of God risen from their graves, we encounter two exegetical difficulties—first, there is no time given in this passage for a second resurrection, inasmuch as directly after the millennium Satan is represented to be during "a little season," which may last for a century or so, engaged in deceiving the nations and making his assault upon "the beloved city." And second, none but the wicked would remain to be judged in the last judgment, which is inconsistent with the implication of the opening of the book of life (v. 12).

5. (Given by Mr. Brown in the words of Gipps.) The opening of the book of life must be understood to signify the manifestation of those who are written in it. But according to Rom. 8:19-23, this manifestation of the "sons of God" takes place when they rise from the grave. Consequently the resurrection of the saints must occur at the time of the judgment, after the millennium, and not before it as is represented by the literal theory.

6. (Also given in Mr. Gipps' language.) The omission of any declaration as to the sea, death, and the grave (or hades) giving up the dead at the first resurrection, and the making of such a declaration respecting the "dead" in ver. 13, convinces me that the first resurrection is not of the saints, and also
that the "dead" in ver. 12 include all mankind, both the saints and the ungodly. For this is most in accordance with the general Scripture method, which always gives more definite and full information respecting the resurrection of the righteous than of the wicked.

7. The clause, "This is the first resurrection" (ver. 5), which is thought to prove it literal, seems to me to prove the reverse. For in Rev. 2:11 fidelity to Christ even unto death is represented as the ground of exemption (of course, not the meritorious ground) from "the second death," and since in the passage before us (ver. 6) the first resurrection is represented as being in like manner such ground of exemption, therefore it would seem reasonable to understand these two expressions as equivalent, and hence that a certain line of conduct, or character in the present life, is what is meant to be the exempting cause connected with the first resurrection. This resurrection must, therefore, be figurative in its nature, not literal.

8. It is a fatal objection to the literal sense of this prophecy, as announcing the bodily resurrection of all the dead, and the changing of all living saints, that it is exclusively a martyr scene—the prophet beholding simply a resurrection of the slain; whereas this very circumstance favors the figurative sense. The literal sense is utterly inadequate to express the resurrection of the whole church of God bodily from the grave.
9. The literal sense offers no consistent explanation of the judgment that was given unto the slain martyrs. If such judgment is to be given unto them personally at the millennium, and they are to rise from the grave for that purpose, then their persecutors, upon whom the judgment is to be rendered, must also be raised at the same time.

Thirdly, On the Side of a Belief in Two Resurrections, but with a Limitation of the First to a Certain Class of the Saints. Moses Stuart ("Com. on the Apocalypse," Vol. II., pp. 475, 476): "The point of antithesis which seems to decide the whole case is, as is remarked in the Commentary, the distinction between the first resurrection and the second. It appears to be a distinction of order of succession, but not of kind. There is indeed one other particular of difference or contrast, viz., the second resurrection will be general, universal, comprehending both the righteous and the wicked, while the first will comprehend, as the writer's language seems to intimate, only saints and martyrs, who have been specially faithful unto death. This distinction the writer has made prominent. He expressly assures us that the other dead would not be raised when the one thousand years should commence, but only at the end of the world when all will be raised. The express contrast here made between the particular and the general resurrection, and the manner in which this contrast is presented, show that the design is not to compare a spiritual with a physical
resurrection, but to contrast the partial extent of the latter at the beginning of the millennium, with the general or universal extent at the end of the world.”

As is known among students of eschatology, Professor Stuart locates the scene of the saints reigning with Christ, not on earth, but in heaven; and his argument is that heaven is everywhere represented in the Scriptures as the abiding-place of “souls” or departed saints, and this is also Christ’s place of abode. Consequently, the location of this thousand years’ reign must be in heaven.

TOPIC D

MILLENNIAL THEORIES AND DIFFICULTIES

I. Theories. 1. The oldest theory of the millennium is one that seems to have come into Christian acceptance from old Jewish apocalypses, some of which are known to have existed even before the Christian era. The idea was intimately connected with that of the Jewish Sabbath, regarded as an institution intended to celebrate the resting of God after the six days of creative work. Accordingly the reasoning was that as God was six days in creating the world, and as he rested on the seventh day, and moreover, since one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, therefore by a kind of analogy it follows that, after six thousand years of human labor and toil, there will be another thousand years
of Sabbath rest. This idea, at least in part, John seems to have appropriated in his Revelation; but whether he so did or not, it very early made its appearance in Christian history. Moreover, whether owing to Christian or Jewish influences, the spiritual character of this idea degenerated quite early into what is usually termed *chiliasm*, or a gross materialistic and carnal notion of the thousand years. Papias, e. g., and some other of the ancient Christian Fathers conceived of the period as characterized by great fertility of nature; also as a time of eating and drinking, of continued marriage festivity, and of untold riches. Hence the entire notion ran easily into excesses, and finally, after a couple of hundred years, it came into great disrepute, and was replaced by another view, of quite different character.

2. This succeeding view has usually been termed the Augustinian theory of the millennium; and it teaches that Christ's reign of a thousand years is simply his church, or the kingdom of God in our world, and that it began its history with the birth of our Saviour, or the setting up of Christ's kingdom in human hearts and lives. With some few modifications, this was the reigning view all through the Middle Ages.

3. But another theory, quite similar to this, made its appearance in the eighteenth century, and was advocated especially by Grotius and Hammond. Its peculiarity is that it represents the millennium more as an organization or polity, beginning its
history with the reign of Constantine the Great, and ending with the assault made upon Christendom, in the fourteenth century, by the Ottoman Turks.

4. But all through the Middle Ages, as said, the prevalent view was the one propounded by Augustine. Then after this middle period there seems to have existed much opposition against the idea of any millennium, most of the reformers assuming toward such notion an antagonistic attitude. But, as before in the early Christian times, so now again a quite new or novel idea of the thousand years presented itself. It was that the reign of the saints with Christ signifies only some new church organization; which idea, we might observe, was, during Reformation times, exploited most fanatically and discreditably by some of the Anabaptists at Münster; and since then it has, in various forms, appeared among the Swedenborgians, the Irvingites, the Mormons, and various other religious sects.

5. Some sixty years ago there was put forward by Moses Stuart, professor of theology at Andover, a singular theory of the millennium, which took the view that the saints reigning with the Saviour during the thousand years were only certain martyrs and faithful believers whose bodies were raised by special privilege, and that the scene of this reign was not on earth, but in heaven. This is, to say the least, a singular view.

6 and 7. But the two most prominent theories of the millennium which are of interest to us in these
times are those we have already discussed in the main body of this work—namely, pre-millennialism and post-millennialism—and therefore they need not be, again, here described.

II. Difficulties. Whatever views, though, are taken respecting the reign of Christ with his saints for a thousand years, there are unavoidable difficulties connected with the general subject. This arises from two causes. First, the description given us, in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, of Christ's millennial reign, is not altogether clear. And then, second, in all the rest of the Bible, except that one passage, there is no mention made of any millennial reign of the Saviour; but in all these other Scriptures the usual view taken is that Christ's kingdom will be perpetual or last forever. Besides, according to the pre-millennial interpretation of Rev. 20: 4-6, Christ's reign, being on the earth or in connection with this material world, is certainly more materialistic in nature than is the usual representation given elsewhere in the Bible. Consequently it would seem that the difficulties under consideration are really inherent in the general subject of the millennium, and therefore it is not very wonderful that different interpreters, such as pre-millennialists and post-millennialists, have taken views so widely different.

In our interpretation of the matter, therefore, we, first of all, acknowledge these difficulties as actually existing—difficulties connected, we may say, not
only with the different interpretations of the millennium, but seemingly inherent in the very subject itself; and then, having done this, we have really prepared the way for a solution of the trouble. It is merely to regard the thousand years' reign as something mysterious and inscrutable, or as a matter that, with our present knowledge of it, cannot be fully and satisfactorily explained. Hence, our method is to leave the millennium, at least in great part, out of the general discussion. Doing that, we have no great difficulty in treating either the thousand years' reign or the whole subject of Christ's second coming.

ADVANTAGES OF OUR METHOD

The advantages of this peculiar way of disposing of the millennium are varied, and may be indicated as follows:

1. This method enables one to construct, from other Scripture passages than Rev. 20:4-6,¹ a full, definite, and consistent doctrine of our Lord's second coming, a doctrine that neither conflicts with general Scripture testimony nor with any clear and undisputed passage of revelation. Besides, it is a doctrine that both encourages hope and is free from all tendency to fanaticism.

2. This method, with its exegetical results, is

¹ The entire millennial passage may be regarded as including ver. 1-8.
amply supported by Scripture; the entire Bible being on its side, and the only Scripture that can be quoted against it being those few verses in Rev. 20. But even this one diminutive passage is not wholly set aside or in any way ignored by our method; it is only, as said, treated as a mystery, for the full and satisfactory interpretation of which we have at present no sufficient means. Besides, should any one, accepting our general view, desire also to hold fast to some notion of a millennium, he can do even this, provided he first modifies somewhat the extraordinary glories usually connected with the post-millennial conception of Christ's millennial reign.

3. All the peculiar duties connected with a true or really Scriptural doctrine of our Lord's final coming are provided for by this method. For leaving out of consideration the whole difficult matter of the millennium, the believer can now very easily be always on the watch for his Master's coming; while at the same time this general view both encourages hope and stimulates missionary undertaking, both at home and abroad, if so be that thus the world may be got ready for our Lord's return.

TOPIC E

WHO, OR WHAT, IS ANTICHRIST?

The "Edinburgh Encyclopedia" gives fourteen different theories as to who or what the antichristian
power mentioned or referred to quite a number of times in the Bible, and known as Antichrist, is to be understood as being, or as having been, or as still to be in the future. One theory, which is very old—dating back before the coming of Christ—is that the "king of fierce countenance" mentioned in Daniel, or Antiochus Epiphanes, was, because of his peculiar character and his persecutions especially of the Jews, the real Antichrist of the ancient times. Other views, which locate the opposing power more in later days or still in the future, are that by Antichrist we are to understand the tyrant Nero, or Domitian, or Julian, or the pagan priests, or some of the rebel leaders of the Jews, or the Jewish people themselves; or Mohammed; or Romanism, some of the individual popes; Napoleon I., or III.; Oliver Cromwell; some person or principle, perhaps, not yet fully revealed; or as Catholic authorities would have us believe, even Martin Luther or John Calvin!

The prevailing notion among most scholars who have given attention to the matter is that this power of opposition to the gospel of Christ, is either an institution or a person; and if an institution, then it must be, in character, either civil or ecclesiastical, or perhaps both.

Another view, however, which has been taken mostly in later times, is that this opposing power is neither an institution nor a person, but only a principle, a spirit working through the ages, or perhaps manifesting itself at different times—a tendency of
things, which, because of its inimical attitude toward Christ and his gospel, is properly denominated the Antichrist. This theory would seem to be in harmony with what Paul says of that “mystery of iniquity” which was in his day already working; also it accords with what John tells us about the spirit of Antichrist. "This is the spirit of antichrist," he says, "of which ye have heard." "There are many antichrists." "He is antichrist which denieth the Father and the Son." (1 John 4:3; 2:18, 22.)

But still another theory is that the Antichrist has not yet made his appearance, but his manifestation belongs to the future. When he comes—and the usual notion taken by adherents of this view is that Antichrist is to be a person—he will concentrate in himself all the powers of hate and opposition to the gospel of Christ, and become the leader in that final assault upon Christianity which is described in ver. 7-10 of Rev. 20.

Now, with so many views obtaining at different times among expositors, or people in general, and with the utter impossibility, as it would seem, of reconciling these different notions as to the historical identity or peculiar character of the Antichrist pictured in the Bible, of course it is not within the competency or purpose of this treatise to decide, dogmatically or otherwise, which of those theories is correct or most in accordance with biblical indications. We can only say that in selecting the Romish
Church, or more especially the papacy in its civil and ecclesiastical aspects, as the fullest expression of the antichristian principle that our world has probably ever seen, or will see, we have only followed common Protestant opinion. To be sure in later times Protestant scholars have been inclined to take a more lenient view of the matter, and to consider the papacy as not so unchristian an institution after all. Still even among these more liberalistic scholars very few, we apprehend, can be found who are unwilling to admit that at least the *papal idea* is involved to some extent in the descriptions given by the Bible, of that great apostatized and persecuting power which should at some time make its appearance during the history of Christianity.

Even Gregory the Great, the first pope, said that any man who should arrogate to himself the title of "universal bishop" would be "the precursor of Antichrist." And Dr. Charles Hodge, after calling attention to the monstrous and unparalleled claims made by the popes—to being Christ's vicar on earth, and therefore as having authority over all mankind both in matters of faith and even in civil government; also as having power to forgive sin, release souls from purgatory, or condemn men to eternal perdition—remarks that "if such pretensions do not constitute the power which make them Antichrist, then nothing remains. Any future Antichrist that may arise must be a small affair compared to the papacy."
Any number of quotations could be made from Protestant authorities, and not a few from Romanists, showing that such views are not uncommon, but that all the way down from early in the Middle Ages there have been some, and during Protestant times many, who have taken the view that the pope, or the papal system, is Antichrist. The view presented in this book is, therefore, we think, supported by a wider consensus of opinion than has been any other.1

TOPIC F

GOG AND MAGOG, OR THE LAST GREAT BATTLE

Running through a large part of the Apocalypse, or at least found in three particular places, there seems to be intimation of coming political trouble, to take place in the East. For instance, in the ninth chapter, from ver. 13 to 21, there is given us, in connection with the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the prophecy of a great invasion to be made, seemingly into Western countries, by different nations whose "angels," or leaders, are bound "at the great river Euphrates." Just what nations these are, it is, of course, difficult to tell, but they have been often supposed to represent the Mohammedan or Turkish

1 Even so considerate a writer as Dr. A. J. Gordon says (in his "Ecce Venit," p. 127): "We may as certainly hold the papacy to be the fulfilment of Paul's prediction of the Antichrist as we hold the fact of a coin to be the fulfilment of the die in which it was struck."
power. Then again, in chapter 16, from ver. 12 to 16, where there is given an account of the pouring-out of the sixth vial, and of its results, it is said that the great river Euphrates again was particularly affected; and one special result of that out-pouring was that the river was "dried up," so as to prepare a way for "the kings of the East"; and it is further stated that there occurred, in this connection, an extraordinary battle in a "place called Armageddon." Once more, in the last part of the twentieth chapter of this same book of Revelation, there is given a prophecy, to which the heading of this article especially alludes, of another great battle called the war with Gog and Magog, or a prolonged struggle with certain strange barbarian nations living away off somewhere in the East, to which these names are prophetically applied. Now again, just what nations are intended to be specified by these peculiar names it is perhaps impossible for any one in this day to tell. But the terms Gog and Magog seem to be used in the Bible a number of times (Ezek. chap. 38, 39; also Gen. 10: 2) to represent strange, more or less unknown barbarous peoples, whose habitation was somewhere off to the northeast of the Caucasus mountains. In ancient secular history they are sometimes associated with the Scythians; or at least, Herodotus affirms that the Scythians were descended from Magog. Various modern authors are of the opinion that those old terms represent really the ancestors of the present
Muscovite or Russian people; and if that is so, then this fact adds peculiar interest to the prophecy under consideration.

For this battle of Gog and Magog, or rather with those peoples, of which we have a picture given us in the last part of Rev. 20, is undoubtedly not merely an imaginary affair, but some occurrence, which is yet to take place in the history of our world, just before the final coming of Christ. However, whether this occurrence is to be a political one, or rather one in which spiritual forces shall be especially exercised, the prophetic indications given are not sufficient to determine. Probably, though, as is always the case in great religious contests, political affairs will be more or less involved. Accepting that as a probable feature of the coming great conflict, then the question arises, what politico-religious contest is this which is prophesied to take place near the end of the world? What nations will be engaged in it? And what will be the special issues which will at that time divide what may be called the forces of good and evil, in so earnest a struggle?

This question is asked by us not because we suppose that any satisfactory answer can be given to it,  

1 There is an interpretation of this battle, or war, which makes all the terms locating it, such as "Gog and Magog," "Armageddon" and "Euphrates River," to be merely symbolical, or indicative rather of spiritual facts than of locality or real place. But such a notion really destroys all the material frame-work of the war, and makes this last great battle something too intangible and uncertain to correspond with the positive indications given in Scripture.
but because there seems to be some real prophetic interest connected with the matter, and because also not a few attempts have been made to answer the question. For instance, a number of years ago Lieutenant Totten, then connected with Yale University as professor of military science, published a number of articles in a widely read journal, in which he undertook to prove from Scripture prophecy, as well as from natural reasonings, that a great politico-religious commotion among the nations was then imminent. All the nations of Europe, he said, as well as of the old world in general, would be more or less involved in that contest. The leaders of the struggle would be, on different sides, Russia and England. And especially Russia, fortified and prepared for aggressive war in the Caucasian mountains, and with also a great desire for the possession of the Holy Land, was represented by Mr. Totten as being at that time almost ready to break forth in aggressive military operations against whatever power might oppose her, and thus undertake to carry out Scripture prophecy by bringing on a great war in the East. The issue of that war, he furthermore said, would be the second coming of Christ and an overthrow of all the hostile nations, with the final outcome of a setting up of Christ's kingdom in our world. Lieutenant Totten, being a pre-millennialist, understands this kingdom to be only one that would last a thousand years, and he names that great final battle the "war of Armageddon";
whereas in our way of considering that battle, it comes after and not before the millennium, and hence may be called the war with Gog and Magog.

But what about the battle itself? Is there any special reason for apprehending a great commotion of nations in the Eastern world, such as has been predicted not only by Lieutenant Totten, but by others—a commotion to take place, they tell us, in connection with the still unsettled "Eastern question"? Probably no one can answer such a query at present. Time alone will tell. We are ready to commit ourself only to the assertion that such a coming event is not impossible, and that upon the horizon depicted for us in Scripture prophecy there does seem to be brewing some Eastern trouble; but exactly what that trouble is to be, or when it will eventuate—on such points we have no opinion.

TOPIC G

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT AND ITS BEARING UPON THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS

The notion of re-peopling the Holy Land with descendants from its ancient inhabitants is a very old one. Ever since the great "dispersion" which took place upon the destruction of Jerusalem, there has been a feeling, and we may say a kind of expectation, existing among the Jews, that at some
time their people would return and occupy the localities once occupied by their fathers. Accordingly at different times during the Christian era there have occurred special awakenings in the interest of that idea, and occasionally real movements have been organized with a view to establishing Jewish colonies in Palestine, or a settling of that country in some way by Israelites. Even now there are in the Holy Land, we are told, some thirty Jewish colonies, a large proportion of them having been set on foot, or at least encouraged in their undertaking, by Baron Hirsch and other charitably disposed Jews. Besides, there are in Palestine other Jews not belonging to the colonies; so that the entire Jewish population of that country to-day is, as has been estimated, about eighty-five thousand, probably one-half of these living in and around Jerusalem.

One great cause of a movement on the part of the Jews toward the Holy Land is the oppression and persecution which this people is known to have suffered even for ages in different countries of the world, and in modern times, especially in Russia, Silicia, Germany, and other European lands. The consequence has been that the Jews, as a people, have longed for a home of their own, or for some locality in which they might dwell undisturbed by other peoples, and where also political rights and privileges would be secured to them; and it is this idea that lies at the foundation of the whole Zionist movement.

L
In the year 1896 Dr. Theodor Herzl, a resident of Vienna, Austria, published a book entitled "Judenstaat," in which he advocated the notion of the Jews having, in Palestine, what has often been termed since "a legally secured and publically recognized home." This was the beginning of the Zionist movement. Since then the movement has spread literally throughout the whole civilized world, manifesting itself not only in the way of organizing multitudes of "Associations" in its interest, but also in holding "annual congresses"—these taking place, with one exception (when the congress was in London), at Basel, Switzerland; also making itself known in various other ways, such as in attempts at securing from the sultan of Turkey a charter for the possession of the Holy Land, in issuing a large number of pamphlets and other publications to advocate its cause, in establishing a "Jewish Colonial Trust" in London, with branches prospected or already founded elsewhere, and in still other procedures. Thus far, however, the movement does not seem to have accomplished much in the way of actually settling the Holy Land with Jews, or in planting colonies in Palestine, or even in obtaining from the sultan the charter sought. Still, the movement has certainly become a very extensive one; it is yet in progress, and no one can tell what its final outcome may be.

But now, whether this agitation for a resettling of the Holy Land with Israelites signifies much or little
as bearing upon the conversion of that people to Christianity, is a question that can be easily enough propounded, but not so easily answered. Interpreters of prophecy who believe that the Jews as a people will surely return to Palestine, commonly believe also in the conversion of that people to the Christian faith, as a matter very intimately associated with their going back to the land of their fathers. Consequently to such interpreters this Zionist movement signifies much; they even see in it a fulfilment of prophecy, and Mr. H. Grattan Guinness has been able, he thinks, to figure out, from astronomical calculations and some data given in the Bible, the exact time when the Zionist movement was to commence. (See his "History Unveiling Prophecy," p. 368.) But to interpreters who do not fully believe in any return of the Jews as a people to Palestine the matter looks quite different. To them it would seem that the Jews might be converted to Christianity outside of the Holy Land quite as well as in it; and indeed the circumstances working toward such conversion would appear to be more favorable in other lands than in Palestine. At all events, the Zionists themselves, or the leaders as well as the rank and file in that movement, have never had any idea of its being a movement in any way associated with religion, or of its being connected with a fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. But to them the movement has been, pure and simple, one of a nationalistic character; its
purpose being, first of all, to unite the Jews, scattered throughout the world, in a common national sentiment, and then, secondly, by securing a home for these people in Palestine, or perhaps elsewhere, to build up eventually an independent Jewish State or commonwealth. Such being its declared purpose, it surely is not easy to see how a movement so purely nationalistic in its character is going to work toward the conversion of persons engaged in it to the Christian religion. On the contrary, the results so far made apparent would seem to be more in the way of confirming the Jewish people in their own religion, rather than toward inducing them to adopt some other faith.

Besides, the testimony of persons living in the Holy Land—where there are, as has been said, quite a number of Jewish colonies—is to the effect that a gathering together of the Jews in Palestine only makes them the more determinedly and inconsiderately opposed to all other religions, except their own, and especially opposed to Christianity. Mr. Edwin S. Wallace, who for some years recently was American consul in Jerusalem, says there is no place on earth where the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile is so high and strong as in that city. Nevertheless, even he firmly believes that "the future inhabitants of Palestine will be Jews"; and he seems also to believe that the great body of the Jewish people will eventually be converted to the Christian faith.
One thing would appear to be sure, as resulting already from this Zionist movement. It is that by it public attention has been called afresh to the whole subject of the Jews, and of the relation of that people to the Holy Land.

TOPIC H

PREDICTIVE PROPHECY AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

The usual attitude of the higher criticism toward what is known as predictive prophecy, is either to reject this element entirely from the Bible or to reduce it to the narrowest possible limits; the old rationalistic attitude being to oppose it on the ground of its being miraculous.

But surely even a miracle is possible enough on the supposition that God—the God of the Bible, possessing infinite power and wisdom—really exists. The matter of predictive prophecy is, therefore, so far as its possibility is concerned, merely a matter of theological demonstration—whether God exists or not. If he does exist, and is in any true sense the author of the Bible, then a divine inspiration of that book, such as is able to give us even a small amount of predictive prophecy, is equally competent to furnish also a large amount. Therefore the matter of the quantity of such prophecy as found in our Christian Scriptures, and also the matter of a prophecy's looking distantly into the future or being confined
to a nearer view, is really not to be considered in a discussion of whether or not the Bible contains predictive prophecy. That is as said, first of all, a matter of theological speculation or proof, and secondly, and more to a decision, it is simply a matter of fact.

Does the Bible then contain, or does it not contain, prophecy of a predictive nature? By predictive prophecy we mean any assertion made some time beforehand—it may be only a short while or it may be centuries—that afterward comes to pass as a matter of fact. Does the Bible then contain such prophecy? We think it does, and in very large amount. For instance, in the Old Testament there are many statements made respecting the birth of our Saviour,—the place where that event was to occur, the time when (indicated by the seventy weeks of Daniel), the fact that his mother was to be a virgin, and that he was to descend from David, and belong to the tribe of Judah, as well as to the family of Abraham and the line of Shem, and that he was also to be the "seed of the woman," all these and many other items connected with not only the birth, but the whole life, and even the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour, are most clearly prophesied in the Old Testament, and then afterward fulfilled, as we have the record, in the New. So also respecting the history of the Jews and other ancient nations, and also respecting the experiences of various cities belonging to Old Testament times, and of individuals who then lived, we have in the
Bible many prophecies, uttered long before the experiences or the history came to pass, and yet every one of those prophecies have either been already fulfilled or are to-day in process of fulfilment.

Besides, as already said, the evidence of the fulfilling of at least Old Testament prophecy is not simply the testimony of men, but of inspired authority. The New Testament itself, inspired as we believe it to be of God, positively attests, in many places, the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. For example, in Matthew's Gospel one often reads that some particular event came to pass "in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," and then the Old Testament prophecy which the evangelist thinks was fulfilled in the event specified is usually quoted. Thus does not only Matthew, but all the evangelists, and we may say the entire New Testament, attest the actual fulfilment, in real fact, of many of the Old Testament prophecies. Those prophecies were certainly of a predictive nature. They actually came to pass, notwithstanding that they were uttered, some of them at least, hundreds, or even many hundreds of years before the time of their fulfilment. So far, therefore, as Old Testament prophecy is concerned, the matter stands sure; it certainly was, or is, predictive in its nature. Moreover, the same thing can be proven true of the New Testament; it also contains, as might easily be demonstrated, much predictive prophecy.
The entire Bible, therefore, being, simply as a matter of fact, characterized by the possession of even a large amount of predictive prophecy, it is entirely to no purpose that either the higher criticism or any other method of Scripture interpretation undertakes to prove the contrary. Prophecy of a predictive nature is just as certainly found in our Christian Scriptures as is, we may affirm, any other element.

TOPIC I—ADDENDUM

RECENT VIEWS AND LITERATURE CONCERNING THE ADVENT

The most recent views taken of our Lord’s second coming, especially in Germany and Great Britain, have been largely colored by special study of what are known as Jewish apocalypses. Those old and long almost forgotten writings, treating of subjects connected with the Messiah and the end of the world, have been hunted up, and their peculiar terms of expression and extraordinary symbolism have been used to tone down or modify the natural significance of the New Testament representation of Christ’s parousia; so that this significance is made to be quite different from what it would otherwise be. In this way it is made possible to take what are known as preterist or figurative views of the advent, and thus make our Lord’s second coming
to be either a past event or something having little or no significance connected with it. Of course, such views have been repelled by orthodox scholars; still it must be said that thus far the rationalistic or destructive critical method has much too largely prevailed.

However, this is not the only kind of literature recently produced that treats of the advent. The pre-millennialists have also been at work, and probably their late literature has, in quantity, been quite equal to that of any other eschatological school.

Some of the more recent publications treating of the advent in one way or another, which have come under our notice, are as follows:

"Unfolding of the Ages," by Ford C. Ottman (published 1905). This book professes to be written from a pre-millennial point of view; and it has been widely announced as a particularly able, exhaustive, and praiseworthy treatise on the whole subject of our Lord's second coming. We have found it to be written rather, or at least largely, from the standpoint of the futurists, and in substance it is an exposition of the book of Revelation, with frequent references to the prophecies of Daniel, which last prophecies dominate very much the special views taken in the book. The writer shows a wide and earnest study of his subject, but his notions are often of the wildest character. See especially what he says about the reviving of the Roman empire (Introd., p. xix., also the whole of chap. 13), the rebuilding of ancient Babylon (pp. 207, 237), and the pre-adamites as being now among the evil spirits against which, according to Paul, all true Christians have to wrestle (pp. 217-219).

"History Unfolding Prophecy," by H. Grattan Guinness
THAT BLESSED HOPE

(published 1906). This is also, and very decidedly, a pre-millennial publication. It is the last of Mr. Guinness' quite numerous works on eschatological topics, and, like all his other publications, it is well written and interesting. One of its peculiarities is, that it deals largely with prophetic numbers, astronomical calculations, and other such matters, not usually thought to be very reliable, but rather mystic in their nature.

"The Last Things," by J. Alger Beet (published 1906). Doctor Beet is professor of theology in the Wesleyan College at Richmond, England. His views on the final estate of the wicked, which are given largely in this book, are not considered strictly sound or orthodox; but his notions respecting the second coming of Christ, as presented also in this book, are well put, and reveal much study of the New Testament oracles—with which, on this topic, he seems to be in strict accord. See also his "Manual of Theology" (1906).

"The Eschatology of Jesus," by Rev. Lewis A. Muirhead, B. D. (published 1904). This work consists of four lectures delivered in connection with the Bruce Lectureship, in the United Free Church College, Glasgow, Scotland. Its point of view seems to be thoroughly orthodox, and it attempts, by quite a thorough consideration of the old Jewish apocalyptic literature as connected with the New Testament representations of our Lord's second coming, to solve the particular problem of the influence of that literature upon these representations, and also deduce what the author conceives to be a correct theory of Christ's parousia. While the work is interesting and reveals much thoughtful reflection as well as study in connection with its special topic, it after all fails to be very satisfactory, because its conclusions are too vague and indefinite.

"The Apocalypse, the Antichrist, and the End," by J. J. Elar (published in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1906). This book is written from the Romanist point of view, and
follows largely Bossuet and other Catholic authors. One peculiarity, however, of it is, that it makes the apocalyptic history begin, not, as Bossuet taught, with Domitian, but with Nero, whom it makes to be the original Antichrist. But another Antichrist conceived by the author as best representing in these times the old antichristian spirit, is, strange to say, the Masonic Order! And then, of course, the "beloved city" which in Rev. 20 is assaulted by Antichrist, in the last great battle, is none other than the "Mother Church" at Rome! Any theory can make what it pleases of apocalyptic matters, provided it puts into its general conception, beforehand, the very things it wants.

“The Christian Doctrine of Immortality,” by S. D. F. Salmond, D. D. (published in Edinburgh, 2d ed. 1897). This is a truly valuable work, discussing not only the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, future punishment, etc., but it also treats, in a very thorough-going and learned manner, the whole doctrine of Christ's second coming. The book is a good illustration of the possibility of holding fast to the old or so-called “traditional” views, and at the same time showing a proper regard for all the real achievements of modern scholarship.

“St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things,” by Rev. H. A. A. Kennedy (published, 2d ed., 1905). Mr. Kennedy delivered the substance of this book in a series of lectures under the auspices of the Cunningham Lecture-ship, connected with the Free Church College in Edinburgh. His point of view is thoroughly orthodox, and his treatment of the subject shows a wide range of careful study, with considerable exercise of judicious criticism.

Beyschlag's “New Testament Theology” (published first German ed. 1891, English translation, 1895). Professor Beyschlag takes the view that Christ's parousia is a process, begun at the Saviour's resurrection, and continuing in various forms of gospel triumph until the end of
time, nay, as a fellowship with the disciples, lasting even in eternity. The author is a true German scholar and speculative thinker, and his views sometimes take a wide range, but they often come wide of the mark so far as orthodoxy is concerned. Dr. Bernard Weiss' "Religion of the New Testament," also German (Eng. Trans., 1905), is a more conservative work.

Dr. Milton S. Terry's "Biblical Apocalyptics" (published 1898). We have already mentioned this book under Topic A in this appendix, and will say of it here only that with respect to the subject of Christ's advent, the author's views agree with the higher-critic or rationalistic notions in general. See references already made to the book, page 123.

Besides the above, less extended mention might be made of Dr. Geo. B. Stevens' "Theology of the New Testament," Dr. Edw. D. Morris' "Theology of the Westminster Symbols," Dr. Wm. Newton Clarke's "Outline of Christian Theology," H. H. Wendt's "Teaching of Jesus," and other like publications, in which the general subject of Christ's *parousia* is treated. Also we might call attention to quite a number of lately written articles and comments on eschatological topics, which can be found in "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible," the "Encyclopedia Biblica," some of the general encyclopedias, the "Bible Commentary," the "International Critical Commentary," the "Cambridge Bible," the "Expositor's Bible," and in some of the magazines, *e. g.*, "Bibliotheca Sacra," January, 1907; "Bible Student and Teacher," April, 1906.
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