

Second Coming of Christ

PREMILLENNIAL ESSAY

OF THE

PROPHETIC CONFERENCE,

HELD IN THE

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, NEW YORK CITY.

WITH AN

APPENDIX OF CRITICAL TESTIMONIES.

BY

NATHANIEL WEST.

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## THE COMING OF THE LORD IN ITS RELATION TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

BY THE REV. DR. JAMES H. BROOKES, PASTOR OF THE WALNUT STREET  
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DR. DAVID BROWN, in his well-known book against Pre-Millennialism, truly says, "It is a school of Scripture interpretation, it impinges upon and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith; and, when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not till it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of one's theology, and the whole tone of his spiritual character, constructing, I had almost said, a world of its own; so that holding the same faith, and cherishing the same fundamental hopes as other Christians, he yet sees things through a medium of his own, and finds everything instinct with the life which this doctrine has generated within him." (P. 6.)

Again, he remarks of the opposite doctrine: "Are there no Anti-Premillennial tendencies, which require to be guarded against? I think there are. Under the influence of such tendencies, the inspired text, as such, presents no rich and exhaustless field of prayerful and delighted investigation; exegetical inquiries and discoveries are an uncongenial element; and whatever Scripture intimations regarding the future destinies of the Church and of the world involve events out of the usual range of human occurrences, or exceeding the anticipations of enlightened Christian sagacity, are almost instinctively overlooked or softened down." (P. 9.)

Again, he declares that "Pre-Millennialists have done the Church a real service, by calling attention to the place

which the Second Advent holds in the Word of God and the scheme of Divine truth. If the controversy which they have raised should issue in a fresh and impartial inquiry into this branch of it, *I, for one, instead of regretting, shall rejoice in the agitation of it.* When they dilate upon the prominence given to this doctrine in Scripture, and the practical uses which are made of it, they touch a chord in the heart of every simple lover of his Lord, and carry conviction to all who tremble at His word; so much so, that I am persuaded that nine tenths of all who have embraced the Pre-Millennial view of the Second Advent, have done so on the supposition that no other view of it will admit of an unfettered and unmodified use of the Scripture language on the subject—that it has its proper interpretation and full force only on this theory. \* \* \* With them we affirm that 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." (Pp. 12, 13.)

Once more, at the close of his elaborate argument he beautifully writes: "Nor is it in regard to the personal appearing of the Saviour only that Pre-Millennialists will and ought to prevail against all who keep it out of sight. There is *a range of truth* connected with it which necessarily sinks out of its Scriptural position and influence whenever the coming of Christ is put out of its due place. I refer to the RESURRECTION as a co-ordinate object of the Church's hope, and to all the truths which circle around it, in which there is power to stir and to elevate, which nothing else, substituted for it, can ever possess. The resurrection life of the Head as now animating all His members, and at

length quickening them from the tomb, to be forever with Him—these, and such like, are truths in the presentation of which Pre-Millennialists are cast in the mould of Scripture, from which it is as vain, as it were undesirable, to dislodge them.” (P. 488.)

It is somewhat singular that one who made admissions so candid and so creditable alike to his head and his heart, could at the same time labor with so much ability and zeal to divert the thoughts of God’s people from a doctrine which, according to his own confession, “*IS THE VERY POLE-STAR OF THE CHURCH.*” It may be confidently asserted that those who read and receive as satisfactory the reasonings of his book, either entirely dismiss the subject of our Lord’s coming from their attention, or remand it so far to the background of their contemplation, that it utterly fails to exert any direct influence on their character and conduct. If they believe that it is fanatical and foolish to expect the Saviour’s personal appearing before the conversion of the world, or until the close of a period more than a thousand years in the future, obviously they will not dwell upon it as immediately affecting themselves, or as an event possessing any conceivable interest for the generation now living. Hence, however frequently they may speak of Death, or the Judgment, or Heaven, they never allude to Christ’s return as a hope animating them amid the vicissitudes of their own experience, and both in their public and private discourse they maintain a silence about it as profound as though it were never mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures.

Yet Dr. Brown acknowledges that “it impinges upon and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith;” that in its rejection, “the inspired text, as such, presents no rich and exhaustless field of prayerful and delighted investigation;” that when Pre-Millennialists “dilate upon the prominence given to this doctrine in Scripture,



and the practical uses which are made of it, they touch a chord in the heart of every simple lover of his Lord;" and that "there is a range of truth connected with it, \* \* \* from which it is as vain, as it were undesirable, to dislodge them." Such an acknowledgment from such a source may seem strange, but that it was demanded will be apparent, when it is remembered that, apart from the book of Revelation, *more than one twentieth* of the New Testament is occupied with the doctrine of our Lord's second coming. If the last book of the Bible is included, as all bearing upon the last days, of course the proportion is much larger. In the Old Testament certainly more than *one hundred* verses announce His second coming to every *one* verse that proclaims His first coming; and while the second is often mentioned without any allusion to the first, the first is never revealed without ample reference to the second, as if the Holy Ghost wished to hasten over the humiliation and sufferings of the former, and rejoiced to dwell upon the glory and grandeur of the latter.

#### I. RELATION TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It is impossible, within a brief hour, even to notice the important connections in which the Second Advent of our Lord is presented in the Old Testament, and only a glance can be given at its relation to the general teachings of the New Testament. But only a glance is needed to convince the attentive reader that no other truth whatever is so largely and so variously used to strengthen the faith and quicken the interest of God's dear children in all that He has been pleased to make known to them of doctrine and of duty. It may almost be said to form the basis of every argument, to give direction to every appeal, to fill out every exhortation, to terminate every warning; so that it is to other truth as a foundation to the building, as a feather to

the arrow, as ripened fruit to the bud and blossom, as eternity to time.

1. Are ministers reminded that they must present something more than professions and brilliant achievements to commend them to the Master's favor? "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7: 22, 23.)

2. Are the disciples, when they resume their special mission to Israel, cheered amid the trials to which they shall be exposed? "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." (Matt. 10: 23.)

3. Are His servants put on their guard against the pleasing delusion of expecting the triumph of His cause during the interval of His absence in the heavens? "But a fourth part of the scattered seed takes effect, and this in various degrees of fruitfulness; the tares grow with the wheat until the harvest, at the end of the age; the birds of the air, which He Himself explains as meaning the Wicked One, lodge in the branches of the great tree; a Woman conceals that which is incipient putrefaction in three measures of meal, until the whole is leavened; and not until the coming of Christ will the wicked be severed from the just." (Matt. 13.)

4. Is the gain of the whole world worse than worthless if purchased at the price of losing the soul? "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16: 26, 27.)

5. Are the Apostles told of the dignity that awaits them? "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19: 28.)

6. Is Israel meanwhile to be forsaken for the rejection of the Messiah? "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23: 38, 39.)

7. Is the close of Israel's troubled history in unparalleled tribulation the speedy precursor of another and far more momentous event? "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then 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." (Matt. 24: 29, 30.)

8. Is the moral condition of the world at His coming described? "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24: 37-39.)

9. Is a warning uttered against the error, now so common in the Church, of saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming," with its consequent worldliness? "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." (Matt. 24: 50, 51.)



10. Is the spiritual state of the Church at the second Advent portrayed? "Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. \* \* \* While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." (Matt. 25: 1-13.)

11. Is an account to be rendered of all the talents received by the followers of Christ? "After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." (Matt. 25: 19.)

12. Is judgment in store for the nations, as the result of their conduct toward those designated as the brethren of Christ? "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; and before Him shall be gathered all nations." (Matt. 25: 31-36.)

13. Does Jesus, before the high priest, and in the face of death, assert His claims as the Christ, the Son of God? "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26: 64.)

14. Does He warn men of the danger of being ashamed of Himself and of His words, including, of course, His words about His second Advent? "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." (Mark 8: 38.)

15. Does He urge the necessity of unwearied watchfulness? "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his

servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all—Watch.” (Mark 13: 33, 37.)

16. Does He enjoin upon His servants to stand with girded loins, and burning lights, and hands upon the door? “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that, when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately.” (Luke 12: 35, 36.)

17. Does He promise high honor to those who keep the posture of constant watching? “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” (Luke 12: 37, 38.)

18. Does He press the need of continual readiness for His personal advent? “Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” (Luke 12: 40.)

19. Does He teach the universal prevalence of worldliness at His appearing? “As it was in the days of Lot; 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. *Even thus* shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke 17: 28-30.)

20. Does He foretell the sad and sudden separations that shall then occur? “I tell you that in that night there

shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left.” (Luke 17: 34-36.)

21. Does He predict universal apostacy as the consequence of the failure of the Church to watch for Him, according to His repeated commands? “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find [the] faith on the earth?” (Luke 18: 8.)

22. Does He charge us to be occupied with Himself, and for Himself till He come? “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” (Luke 19: 12-27.)

23. Does He distinctly inform us of the events that shall follow, when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled? “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; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke 21: 25-28.)

24. Does He beseech us in view of all this to keep our hearts “with all diligence,” or, as it is in the margin, “above all keeping?” (Prov. 4: 23.) “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all

them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:34-36.)

25. Does He exult in the anticipation of the time when the rebellious province of earth shall be brought back into communion with heaven, and His own royal person shall be the link of restored fellowship? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John 1: 51.)

26. Does He reveal Himself as the resurrection of His people who die, and as the deliverance from death of His people who shall be living at His advent? "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11:25, 26.)

27. Does He cheer the hearts of His disciples, saddened by the announcement of His departure? "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14: 2, 3.)

28. Does He set forth the offer of the Holy Spirit in relation to Himself and His second appearing? "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16: 13, 14.)

29. Does He seek to impress the Apostles with the importance of looking for Him constantly by His remarkable



statement concerning John? "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus *said not* unto him, He shall *not die*; but, If I will that he tarry till I *come*, what is that to thee?" (John 21: 22-23.)

30. Does He give an intimation, as a powerful stimulus to what is called missionary effort, when the age of conflict and cross-bearing, so dark without the light of his manifested presence, shall close? "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.)

31. Meanwhile, were the disciples to be animated in the midst of their toil by an assurance that would gladden their hearts, and nerve their energies? "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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: 10, 11.)

32. Did they hail the day of Pentecost as a type and pledge of the mightier outpouring of the Spirit, that like a sea of glory shall spread from pole to pole, when Jesus comes? "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit; and they shall prophecy; and I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood,



before that great and notable day of the Lord come." (Acts 2: 16-20.)

33. Did they seek under the guidance of the Spirit for the most searching and arousing motive to induce men to turn unto God? "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when [in order that] the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He (the Father) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the *times* of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3: 19-21.)

34. Did they tell believers what to expect from an unfriendly world? It is their testimony, not for that day only, but for the entire age in which we live, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." (Acts 14: 22); and there is not a hint that it will be otherwise till Jesus comes.

35. Did the whole college of Apostles announce the divine purpose with respect to the times of the Gentiles, and the order of His procedure in the conversion of the world? "God, at the first, did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. [This is all He intends to do in the present dispensation.] And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return [that is, after He has taken out of the Gentiles a people for His name], and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up. [So He takes Israel again into national and covenant relations to Himself after His personal return; and then the grand and ultimate purpose is stated:] That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts 15: 14-17.)

36. Is the curse that is eating like a cancer into the bosom of the lower creation to be removed? "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God [at the second coming of Christ; see Col. 3: 4; 1 John 3: 2]. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit: the redemption of the body," at the second coming of Christ. [See 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 15: 33] (Rom. 8: 19-23).

37. Is the curse to be lifted from Israel, of whom it is said, "even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart?" (2 Cor. 3: 15.) "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. 11: 25, 26.)

38. Do we desire to reach the climax and crown of Christian attainments in grace and in knowledge? It is declared by the Holy Ghost to be "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1: 4-8.)

39. Are we forbidden to judge one another, and commanded to be indifferent to the decision of man's day? "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." (1 Cor. 4: 5.)

40. Are we raised above the ways of the world by the assurance of association with Him in the judgment at His coming? "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? \* \* \* Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3.)

41. Is it the privilege of believers to come to the Lord's table, and are all believers there at least the witnesses, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, to the truth of His second coming? "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He comes." (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

42. Is the resurrection of the body a cardinal article of their belief? "Every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. 15: 23.)

43. Does a tremendous curse await those who withhold their affections from the Son of God? "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." [the Lord cometh.] (1 Cor. 16: 22.)

44. Is there to be mutual joy between faithful ministers and their people in His presence?" "Ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." (2 Cor. 1: 14.)

45. Should it be the aim, ambition, point of honor, with believers to be well pleasing unto Him? "For we must all appear [be made manifest] before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

46. Are they confidently expecting the complete fulfillment of God's promise to His children? "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;" (Gal. 5: 5) the hope of the New Testament being always associated with the second coming of Christ. See Acts 23: 6; 26: 6, 7; 28: 20; Romans 5: 2; 8: 24; Col. 1: 5; Tit., 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 3; 1 John 3: 2, 3.

47. Has God marked us as His own by sealing us with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, and so gives us the enjoyment of His love. It is "until the redemption of the purchased possession," at the second coming of Christ. (Eph. 1: 14.)

48. Does this make it the more incumbent upon us to walk in unhindered communion with our abiding Comforter? "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4: 30.)

49. Will the purpose of the Saviour in His atoning work be accomplished? "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself [at His coming] a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25-27.)

50. Can we depend upon the perseverance of *the Lord* in the work of Salvation? "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1: 6.)

51. Does His persevering love demand the response from us of lofty aims and truthfulness and blamelessness? "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." (Phil. 1:10.)

52. Is the thought of His coming an incentive to ministerial fidelity and zeal? "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." (Phil. 2: 16.)

53. Is the government to which our allegiance is due clearly defined? "Our conversation [citizenship, or country, or commonwealth] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Phil. 3: 20, 21.)

54. Is it becoming in us to exhibit gentleness and patience of spirit? "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4: 5.)

55. Are we called to put to death our fleshy appetites?



“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify, THEREFORE, your members which are upon the earth.” (Col. 3: 4, 5.)

56. Are believers, converted from heathenism, described by the Holy Ghost? “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God: *and to wait for His Son* from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. 1: 9, 10.)

57. Will there be a glad recognition of those who have been led by our testimony and service to trust in the Saviour of sinners? “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thess. 2: 19.)

58. Should brotherly love increase and abound? It is “to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” (1 Thess. 3: 13.)

59. Is the dark cloud of sorrow hanging over the grave that hides our precious dead tinged with the golden light of hope? “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” (1 Thess. 4: 14.)

60. Have we the assurance of being with them again in a bright and happy day? “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4: 16-18.)

61. Were recently converted heathens taught by the inspired apostle, during his brief visit among them, what to



expect? "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But *ye* brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thess. 5: 1-6.)

62. Is practical and entire holiness to be sought with unceasing diligence? "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5: 23.)

63. Is a terrible punishment awaiting the despisers and neglecters of God's grace and God's Son? "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believed (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

64. Are Christians distinctly told of the course of events from the apostles' times to the personal appearing of the Lord? "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand," literally, *is present, has come, has set in*. That day can not come except that there

first comes the apostacy, for the mystery of iniquity already working then like leaven shall spread more and more, until the Antichrist is developed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit [or breath] of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [everywhere else translated appearing] of His coming," or presence. (2 Thess. 2: 1-8.)

65. In the knowledge of this do we need to stay our minds upon Him who can never fail? "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thess. 3: 5.)

66. Is the note of warning again sounded against the error of expecting the triumph of good till He comes? "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron. \* \* \* If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 4: 1-6.)

67. Is steadfast obedience enforced by the most solemn considerations? "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 6: 13, 14.)

68. Are the characteristic features of the last days as unlike the common anticipation of the progress of truth and righteousness, as darkness is unlike light? "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, true breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors,

heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof \* \* \* But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3: 1-5.)

69. Because of these abounding evils in the Church are ministers to be doubly on their guard against the temptation to preach sensational and unscriptural sermons? "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing and kingdom [so Alford on the authority of all the oldest MSS.] preach the Word." (2 Tim. 4: 1, 2.)

70. Is there something left to cheer the heart of the faithful witness for Christ, even when the people will no longer "endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables? I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course;" "I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.)

71. Are ministers told what to preach? "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. \*

\* \* These things speak." (Tit. 2: 11-15.)

72. Does God intend that His son shall be crowned with glory and honor on the very theatre of His humiliation and death? "But when he again hath introduced the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. 1: 6.) Alford's translation.

73. Is faith in the second Advent essential to salvation? "Christ was offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 28.)

74. Has it pleased the Comforter to console His people in the midst of reproaches and afflictions, and despised companionships and the spoiling of their goods? "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10: 37.)

75. Is a spirit of resolute endurance required under the pressure of temptation? "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried [everywhere else rendered approved], he shall receive the crown of life (at Christ's second coming; see Tim. 4: 18, Rev. 2: 10), which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." (Jas. 1: 12.)

76. Is the heart burdened by the crimes and cruelties that meet the eye, and by the cries of the oppressed that reach the ear every day? "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (Jas. 5: 7-8.)

77. Is murmuring against one another unseemly while the world's destruction lowers, and glory is dawning for believers? "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the Judge standeth before the door." (Jas. 5: 9.)

78. Is there cause for great rejoicing even when in heaviness through manifold temptations? "That the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1: 7.)



79. Was the completed salvation, to be brought at our Lord's appearing, the subject of diligent inquiry by the holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. 1: 11.)

80. Is this completed salvation an object set before us in the Gospel to arouse and to strengthen? "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1: 13.)

81. Are we to live with His promised revelation constantly in view? "The end of all things is at hand; be therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Pet. 4: 7.)

82. Does His expected revelation turn the sufferings to which we are exposed as Christians into an occasion of rejoicing? "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4: 13.)

83. Are pastors urged to fidelity and self-denying labor, and conduct forming an example to the flock? "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5: 4.)

84. Have we more sure the prophetic word by the significant and typical scene on the Mount of Transfiguration? "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty." (2 Pet. 1: 16.)

85. Are Christians warned that there shall be false teachers among them, and that a sign of the final apostacy will be the denial of Christ's coming? "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers walking



after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3 : 3-4.)

86. Is the reason given for the tarrying of the Lord at the right hand of God? "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, but not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3 : 9.)

87. Should the certainty and the suddenness of His coming keep us ever on the alert, armed against sin? "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, \* \* what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God." (2 Pet. 3 : 10-12.)

88. Is the only safeguard to remain in unclouded communion with Christ? "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John 2 : 28.)

89. Do we wait for the manifestation of our high calling and dignity, as those who have been through grace made partakers of the divine nature? "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and 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.)

90. Would we know the spirit of deceivers and of Antichrist? "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come (coming) in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist." (2 John 7.)

91. Would we know the testimony and preaching of a man who walked with God, and pleased God? "Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14: 15.)

92. Would we strike the key-note of the last book of the Bible? "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1:7.)

93. Amid increasing perils are we to keep the attainments hitherto made in grace? "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come." (Rev. 2:25.)

94. If in the midst of these perils we have slipped, are we to return to Him from whom we have wandered? "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. 3:3.)

95. Is there danger of growing disheartened by the sore conflict, and thus of losing His approval? "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.)

96. Would we walk in shining raiment with the redeemed? "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15.)

97. Does the Lord, for whom the weary Church has long waited, and for whom suffering creation has groaned, at last come forth in glory and majesty? "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. \* \* \* \* And

He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:11-16.)

98. Is it most important that we give heed to the promises and threatenings and teachings of God's final revelation to man? "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Rev. 22:7.)

99. Do we desire the reward which our returning Lord will delight to bestow upon His faithful servants? "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22:12.)

100. Above all, do we desire Himself? "Surely I come quickly; Amen." And surely He expects to hear from every heart that is true to Him the eager response, even so, come Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20.) With these sweet words of promise falling from His lips, His voice is heard no more on earth, and the Sacred Scriptures are sealed as complete.

#### ADMISSIONS OF POST-MILLENNIALISTS.

Very many similar texts might be quoted, but enough has been said to show that this great truth runs like a golden cord through the entire New Testament from beginning to end, touching every doctrine, binding every duty, arousing, consoling, directing, guarding, inspiring the believer at every step of his pilgrimage. As a motive, an incentive and an end, it has a prominence assigned to no other thought. Wherever we turn it arrests the eye; whatever the subject of inquiry, it engages the attention by its commanding presence. In the fine language of the Rev. John Ker, it is "in the New Testament the great event that towers above every other. The heaven, that gives back Christ, gives back all that we have loved and lost, solves all doubts and ends all sorrows. His coming looks in upon the whole life

of His 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. It may surely be for us to consider whether our removal of Christ's coming further from us in feeling does not arise from a less vivid impression of its reality and surpassing moment." (Sermons, p. 176.)

It is one purpose of this Conference, with His blessing, to change these "moments of high conviction" into the life-time posture of the soul; and, as far as He may be pleased, to own our testimony for the good of other Christians, in the words of Professor Hackett, to "bring both their conduct and their style of religious instruction into nearer correspondence with the lives and teaching of the primitive examples of our faith." Again he says, referring to the return of Christ at the end of the age, "that event was always near to the feelings and consciousness of the first believers. It was the great consummation on which the strongest desires of their souls were fixed, to which their thoughts and hopes were habitually turned. They lived in expectation of it; they labored to be prepared for it; they were constantly, in the expressive language of Peter, 'looking for and hastening unto it.' The Apostles, the first Christians in general, comprehended the grandeur of that occasion; it filled their circle of view, stood forth to their contemplations as the point of culminating interest in their own and the world's history; threw into comparative insignificance the present time, death, all intermediate events, and made them feel that the manifestation of Christ, with its consequences of indescribable moment to all true believers, was the grand object which they were to keep in



view as the end of their toils, the commencement and perfection of their glorious immortality. In such a state of intimate sympathy with an event so habitually present to their thoughts, they derived, they must have derived, their chief incentives to action from the prospect of that future glory; they hold it up to the people of God to encourage them in affliction, to awaken them to fidelity, zeal, and perseverance, and appeal to it to warn the wicked and impress upon them the necessity of preparation for the revelations of that day." [Hackett on Acts, pp. 63, 64.]

That it was indeed "always near to the feelings and consciousness of the first believers" is admitted and proved by all post-millennial expositors and writers, as Drs. Hodge, Barnes, Brown and others; that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost presented it as an object of hope to those who lived in the days of the Apostles must also be apparent to the careful reader of the New Testament; and this is the fact that sets forth in the clearest and strongest light the relation of Christ's coming to Christian doctrine. It is a profound remark of Trench, speaking of the tarrying of the bridegroom, that "we may number this among the many hints, which were given by our Lord, that it was possible the time of His return might be delayed beyond the expectation of His first disciples. It was a hint, and no more; if more had been given, if the Lord had said plainly that He would not come for many centuries, then the first ages of the Church would have been placed in a disadvantageous position, being deprived of that powerful motive to holiness and diligence supplied to each generation of the faithful by the possibility of the Lord's return in their time. It is not that He desires each succeeding generation to believe that He will certainly return in their time, for He does not desire our faith and our practice to be founded on an error, as, in that case, the faith and practice of all gener-



ations would be. But it is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ that it should be possible at any time, that no generation should consider it improbable in theirs." (Notes on the Parables, pp. 207, 208.)

#### ITS RELATION TO THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

First, then, it illustrates and manifests the unity of the Church with a distinctness to which the Post-Millennial theory can lay no claim. It is not our province to make this unity, but we are responsible to keep and to exhibit it amid the distractions and divisions of the world. But of what does the Church on earth consist? Not simply of the number in any one generation who have been linked by the Holy Ghost to the risen Christ, but of the entire number of believers between the ascension and return of our Lord; "for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is [the] Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13.) Christ is exalted to be "the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 22, 23); and if His second coming is the hope of one member of that body, it is the hope of all the members. It did not please God to reveal the time of His coming, because He would set it as a beautiful bow in the dark cloud, overshadowing the entire interval of His Son's absence from the earth, that from one end to the other of the dispensation all faces might be turned up in faith and expectation. Hence our Saviour could bid His immediate followers watch for Him, and Paul could say, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together" with the risen dead,

and all of the Apostles could represent the Advent as nigh; for its nearness to one believer is the measure of its nearness to the entire body, viewed in its unity. Moreover, the conviction of its nearness necessarily sinks out of sight the minor differences that separate Christians, and as Saul of Tarsus, dazzled by the brightness that flashed upon him on the road to Damascus, declares, "I could not see for the glory of that light," so we can not see the motes in the eyes of our brethren while gazing upon the splendor of that approaching Advent. The Assembly now convened furnishes striking evidence of its power to bring believers together on a common ground, to bear a common testimony to the blessedness of a common hope.

#### RELATION TO THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

Second—The Pre-Millennial coming of our Lord alone vindicates the Divine honor and sovereignty. Those who reject the doctrine constantly affirm that it disparages the Gospel by representing it as a failure, and the work of the Holy Spirit by intimating that it is inadequate to the conversion of the world. But a moment's reflection is sufficient to show that it exalts the Gospel by proving that it accomplishes all it was designed to effect, and the work of the Holy Spirit by demonstrating that He saves all He intended to save during the present dispensation. It is not a question of what God might do, but of what He proposes to do, as revealed in His word. It has already been seen, as announced by the Apostles, that God's purpose is not to convert all the Gentiles before the return of Christ, but to take out of them a people for His name; and if one verse of the Scripture from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation can be found to assert the conversion of the world previous to that return, pre-millennialists will agree to hold their peace forever after. On the other hand, the post-millennial

heresy disparages the Gospel and the work of the Spirit by forcing the conclusion that they are unable to reach the end they were ordained to attain. If it was God's purpose to bring in the millennium by agencies now employed, the most careless observer can see that it has been signally defeated for more than eighteen hundred years, and, judging the future by the past, the only way of judging apart from prophetic testimony, there is little prospect of achieving greater success in the time to come.

Where are the churches planted by apostolic hands and watered with the blood of martyrs? They have long since perished. Where are the countries over which the disciples of Jesus, in the first and second centuries, swept as an army with banners? Under the black pall of spiritual death. Where is the city or town or village in the most highly favored portion of Christendom, all of whose inhabitants even profess to believe in the Son of God? According to Professor Hitchcock's statistics in his *Analysis of the Holy Bible*, of the earth's population, there are 195,000,000 Roman Catholics, 160,000,000 Mohammedans, 340,000,000 Buddhists, 460,000,000 Pagans and other heathen religionists, and 97,139,000 Protestants in name. Of these last, so few comparatively, what a "little flock" follow the Good Shepherd; what an overwhelming majority remain utterly indifferent to His voice, or fiercely oppose His claims? Wars and rumors of wars, famines and pestilences, anxiety and unrest everywhere, scientific men burning incense to their own vanity, the masses upheaving with mad efforts to destroy the foundations of all governments, appalling crimes and shocking villianies loading the columns of our daily journals, infidelity garrisoned within the Church, the world blaspheming in its rage and pain, the virgins asleep—such is the picture our Lord Himself drew of the course of the present age, "till He come." It is a picture true to the

facts of human experience and observation, and it is submitted to the consideration of the candid inquirer, whether the hope of His coming to quiet this confusion and to quell this turbulence does not glorify Him more than the boast of a religious progress, which even ungodly men can see is a delusion and a snare, and a mirage of the desert.

## RELATION TO THE CURSE.

Third—This leads us to glance at His coming in relation to the promised removal of the curse from the face and bosom of suffering creation. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Rom. 5: 12.) To fallen Adam it was said: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” (Gen. 3: 17, 18.) From that day to this the curse has smitten the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the king and the peasant, the philosopher and the savage alike, and diffused its virulent poison through the whole system of nature. The winds with their ominous moan, the lower animals that once crouched lovingly at man’s feet, the dumb earth reluctantly yielding her riches to his toil, and the waves with their resistless might, seem to have conspired against the destroyer of their peace, as if they would hurry him into the grave. But the word of God that liveth and abideth forever tells of a time, and that, too, while nations exist, when “there shall be no more curse” (Rev. 22: 30); when “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” (Isaiah 11: 6.)

It is obvious that the spread of Christianity, however widely extended; personal devotedness to the Saviour, how-



ever fervent; the suppression of moral evils, however thorough, can never arrest disease and decay and death, nor extract malaria from the soil, nor cause the fir tree to grow instead of the thorn, and the myrtle tree in place of the brier. If, however, post-millennialists insist that the cow and the bear feeding together, the lion eating straw like an ox, the sucking child playing unharmed on the hole of the asp, the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose, and the thirsty land becoming springs of water, are to be understood spiritually, being nothing more than poetical metaphors to show the transforming power of the Gospel, they are forced to conclude that the curse will rush onward in its desolating career through the entire period of their anticipated millennium. Storms will continue to burst in unsparing fury upon earth and sea; creation will continue to groan in her travailing throes; plague and pestilence will continue their work of destruction; sickness and pain will continue to invade every household; death will continue to lay his ruffian grasp on every quivering form, hard labor, corroding care, bitter poverty, darkened homes, blighted hopes,

"The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to,"

will continue to harass, and waste and kill, as the thousand years roll on, until a great cry would ascend to God to bring such a millennium to a speedy end.

But He is better than men think, for "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." It is reserved for the Second Man in person, and on the very earth that held His cross, to remove the curse inflicted by the first man; and it is strange that one loyal to Him can wish it to be

otherwise. When the expectation of His personal coming dropped out of the faith and hope of the Church after three hundred years of blessed testimony and successful service, she did little through the dark ages to bear His name to the perishing millions; and this was dishonoring to Him as the Prophet and Priest of His people. But since the era of modern missions, she boasts that she can and will repair the ruins of the fall, and reign on the earth, while He has gone into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom, and to return; and this is no less dishonoring to Him as the Anointed King of the nations. Some, at least, thank God, do not desire her coronation until His own royal hand shall seat her beside Him on the throne, for they are singing day by day, with full intelligence of its meaning,

“Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown HIM Lord of all!”

#### RELATION TO JUSTIFICATION.

Fourth—His pre-millennial coming sustains a relation to the doctrine of Justification equally direct and important. Owing to the prevalence of the unscriptural theory that by the combined efforts of civilization and religion the world grows better as it grows older, not only is the sovereignty of God in the bestowal of His grace banished from the emasculated theology of the day, but men are thrown upon their own resources for salvation. According to the preaching too frequently heard, even where there is no bold denial of the plain statements of Scripture concerning the future punishment of the wicked, conversion is regarded as a long and laborious process, a result of culture under self-imposed restraints, or a conformity to ecclesiastical rules and regulations, with a vague and indefinite hope that all this may purchase a title to heaven. According to the

Gospel, "He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life." (John 3: 3.) "By Him all that believe ARE justified from all things." (Acts 13: 39.) "To him that worketh not, but believed on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counteth for righteousness," (Romans 4: 5,) and "Being justified by faith we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5: 1.) All is simple, clear and pressing, as if there were urgent need of haste in delivering the message, and of haste no less urgent on the part of those who listen to receive it, and straight-way rejoice.

Those who spoke knew that Christ might come while they were speaking, and they would have those who heard to know it likewise, that they might lay hold of eternal life without a moment's delay. They must be like the dying thief, who had no time to make himself better, but was shut up to the necessity of believing the promise of Jesus; they must be like multitudes of Christians on a dying bed, of whom it is said they received dying grace, because at last they are forced to turn from the trying to trusting, when it ought to have been living grace all along; they must have been like those of whom the Master spoke in view of His coming. "He which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." (Luke 17: 31.) No one can really look for His Advent as possible every day, as not improbable any day, without being cast upon His finished work alone for justification, and upon His faithful word alone for assurance. Nor will it answer to substitute death for His personal coming, because death is not mentioned in Scripture as that which is set before believers, and because it is notoriously the most powerless and the most fruitless argument that can be addressed to men. It is something

far more impressive than a solitary death that demands immediate attention, and that sends out the stirring words, "Come; for all things are now ready (Luke 14: 17); "Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2); "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1); "now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2: 13); "Beloved, now are we the Sons of God; and 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).

#### RELATION TO SANCTIFICATION.

Fifth—His second coming has a bearing, that can be scarcely noticed, upon the doctrine of Sanctification, not only in its power, when heartily received, to separate us from a doomed world, to make us watchful over our own hearts, and to consecrate us with sustained energy and enthusiasm to Christ, but as indicating the point at which sanctification is completed. There is a sense in which believers are already sanctified, for we read, "To them that ARE sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1: 2); "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. 1: 31); "But ye are washed, but ye ARE sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our Lord" (1 Cor. 7: 11); "By the which will we ARE sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10: 10); "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that ARE sanctified" (Heb. 10: 14). But using the term at present in its commonly accepted sense, as implying progressive holiness, or the increasing ascendancy of the new man over the old man, of the spirit over the flesh, what thoughts cluster



about it in the light of our Lord's second Advent! Post-millennialists invariably make it end at death, and thus turn our attention to that which is the curse, the consequence and the conquest of sin, to the clammy sweat, the glazing eye, the labored breathing, the coffin, the grave, the worm and corruption, as the goal to which the Holy Spirit's discipline and teachings conduct the believer. It is needless to say that no such view is presented in Scripture. There, a far higher and nobler object is set before us: "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. 3: 13); "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 23); "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2: 28). This, and not death, is the appropriate and glorious termination of our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and that coming accounts for the two-fold form in which sanctification, and other doctrines of God's word, are revealed. We are sanctified now through the cleansing blood, should He come to-day; should He be pleased to tarry yet a little longer we will have larger and still larger experiences of His sustaining and sanctifying grace amid trials and conflicts here below.

#### RELATION TO INSPIRATION.

Sixth—the relation of the Second Coming to the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures must not be entirely overlooked, even in so imperfect an outline of the connection in which the great truth stands in the New Testament. Those who witness for this truth have fought the battle with its

enemies on the ground of ecclesiastical history, and on the ground of Biblical exegesis, and have triumphantly carried both points, proving that the early disciples looked for the Advent of Christ, and that this Advent was nothing but His literal and personal return to the earth. Forced to abandon their former position, Post-Millennial ministers and writers are now taking a new stand, far more dangerous to the souls of men, and far more dishonoring to the Lord. They are boldly asserting that holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, *were mistaken* when they taught the people to look for His coming. Thus in a recent and popular work it is said: "This expectation is expressed by all the Apostles in terms which fairly admit of no other interpretation. It is found in Paul (Rom. 13: 11, 12; 1 Cor. 7: 29-31; 10: 11; Phil. 4: 5; 1 Tim. 6: 14). \* \* The same expectation is expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews (10: 25, 37); in the Epistle of James (5: 3, 8); in the Epistles of Peter (1 Peter 4: 7; 2 Peter 3: 3); in the First Epistle of John (2: 18); and in the Apocalypse (1: 1; 2: 11; 22: 7, 22, 20). To put any other construction on these passages, as if the Parousia to which they refer was anything else than the Second Advent of the Lord to Judgment, would introduce a dangerous license in interpretation, and one which might be employed to subvert the principal doctrines of the Christian system. Under the general expectations of the Apostles, mistaken though it might prove to be in the one particular of time, there lay a fundamental truth. \* \* \* It is not strange that this expectation, which appears so distinctly and frequently in the Epistles, should tinge the phraseology in which the Evangelists record the prophetic utterances of Jesus. That a verbal exactitude belongs always to these reports of the Saviour's teachings is claimed by no intelligent person who has compared the Gospels with one another. Jesus taught

in the Aramaic dialect; His teaching was transmitted orally, for a time, before it was embodied in a written form; His sayings are often condensed by the Evangelists, and given in an order not corresponding precisely to that in which they were uttered." (The Beginning of Christianity, pp. 366-9.) Is it possible that those who oppose the truth of our Lord's pre-millennial coming are pushed to an extreme so frightful as this? Was Jesus incorrectly reported? But where meanwhile was the Holy Ghost?

It is astonishing that the distinguished author says the Apostles were mistaken in the one particular of time, when in the very next paragraph, referring to the teachings of Christ, it is stated, "that the time of the Second Advent and consummation of the kingdom, he declares to be not a subject of revelation." How could they be mistaken in that which was not a subject of revelation? They were not taught that He would, or would not, come at any fixed time, but they were taught to look for Him continually, and, should they die before His Advent, to hand down their believing expectation of it as the most precious legacy they could bequeath their successors, that so His coming might be the one radiant star of hope in the firmament of revealed truth for the entire Church. But if it "would introduce a dangerous license in interpretation, and one which might be employed to subvert the principal doctrines of the Christian system," to refer the numerous statements of Scripture on this subject to anything else than the Second Advent of the Lord, it is a much more dangerous license to say that the Apostles were mistaken in their teachings. If they were mistaken on this point, they may have been mistaken on other points, and infidelity is the logical and inevitable result of affirming either the one or the other. It is becoming quite the fashion to treat lightly and irreverently

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\*So Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 468.

the authority of the Bible, whenever it runs counter to some popular theory, or scientific assertion, or humanitarian scheme; and to one who knows that the very words of Scripture were given by the Holy Ghost the tendency of the pulpit in this direction is exceedingly alarming. It is sad to see the author just quoted fostering such a tendency by declaring that the Apostles were mistaken in their expectation, though he admits that it was "an expectation that was not extinguished by the disappointment of it in the first age of Christianity, but is expressed in most of the Fathers in the second century; for Origen, who died A. D. 254, seems to have been the first to suggest that the Gospel, by its new moral power, through the Spirit, would overcome heathenism in the Roman Empire." (9. 369.)

#### RELATION TO THE RESURRECTION.

Seventh—The relation of our Lord's second coming to the doctrine of the resurrection is too well known to require extended remark, even if time permitted. The two are intimately and indissolubly associated in the Scriptures, though the fatal habit of spiritualizing away the one has, to a fearful extent, led to the denial of the literality of the other. Nor is this result surprising, painful as it is to see the abandonment of a doctrine so prominent in the word of God, and so peculiar to Christian faith. If the frequent allusions to the Advent of Christ, running all through the New Testament, can be perverted to mean a thousand different things, it is not strange that those who are perplexed by scientific arguments against the reality of the resurrection should seek to explain it as referring only to some spiritual change at death. But one is as literal as the other, and both stand or fall together: "Christ the first fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's, at his coming." (1 Cor. 15: 23.) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven



with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17.) Hence in His sublime announcement to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He includes the whole dispensation within the sweep of the statement that follows: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" then reaching on to the time of His advent, He adds: "and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.)

Hence, too, there is nothing, and in the very nature of the scheme of redemption there can be nothing, between believers and that promised Advent, with its attendant resurrection of the righteous dead. The first step is to be in Christ, of whom it is said, "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2: 10); the next step is to be with Christ in the glory; for "whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8: 30.) The first step is to receive Christ by faith, the next step is to wait for Christ from heaven. There is no need of delay, either to secure additional title to the incorruptible inheritance, or to acquire fitness for its possession, since that cry which shook earth and hell was heard ascending from the dying Saviour, "It is finished." (John 19: 30.) The atoning work is done; the debt is paid; the law is satisfied; the vindicated justice of God demands no more; "and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 17.) Judgments are in store for Israel and for the world; but there is no judgment for those who are already in a risen and ascended Christ.

"God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins HATH quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are [were] saved);

and HATH raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 4-6). "Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood" (Col. 1: 12-14). "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment] but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24). "He that believeth on Him is not condemned," or judged (John 3: 18). "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4: 17).

It was to be expected, therefore, that even the first pagan converts having turned to God from idols, to serve the Living and True God, would be taught "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1: 10). There was nothing else, there could have been nothing else, set before them as the hope of the Gospel; for, if the grave intervened, it was only in the touching words of the inscription on Dean Alford's tomb, "The inn of a traveler on his way to the New Jerusalem."

Should the objection be raised that they waited in vain, and that their hope met with a cruel disappointment, the reply is, their bodies are waiting still in the assurance of a glorious resurrection in His coming. They laid their dead to rest, comforted with the thought that before they left the place of burial the Lord Himself might descend from Heaven with a kingly and conquering shout to His own sleeping and living saints to awaken the former and to change the latter, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;" for had He not in the last chapter of the Bible three

times repeated the promise, "I come quickly?" There is no revolution of the earth upon its axis in that bright world of which it is said, "there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21: 25); and ages fly swiftly where all is glory and gladness. When the voice sounds from the celestial city, "Surely, I come quickly," it is counting time as it is reckoned by Him with whom a thousand years are as one day (2 Peter 3: 8), and, according to the chronology of heaven, not two days have yet passed since the risen Jesus, with uplifted hands in the act of priestly blessing, ascended from the Mount of Olives. The evident purpose of the constant representations in the New Testament of the nearness of His advent is to keep His Church in the attitude of eager expectation and unceasing watchfulness, like Rebekah under the wise guidance of Eliezar, who was a type of the Holy Spirit. Charmed with the story and with the proof he gave of the bridegroom's love and wealth, she left her father and mother, and brother and childhood's home for a distant land. But no account is placed on record of the long journey. "The servant took Rebekah and went his way;" and the very next statement is "*and Isaac came*" (Gen. 24: 61, 62).

Brethren in the Lord, we are not prophets, we are only humble students of the prophetic word; and, while it is not for us "to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His power" (Acts 1: 7), it certainly becomes us, after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years, to shout with increased earnestness and urgency the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24: 14.) When the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled "there shall be 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; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21: 25-28.) The long and perilous journey is almost finished; the conflict of centuries will soon close in songs of victory. Xenophon relates that the Greeks, after the death of Cyrus, were exposed to innumerable hardships in their retreat through hostile countries. They were forced to face the bitter blasts of Winter, and marched through snows, and were scorched by the burning sun, and crossed pestilential marshes, and scaled steep mountains, and stormed forts and citadels, and were harrassed at every step by their wary and relentless foes. At last the vanguard ascended a mountain and gave a great shout, which, when Xenophon, and those in the rear, heard, they concluded that some other enemies attacked them in front. \* \* \* The noise still increasing as they came nearer, and the men, as fast as they came up, running to those who still continued shouting, their cries swelled with their numbers so that Xenophon, thinking that something more than ordinary had happened, mounted on horseback, and taking with him Lycius and his horse, rode up to their assistance, and presently they heard all the soldiers calling out, "Sea! Sea!" and cheering one another. At this they all set a running, the rear-guard as well as the rest, and the beasts of burden and horses were driven forward. When they were all come up to the top of the mountain they embraced one another, and also their generals and captains, with tears in their eyes." (Expedition of Cyrus, p. 250.)

Courage, fellow-soldiers, for we shall soon behold the sea, with its placid bosom kept in millennial repose by the divine "Peace, be still" of Jesus; and upon its "shining



shore" we shall ever be with the Lord. We must expect reproach and ridicule, for no great truth of God's word that had sunk into obscurity has ever been restored to its appropriate prominence except at the cost of suffering and struggling to its witnesses. We must expect that some who advance with us to the battle, discouraged by difficulties and intimidated by dangers, will throw away their arms, or desert to the enemy. But supported as we are by the authority and example of the Captain of our Salvation, and of all His inspired apostles, by the faith of the Church for three hundred years, by the teaching of men eminent for their piety and learning through the centuries that are past, by the felt power of "looking for that blessed hope" to raise our thoughts above the world, let us press on, cheered by the assurance that, if we gain not the applause of men, we receive the approval of the Master, and at "our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2: 1), we shall hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matt. 35: 22.) "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13: 12). It is not for us who are gazing through the gloom for the appearing of the Morning Star to take counsel of our fears, or to be governed by a time-serving policy in our testimony, "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10: 37.)

"Brother, up to the breach,  
For Christ's coming and truth,  
Let us act as we teach,

With the wisdom of age, and the vigor of youth.  
Heed not their cannon balls;  
Ask not who stands or falls;  
Grasp the sword  
Of the Lord,  
And—forward!"