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I. THE NEW PNEUMATOLOGY.

The genetic principle of the New Theology, the dynamic force with which it reconstructs the Old and organizes the New, is the *Immanence of God*.

Immanence and Transcendence are philosophical antitheses. Immanence (*immaneo*) literally means to remain in, indwelling, inhabiting, while Transcendence (*transcendeo*) literally means to go beyond, surpass, stand above, be superior to. An immanent soul is an embodied soul, an incarnated spirit, such as are all living men; a transcendent soul is one which has gone beyond the material organism, a disembodied soul. An immanent God is a world-embodied God, an intramundane God; a transcendent God is one which stands above the world and is superior to it and in no sense a part of it, an extramundane God. The life of an immanent God is an outflow; the life of a transcendent God is an inflow. An immanent God evolves; a transcendent God creates. An immanent God is natural; a transcendent God is supernatural. An immanent God operates *ad intra*; a transcendent God acts *ad extra*. An immanent God is related to the world as the Three Persons in the Godhead are related to each other; a transcendent God is related to the world in an extramundane and supersensible manner. Paternity, filiation, spiration, within the circle of the Godhead, are immanent and intrasitive acts; creation, providence, miracles, redemption are transcendent

IV. THE COMINGS OF OUR LORD.

It is the contention of pre-millennial writers, that those passages in New Testament prophecy which speak of the Coming of our Lord have sole reference to his second, visible appearance at the end of this dispensation, and never refer to an invisible coming through the Holy Spirit or in visitations of providence or at death. However great the difficulties necessitated by this exclusive reference, however apposite the sense in many places, if understood to allude to a spiritual coming, or however strong the exegetical argument to sustain this latter sense, we are told that the former application is in the New Testament invariable. And well may they make this contention. For to concede the contrary would be to surrender the entire argument on which the imminency of the second Advent is based and to jeopard the whole millennial outlook as it looms before their vision.

We should not minimize the doctrine of the second Advent, or overlook its prominence in Scripture. A correct understanding of the resurrection, the final judgment, the spread of the gospel among the nations, the nature of the Messianic kingdom and the method of its introduction, and other vital doctrines hinge on the right conception of the return of our Lord and our relation to that Coming. Yet we meet with misleading statements as to the prominence of this return itself in Scripture. We are told the number of verses that allude to this sublime event, the percentage of space in the New Testament and in the ancient prophets that is devoted to it. But many of the references cited do not bear upon the personal Coming. Others simply allude to "that day," or to the resurrection, the judgment, the coming glory, or other matters incidental to, and chronologically subsequent to, the final Coming. And brethren who in their teachings and their prayers give a prominence to these things without specifically

connecting them with his Coming, or using that as a blanket phrase to cover all attending and connected blessings, are sometimes accused of neglecting the important fact of their Saviour's blessed return and minimizing its importance in the practical life. But emphasis on these things is emphasis on the latter. We do not dissociate them. These are the concrete and tangible blessings that stimulate our hope. Not to name, with studied regularity, that great and loved event which is the spring of all our pious anticipations and the precursor of the coming kingdom, need not imply its neglect. Nor do Christians who hold that the Scriptures speak of spiritual and invisible Comings of Christ merit the charge freely cast against them of rationalizing and of having drifted from the early faith. In the warmth with which they declaim against the doctrine of a spiritual and figurative coming of our Lord to his church or into the hearts of his people, many pre-millenarian writers openly charge brethren who understand Scripture to so teach, in certain passages, as holding that only in such Comings is he expected ever to return, and as denying any ultimate personal return whatever. In fact, some pre-millenarians seem to think that belief in a personal Advent is confined to themselves, and that those who repudiate a premillennial advent are not expecting a personal return of their Lord at all. Mr. Burgh calls pre-millenarians "modern expectants of the Lord's coming," as if they monopolized that expectation. At every prophetic conference addresses are made to establish the fact of a personal coming, as though the reality, rather than the time and the objects of that Coming, was the issue in controversy. All this is on the tacit assumption that they who see returns of Christ at Pentecost, or into men's hearts, or in the progress of the gospel, or at death, regard that as exhausting the prophecies of the Parousia, or as denying that there is to be, after these, a further and crowning return of the Glorified One in visible and personal splendor.

I. Often the Coming of Christ is spoken of absolutely, with-

out any statement as to what it is or when it will be. If it can be shown that the Scriptures speak of other comings than the final one at the end of the age, it cannot be affirmed off-hand that this last Coming is necessarily meant, in cases where the context does not explicitly affirm that that is the coming alluded to.

Now the Coming of Christ is sometimes spoken of as near at hand, and sometimes as distant. It is, therefore, not a single fact, but something comprehensive and continuous. He is constantly with us. Yet there are special seasons of extraordinary manifestation in which his presence is more vividly realized. These form a Parousia of Christ and on these the development of his church and kingdom is dependent. Dr. Hodge, commenting on Rom. 13:11, says, "We are not to understand the expressions, 'day of the Lord,' 'the appearing of Christ,' 'the coming of the Son of Man,' in all cases in the same way. The day of the Lord is a very familiar expression in Scripture to designate any time of the special manifestation of the divine presence, either for judgment or mercy. See Ezek. 13:5; Joel 1:15; Is. 2:12; 13:6, 9. So also God or Christ is said to come to any person or place when he makes any remarkable exhibition of his power or grace. Hence the Son of Man was to come for the destruction of Jerusalem before the people of that generation all perished; and the summons of death is sometimes represented as the coming of Christ to judge the soul. What is the meaning of such expressions must be determined by the context in each particular case."

According to Meyer, Jesus has spoken of his advent in a three-fold sense. "1. That outpouring of the Holy Ghost which was shortly to take place and which was actually fulfilled; see John 14:1, ff.; 16:16, 20, ff., also on Eph., 2:17. 2. That historical manifestation of his majesty and power which would be seen immediately after his ascension to the Father, in the triumphs of his cause upon the earth, of which Mat. 26:64 furnishes an undoubted example. 3. His coming

in the strict eschatological sense, to raise the dead, to hold the last judgment, and to set up his kingdom, which is also distinctly indicated in such passages as John 6:40, 54; 5:28; in connection with which it is to be observed that in John the 'I will raise him up at the last day' does not imply any such nearness of the thing as is implied when the spiritual advent is in question; but on the contrary presupposes generally that believers will have to undergo death." . Again he says in substance that though our Lord predicted his second Coming as an event close at hand, without understanding it, however, in the literal sense of the word: though in so doing he availed himself to some extent of such prophetic phraseology as had come to be the stereotyped language for describing the future establishment of the literal kingdom of the Messiah, (Mat. 26:64), and in this way made use of notions connected with this literal kingdom for the purpose of embodying his conceptions of the ideal event. It is nevertheless conceivable that in the minds of the disciples the sign of Christ's speedy entrance into the world again came to be associated and ultimately identified with the expectation of a literal kingdom. This is all the more conceivable when we consider how difficult it was for them to realize anything so ideal as an invisible return, and how natural it was for them to apprehend literally the figurative language in which Jesus predicted this return; how apt they were, in consequence, to take everything he said about his second Coming in the three-fold sense above mentioned, as having reference to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. The separating and sifting of the heterogeneous elements that were blended together in their imaginations, Jesus appears to have left to the influence of future development, instead of undertaking this task himself, by directly correcting the errors to which this confusion gave rise (Acts 1:7, 8.) "The coming of Christ," says Bishop Waldegrave, "viewed from the human side is a phrase not always to be held to one meaning. The Holy Scriptures beyond all doubt recognize potential and spiritual, as well as personal, comings

of the Lord. See for potential comings, Mat. 10:23 ; Rev. 2:5, 16, 25 ; 3:3, 10. For spiritual comings, see Ps. 101, 2 ; John 14:18, 21-23 ; Rev. 3:20. In like manner the Scripture recognizes a potential and spiritual as distinct from a personal presence of Christ with his people. See Mat. 18:20 ; 28:20 ; Mk. 16:20 ; 2 Tim. 4:17. Since such potential and spiritual comings and presence, when translated into the language of imagery, naturally assume the outward appearance of a personal and visible coming and presence, this fact will abundantly account for the use of language expressive of potential and spiritual comings, like Ps. 102:13-16 ; Is. 19:1, 16, 19-21 ; 40:10 ; 59:20 ; Zech. 2:10-12 ; or expressive of potential and spiritual presence, like that in Ps. 135:21 ; Is. 12:6 ; 24:23 ; 60:13 ; Ezek. 41:22 ; 43:1-9 ; 44:2 ; Joel 2:27 ; 3:17, 21 ; Mic. 4:7 ; Zeph. 3:15 ; Zech. 6:12, 13 ; 8:3, without expecting a personal reign of Christ upon earth as its only adequate counterpart."

Says F. W. Robertson : "There are many comings of Christ. Christ came in the flesh as a mediatorial presence, Christ came at the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ came, a spiritual presence when the Holy Ghost was given, Christ comes now in every signal manifestation of redeeming power. Any great reformation of morals and religion is a coming of Christ. A great revolution, like a thunder storm, violently sweeping away evil to make way for good, is a coming of Christ." It is thus that the sacred writers speak of the Judge as standing at the door, and of the Coming of Christ as drawing nigh, or as always at hand. So also our Lord says : "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." "Thus viewed," says Dr. Boyd-Carpenter, "from one aspect the coming of Christ has various applications. But viewed from the divine side the coming of Christ is a single act, in which all subordinate applications are included. His various advents may be viewed as forming elements of one advent which is progressive, from one side, but complete from another." There is no necessity therefore of leaping to the conclusion, that when the sacred

writers warned their hearers that the coming of the Lord was near, they were mistaken, or that they sought to sustain the fainting hopes of the early church by expectations which have proved false. Dr. J. B. Ramsey says that such language as "Behold he cometh with clouds" is used in a way that "seems necessarily to include the manifest, glorious, visible progress of his kingdom of grace from that generation in which it was established on toward that final consummation, as it is advanced from age to age by the mighty movements of his providence. These, as they sweep over the nations, remove obstacles, and combining with the Word and Spirit, prepare the way, by successive victories of grace and peace. The revolutions that shake the nations, that fill the world with desolation and blood, are but the footsteps of his providence, levelling the mountains and filling the valleys to make a highway for the onward progress of his kingdom." "The New Testament," says Dr. J. M. McDonald, "informs us of a two-fold coming of Christ. One, his appearing in the flesh, was visible; the other relates to the preservation, propagation, and consummation of his kingdom. This second coming is partly invisible, as when he punishes the incorrigibly wicked, as in the instance of the destruction of Jerusalem, or as when he interposes for his sincere followers and grants them the light and comfort of his presence, and it is partly visible, that is, Christ at the end of the world will thus appear, to raise the dead, and pass the irreversible sentence of judgment on every man. It is this second, partly visible and partly invisible, coming of Christ which the Book of Revelation reveals." Again: "The second coming of Christ has always, ever since he first promised 'Behold I come quickly,' been at hand. For 2,000 years the church has been looking out for the coming of Christ. Nor has she looked in vain. While some who have thought they saw symptoms of his coming to judgment have been disappointed, others who have desired his spiritual presence and have interpreted the providential events of their own time by the light of divine truth, have felt that their prayers for his advent were not unanswered."

Dr. A. T. Pierson quotes Mat. 16:25-27 as showing how the apprehension of a visible, premillennial coming is urged as a motive to self-denial. Of these, verse 27 reads: "For 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." But verse 28 shows the reference is to a spiritual and not to a literal or outward Coming: "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," where coming in his kingdom is explanatory of his coming in the glory of his Father. This passage is fatal to the theory of an invariable literal understanding of the Coming.

In reply to the question as to the signs of his coming again and of the end of the world, our Lord, in Mark, 13th chapter, first tells (verses 4-13) what will not be the sign, then (verses 14-20) what will be the sign of that Coming. And the sign given is one that has distinct and unmistakable reference to the destruction of the Holy City, clearly pointing to that signal judgment as a second but invisible Coming. The 21st verse: "And then, if any man shall say to you, 'Lo, here is Christ,' or 'Lo, he is there,' believe him not," seems to imply, says Dr. J. A. Alexander, that the "coming of Christ, the signs of which had just been given, was not to be a visible, personal appearance. For if it had been, the declaration, 'he is here,' or 'he is there,' would not have been necessarily or invariably false, and the disciples could not have been charged to disbelieve it, from whatever quarter it proceeded. This consideration, taken in connection with the wonderful coincidence between the previous description of the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, a heathen host triumphant upon sacred ground, and the occurrences attending the destruction of Jerusalem, seems to establish the important fact that in a part at least of this prophetic discourse, the coming of Christ is an invisible, impersonal one."

John 16:16 is unmistakably a spiritual Coming. "A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and

ye shall me, because I go to my Father." It is not strange that men who apply virtually all that is said in Scripture with respect to our Lord's coming in order to destroy Jerusalem, and his coming to vindicate his Church, to the ante-millennial Coming, and that in a literal sense, should apply this verse to the same final advent. The "ye," here, means the twelve. The whole context is on the Holy Spirit's coming. The reference is not to his appearing after his resurrection or at the end of the world, but to the spiritual vision of him in the ministry of the Paraclete, which they should experience. There is nothing here, or in what follows, about the final return. Or if it have the comprehensive sense, it cannot refer to the personal Advent exclusively, and in no sense could it so refer to those to whom he immediately uttered the words. Similarly, John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," refers not to the final Parousia, for the next verse says, in explanation, that then the world shall not see him, only his disciples; whereas the world will see him at the final Parousia, for "every eye shall then behold him." Then the "yet a little while," if it refers to the last great day, would scarcely be appropriate as comfort to the twelve. If this passage does not refer to a spiritual coming through the Paraclete, then were they and then are we orphans, till the second visible coming. "The return of the Paraclete," says Meyer, "is the principal thing on which the hopes of the disciples had to fix themselves, the second coming of Christ being only a step on the road to the eternal glory."

That there is a Coming, true and real, which is not outward and visible, is clear from Christ's promise to manifest himself to his disciples. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot: Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Jno. 14:22, 23. Jesus answered and said unto him: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." If this is visible for the Son, it is visible for the Father, who must then also have a Parousia.

John 14:1-3 clearly alludes to a Coming of Christ to receive his disciples at their death. His comfort for their troubled hearts was not death, as a physical fact, but that when he had prepared mansions for them in the house above, he would then come again and receive them to himself, that where he was, there they should be also. It is destructive of this passage to refer this comfort to the end of the world. If it had any immediate application to those to whom it was spoken, it pointed to the hour of death. For nearly 2,000 years these disciples have experienced the delightful rest of those heavenly mansions and the comfort of our Lord's immediate presence. To assume that Christ passed over all this period of ineffable blessedness and pointed them to the remote millennial joys of earth, to be experienced when they should return with him in his glory, is incredible; especially as the great solace for their sorrow was the prospect of reunion with him. Why should he thus pass over the certainly near, and point to the certainly remote consolations, and in so doing violate the prime canon of pre-millenarianism, that the pungency of motives, as a stimulus and a comfort, is measured by their known or apprehended nearness? Can it be, because the joys of heaven are to be so overwhelmingly eclipsed and surpassed by the beatitudes of the millennium as to be unworthy of mention in comparison? But that exegesis which denies a return of our Lord in judgment on Jerusalem, refuses this interpretation of John 14:1-3. It does not recognize this as a lovely hope. It speaks as though we made death itself the hope instead of Christ coming at death. Says Dr. A. J. Gordon: "He who rides upon the pale horse cannot be the same as he who comes in the clouds of heaven." Dr. E. P. Goodwin repudiates all reference to death in this passage, and denies that the Lord's Coming is ever spoken of in connection with the death of his saints. "Death," he says, "is our great, relentless foe. Its coming ought never to be in a believer's mind made the same thing as the Coming of the Lord." Dr. W. G. Moorehead says we have forgotten "the hope" and substituted death for "the

Coming." If these brethren are correct, we should no longer speak of death as the gate of endless joys, but should start and fear to die, as though Jesus were not with us to sustain us in that trying hour. The death of a believer is to all practical purposes the Coming of Christ to that individual. It summons him into the glorious circle of those who see his face and who now enjoy in the closest intimacy his blessed fellowship. It is to him the end of probation, the close of time and the opening of an unchanging eternity, as truly as the second advent will be to mankind at large. There can be no objection to the application to the death of individuals, in a proper and subordinate way, of the warnings suggested by the latter. That the pious heart instinctively clings to the view of a Coming of Jesus into the life and experience of the Church and the individual, we have but to inspect our hymn-books. The devotional character and elevated, scriptural sentiment of, "Come Thou Almighty King," "Come My Redeemer, come," "Come, Gracious Lord, descend and dwell," will cause them to live in the worship of the people of God, because they voice aspirations of the soul which are authorized and implanted by the Holy Spirit. But such comings do not exhaust the promise of his Coming. He will yet come in visible splendor amid the clouds of heaven, in the fulness of time. No minor or premonitory coming is fitted to take that place in our lively anticipations which this final, triumphant coming is designed to occupy.

II. But what effect on the promise of the final Coming has the question whether it is post- or pre-millennial?

The great majority of those who embrace the latter view, do so on the supposition that no other view of the second Advent accords with the Scripture understood in its plain and ordinary sense, or gives to its language on this subject its full and proper force; while the counter view derogates from the prominence of that Coming as a practical doctrine. Says Dr. J. H. Brookes: "The purpose of the constant representations in the New Testament of the nearness of the advent is to keep the church in

the attitude of eager expectation and unceasing watchfulness." Dr. A. J. Gordon says: "It is impossible that men should feel the power of an event which is certainly remote as they do one that is even possibly near. Push the event of Christ's return across a period of 1,000 years and by no possibility can it continue to be an event of such startling and solemn interest as when it is known that it may be very nigh." Says Dr. A. T. Pierson: "The mischief of the doctrine that interposes a millennial era between the first and second Coming of the Lord is, it makes impossible the posture of perpetually looking. The imminence of the Lord's Coming is destroyed, the moment you locate between the first and second Coming of our Lord any period of time whatever that is a definite period, whether ten or a hundred or a thousand years. I cannot look for a thing as an imminent event which I know is not going to take place for ten years to come. Therefore all the warnings of Christ and of the Holy Ghost touching the imminence of the Lord's Coming become not only absurd but farcical, if the Lord's Coming is not to introduce the Millennium but to end it." That is the point. We may long for it and wait for it on the post-millennial view, but how can we watch for it? The command to watch would seem to be precluded by the insertion here of a long, definite period. There is plausibility in this position. If we are shut up to this inference, and if with it we concede the postulate of two resurrections, then the whole pre-millennial programme with its pessimistic outlook for the church, its revived Judaism, and its incongruous blending of glorified saints with men in the flesh follows as virtually proved. It is claimed that what the New Testament writers emphasize is not so much the certainty of the second Advent as its possible nearness; that for aught that was revealed, it might occur in their day. The Prophetic Conference of 1879, held in Trinity church, New York, in its published creed affirmed that the second Advent is everywhere in Scripture represented as imminent and may occur at any moment. Dr. Pierson speaks of it as "an overhanging fact, liable always to

occur." The reason he assigns why it is always represented as near, is not so much that it is near, but that we may be perpetually looking for it. Dr. W. J. Erdman says that in the light of present events, the return of our Lord seems to be not far off. Dr. Tyng says that for some of us necessarily the interval of hope must be short. The circular call for the above New York Prophetic Conference, signed by Drs. Brookes, Gordon, Tyng, Bishop Nicholson and others, alludes to the revival of activity and aggressiveness among pre-millenarians then going on for the propagation of their dogma, and declares it to be nothing less than the wise virgins at last rising up and trimming their lamps in preparation for the Coming of the Bridegroom. This not only assumes that the Advent is at hand but it arrogates to premillenarians a superior readiness for that Coming, if not a deeper devotion to the cause of their Lord, and at the same time contains a sly insinuation that post-millenarians are the foolish virgins.

It constitutes no slight objection to pre-millenarianism that with so many of its ardent advocates not only is belief of this doctrine confounded with zeal for the Master, but also there is an habitual proneness, unperceived often by themselves no doubt, to impute to those not in agreement with them a lower scale of loyalty to Scripture and a laxer zeal for the honor and kingdom of their common Lord. I cannot see why it should be that those who do not understand the Word to teach an immediate visible return of Christ should love and long for his appearing less than those who infer from Scripture that the times are ripe for it. Yet too often it is assumed that this latter expectation is "the test of a vigorous faith and of a pious love for his appearing."

It is contended that the Apostles and Christians of their day expected the return of the Lord, with all its glorious consequences, in their lifetime. Almost all rationalistic commentators declare that the Apostles so held and taught, and they make the point against inspiration that this teaching was falsified in fact. Prof. Hackett affirms that the hope of

the speedy return to this earth of our Lord was with the first believers the great consummation, on which their strongest hopes were fixed, that they lived in expectation of it and hoped to be prepared for it. Rev. J. M. Gray says that our Lord in not contradicting these expectations, thereby authorized them. Dr. Tyng argues at length that the men of the first Christian generation, including the Apostles and the writers of the New Testament, lived in the almost daily expectation of the Lord and the end of the world. Dr. Gordon says of the early Christians that they lived in constant and joyful anticipation of receiving back their sainted dead. "The difference between their attitude and that which generally prevails nowadays is this: Now, men wait for death to bring them into the presence and companionship of the departed saints. Then, they waited for the resurrection to bring their blessed dead back to them. Now, they watch for the opening inward of the gate of the grave to let them into the company of the redeemed with Christ in Paradise. Then, they watched for the opening outward of the gate of the grave that their dead might rejoin them in their transformed bodies." That is, David's expectation of going to his departed child has for now 1,800 years been out of date. And we are urged back to this platform of hope, to this falsified expectation, as the highest and holiest plane on which we can pitch our piety. Viewed in the light of results, it may fairly be asked, which attitude of the two was divinely authorized?

We concede that the hope of the bright rewards attendant upon the return of our Lord constitutes now, as in the Apostolic teachings, the paramount incentive to faith and holy endeavor. Yet we fail to discover one instance where the hopes that center in his Coming are made contingent on the immediacy or the pre-millennial aspect of that Coming. They are just as real and operative on the other scheme as they can rightly be conceived to be on this. The early Christians, clinging to the fond idea of the earthly kingdom, at first hoped that the second Advent might occur in their day. The

Apostles themselves, no doubt, in advance of revelation, cherished that expectation. It was revealed to them, however, that other events should first occur. The world must be evangelized, the Jews converted to Christ, the apostacy come to a head and the man of sin be revealed. As the Apostles spoke by inspiration, it cannot be urged that when they say that the day of the Lord is at hand, and to exhort believers to watch and pray for his Advent, they believed it was to occur at once. What they said God said. If God, knowing that his Son should not return for centuries after his ascension, could say to the people: The day of the Lord is at hand; watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, then that language was appropriate, even though those using it knew that the Advent could not occur for many thousand years. Even in our Saviour's prophetic discourse, Mk., 13th chapter, a prominent aim was to tell what would not be the signs of his Coming, that believers might not be led to expect that event too soon. And while he speaks in this address of his speedy coming in judgment on the Jewish capital, he distinctly speaks of the universal dissemination of the gospel and other events that would intervene before his final return and postpone it far beyond the limit of that generation. When the Thessalonians came to apprehend that the Lord was to return, Paul wrote them a special letter to correct that impression. He beseeches them in earnest tones not to be troubled and to give no heed to the insinuation that the day of the Lord was at hand. He had already told them to watch for that Coming. Now he tells them that this Coming was not imminent. This teaching of Paul's is fatal at once to the theory that the early Church on divine authority lived in momentary expectation of the Coming and to the view that watching necessarily implies imminence. We have seen no reply to this. Bonar says Paul only meant that there were "no streaks of dawn as yet." Dr. S. H. Kellogg makes the attempt but breaks down. He can only say that Paul could not mean to contradict himself or weaken the force of his

previous exhortations, in which he had reminded the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; that no one can understand these words to contradict the many passages of the New Testament in which the Coming of the Lord is spoken of as imminent; that no matter how the passage be understood, a man cannot really be said to watch except he regard the event for which he watches as at least possible at any time. But in this he refuses Paul the right to explain his own words and erects his own inferences as to the imminency of the Coming against the clear and unmistakable teachings of the Apostle. Paul taught the Thessalonians that the idea of an immediate, visible Coming must not be allowed to gain possession of their minds. Such an entreaty would never have come from a pre-millenarian. He would have been afraid of destroying the possibility of watching. It is singular that the only errors as to the second Coming mentioned in the New Testament all consist in dating it too early. In the parables our Saviour hints at a distant Coming. The bridegroom tarried. It was after a long time that the nobleman returned. Peter, in his exhortation to his brethren in the flesh to repent that the times of refreshing might come, alludes to spiritual refreshing. As such, it had pertinency. But if he meant: repent that the Millennium may come, it would have been irrelevant as a ground of exhortation. As to the apprehension among some that John should live till Christ should come again, John himself tells us that was a misapprehension, unauthorized by the words of our Lord. Yet the statement which he cites as current, has this deep point of interest, that the facility with which, on the slightest grounds, our Lord was misunderstood, reveals among the, as yet, unenlightened disciples an expectation of a speedy return and erection of the Kingdom, and thereby reveals the source of this expectation as to John in the, as yet, unpurged Jewish conceptions of a carnal kingdom. So, of any similar expectation in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Church. It had this same root, was equally unauthorized by

any revelation from God, and suffered the same refutation by the logic of events. It was the lingering remains of exploded Jewish expectation. Much that the disciples fondly dreamed failed to materialize. Our concern is not with what the early Church thought, but what the Apostles taught.

But there are other aspects of our Lord's Coming than the question of its nearness and the duty of watching for it, that are just as serious and as prominent. Even if this latter seems to imply that his Coming is now, and was in the Apostolic days, momentarily imminent, there are whole classes of passages which show that the reverse of this was the mind of the Spirit. The Church of to-day, as the Apostolic Church before it, not only has to watch, but has a work to do. To the end of time it must go, teach, make disciples. This is her great mission. We cannot conceive that the early Christians could expect to disciple all nations in their generation, or that they measured the destined progress and mission of the church by what they could accomplish in at best a few years. It is impossible that any inspired teaching should have been the warrant for such a falsified impression. At his Ascension, the disciples asked their Lord about his coming again. He replied by telling them of their work, which was to extend to the uttermost parts of the earth. Again, if the exhortations to watch were in that day compatible with all the work then to be done, they must still be compatible with the remainder of it yet undone. The expectation of the Coming must be repressed by the prior necessity of a world-wide evangelization. It is this latter, the work, that claims our love and consecration to-day. The more we realize its magnitude and obligation, the less serious will be our expectation of an immediate return. Dreams and fancies, now as then, give way before the dawning consciousness of a world-wide mission.

But what is meant by the Advent being near? 1. It must be understood in connection with many exhortations to patient waiting. 2. It must be understood in a sense that will admit of a lapse of 1,800 years, and may admit of as many more. 3. It

means that we are now entered upon the last dispensation, the termination of which will be the end of the world. Events which were to precede and prepare the way for the final consummation had, at least the first train of them, already begun in the Apostolic day, and are now hastening to fulfilment. It is based upon the great fact that with God all time is brief, that to him the end is as present as the beginning. But all this does not make the culmination of all things in the final Parousia imminent in the sense, as we are told, that it must be instantly and momentarily expected. It ever remains that the chronology of man and the time-measurements of God are gauged by different standards.

It may be here remarked, that many passages that seem to put the Advent near at hand, simply conceive the church as one in all ages, a continuous body, enduring till he Comes, and all in this line between the two Comings are made the objects of the exhortation. Dr. David Brown cites as passages that may be thus understood, 1 Cor. 1:7, 8; Lk. 19:13; Phil. 1:6, 9, 11; 1 Thess. 5:9, 9, 10, 23; 1 Cor. 11:26. Many pre-millenarians are inconsistent in that, while they hold that the final Advent may occur any day and is confidently expected, they hold views as to many of the prophecies that are incompatible with the theory of a possible, immediate return. They anticipate prior events that are not yet realized. The post-millenarian only affirms more prior events than these do. But these teach a number and variety of events, yet to be expected, that destroy the whole doctrine of immediacy, that is the very soul and central postulate of pre-millenarianism and absolutely necessary to any vestige of truth in the system. The Jews, they teach, must first be restored to their former land, and that sufficiently long for them to attain therein to much prosperity. The temple must be rebuilt as a Jewish temple, since Christ will not come till he sees the abomination of desolation standing in the holy temple. Then a confederacy must be formed against the Jews and they be assaulted by the armies of Gog, in the midst of which conflict Christ is to come.

Many, with Canon Ryle, hold that a more complete development of Antichrist is yet to be expected than we now have in the Romish Pope. How then can those who maintain such expectations be looking daily for the Coming of the Lord? Must they not rather be looking for those events which they believe shall precede it? Those daring souls who lift the veil, and find in the mystic 42 weeks or the 1,260 days the disclosure of a date yet future for the end of this dispensation, destroy the imminence of the Advent, and the possibility of watching in that temper and under those conditions which pre-adventists say are necessary to that exercise. Every calculator of prophecy, searching with his key for dates and disclosures of times that are fixed in the future, destroys the possibility of watching as truly as those do who say we must watch across the Millennium.

But granting that the Advent is thrust off by a sufficient interval for the ripening of these conditions, and that it is not in any proper sense now imminent, it is yet contended that it is at least pre-millennial. In support of this, they point confidently to 2 Thess. 2:8, the overthrow of Antichrist by the coming of the Lord, and to Rev. 20:1-10, the dual resurrection; which two great facts, it is claimed, necessitate an order that involves a pre-millennial Coming. It is aside from our purpose to discuss the topic introduced by this second passage. As to the former, it is argued that the existence of the apostacy is impossible during the Millennium, that it must come to a head and be overthrown in the person of Antichrist before the dawn of the millennial period. The contention is then made that the Coming which is to effect this overthrow is the visible, personal Coming of Christ, to erect his kingdom of glory on the earth. But this is assumption. It is not affirmed in Thessalonians that it will be by a visible Coming. The millennial position cannot possibly be stronger than this assumption, which is one of the necessary links in the chain of its proof. Yet it is purely an assumption, one that throws the whole problem of eschatology into confusion and has nothing

to substantiate it save confident assertion. This Coming is indeed a pre-millennial Coming, but it is at the same time a figurative Coming. On the other interpretation, it is the only passage of Scripture that seems to me to favor a pre-millennial Advent. But in this it is in plain conflict with other Scriptures that are clear. If we understand it, however, as a figurative Coming, according to the abundant analogy of the prophetic language in both Testaments and as our Saviour himself spake of his Coming to the overthrow of Jerusalem, harmony is restored and the last vestige of support is taken from the doctrine of a pre-millennial Coming. No argument can be drawn from Rev. xix., since the chronological connection of the 20th chapter with it is not established. This latter chapter does not mention any Coming at all.

III. But we are told that the prominence assigned to the future Coming of our Lord in Scripture, as an incentive to holy activity and watchfulness, not only argues that it must be pre-millennial, but necessitates that we should believe it to be daily and hourly impending, since only on the view of its imminency can it exert that peculiar uplifting and sanctifying power it is so fitted to impart; that any theory which interposes a millennium athwart this expectation is irreconcilable with the statements of Scripture that we know not the day when the Master will return. Says Trench: "It is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the second Coming that it should be possible at any time, that no generation of believers should regard it as impossible in theirs." Says Dr. Brookes: "To hold post-millenarianism is to dismiss Christ's Coming from our attention, or to remand it so far back as to have no inference on character and conduct. The mind dwells instead on heaven, death and judgment, and from these derives its hopes and fears, and the Advent ceases to be the 'Pole-star' of our life." To show the disastrous effects of overlooking the imminency of Christ's return, he further declares that the ultimate cause of the Dark Ages, the Papal apostacy, the cessation of missionary effort after the first centuries, was

the lapse of the pre-millennial doctrine through the ease and sloth induced by the check of persecutions (though this can hardly be reconciled with the fact, which Dr. N. West concedes, that it was the revival of missionary activity and enthusiasm that relegated the doctrine into that general disbelief which has now for so long a time prevailed). But Dr. Brookes says further: "The spiritualizing away of the second Advent has to a fearful extent led to a denial of the literality of the resurrection." He virtually makes post-millenarianism responsible for that conception of justification which "banishes the sovereignty of God in the bestowal of his Grace from the emasculated theology of the day, so that men are thrown upon their own resources for salvation." To post-millennialism is due the impression that conversion is to be regarded "as a long and painfully laborious process, a result of culture under self-imposed restraints, or a conformity to ecclesiastical rules and regulations;" whereas "no one can look for Christ's 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." As for sanctification, he says: "The second Coming, not death, is the appropriate and glorious termination of our growth in grace." This is a startling proposition from so noble a Christian! Does it assert that sanctification is not possible or perfect till our Lord's return? He surely cannot mean that the heavenly saints, with whom he now holds fellowship, are not perfect in holiness. We would rather believe that, in his enthusiasm for his favorite doctrine, he was so borne away with the conviction that the Coming was daily and hourly at hand, that he confidently expected this generation of believers to be sanctified by transformation at the Parousia, rather than by entrance into heaven through a death they were not to anticipate or ever to experience. This same beloved brother has given us one hundred classified verses from the New Testament to set forth the varied practical bearings of this expectation. Yet no one of them draws its force from the fact that the

Coming alluded to is pre-millennial, and a large proportion do not allude whatever to the final Coming. Violence is thus done to Scripture and an undue stress is laid upon the influence of that Coming by understanding it as the motive, where it is not properly alluded to.

But how are we going to vindicate the morality of God's plying his people with a motive that in itself is deception, of his authorizing an expectation that he knew would not be realized? If the Apostles and early Christians confidently expected their Lord in their day, and if that expectation was not a lingering, exploded Jewish conception, but rightly based on the teaching of the Lord, how can we hold that they were sanctified by a hope that proved to be false, and how justify the honesty of their Lord in warranting such a hope? If it was his wish that his second Advent should always be looked upon as a possible, nay, a probable thing; and if it was for that reason he gave us the injunctions to watch, etc., then he made use of false means for the purpose of attaining a moral end. If such terms as, "behold, I come quickly," "the end of all things is at hand," were properly applicable to an interval of 1,800 years, how can any one say that they express a momentary imminence to-day? It is no answer to say, with Prof. Lummis, that "We are little skilled in celestial arithmetic." We must accept the providence of God as a valid interpreter of his Word, and this interpreter has shown us that the imminence here taught is not of the character pre-millenarians understand as there taught. We are told that the hope of a later Coming is less powerful as a stimulus than the hope of a near one. Hence, that we may get the larger stimulus, God authorizes us to think it is near, and tells us it is, so, though when he so taught it was a score of centuries off. But is it not fallacious to hold that the strength and influence of a hope is measured by its apprehended nearness? Is a disciple, seventy years of age, more holy than one of twenty? Did the hope of the first Coming gather sanctifying strength as it moved down the centuries? Were those dwellers in Judea

who rightly regarded the prophetic time as come for the appearance of Israel's deliverer more sanctified by that imminent expectation than were Enoch and Noah, who walked with God, or Abraham, who desired a better country, that is a heavenly? Is the second Advent any more a "pole-star" in this dispensation than the first was under the former? Was the expectation of the disciples, at the Ascension, that the kingdom on which their hopes were centered, would then be erected, peculiarly sanctifying? How then could the same or a similar expectation, alike negatived as to the fact, be sanctifying, when entertained ten or five hundred years later? We have no stronger ground for expecting our Lord's return in our day than these disciples had in their day. How then can we attribute to this expectation, to-day, sanctifying power of peculiar order? To the early disciples, amid the crash of persecutions, the promise, "Behold, I come quickly," was peculiarly appropriate, if it meant a spiritual coming for their deliverance. But to refer it to the second Advent, an event indeed remote, but which in some way on God's authority they were to believe was to be realized in their day, is to suppose God meant to solace them with deceptions. But we are told that it was only the attitude of expectancy he wished to promote, and that such an attitude is refreshing and comforting. This, as a cure for heart trouble, is close kin to faith-cure for the body.

But we ask: What motive to holy endeavor is increased by the pre-millennial expectation? What more does it ultimately promise? What added responsibility does it entail? We have the commands of our Lord. Our obligation to his redeeming love is immeasurably great. We have an efficacious gospel and the outpoured Spirit, and a perishing world is appealing to us. After a brief course at longest, we shall lay down our work, enter into his glad presence and be crowned with the glories of an unspeakable triumph. How could motives be stronger or his known, certain return to-morrow add ought to them? An expectation, to be cheering and controlling, must

ground on more than a faint possibility. It demands the warrant of a promise as its assurance. Such expectation, as much as desired, is necessary to an active hope.

The error of the Thessalonians about the nearness of the day of Christ arose from the pretended revelations of evil minded men, and was bolstered by forged letters purporting to be from Paul. If the divinely authorized expectation for that age was a speedy Coming, it is strange that designing men should set themselves to systematically inculcate the same hope, with the result of excitement in the church and an idle cessation from work among the people. It is strange that, hostile to the truth, they should find their interest "to lie so much in possessing the church with the belief of Christ's nearness as to lay false prophecy, pretended Apostolic discourses and forged letters all under contribution to give currency and weight to this view of the Advent." If that was Paul's view, why their zeal in the matter? If "the hope" was so sanctifying, why should Paul hasten to puncture their hope and teach them that it was not imminent. If then, as now, it was desirable to believe that the Lord's return was an hourly possibility, the proper thing for these disturbers to have done would have been to teach the distance, not the nearness, of that Return. Certainly the disorder raised in Thessalonica by the doctrine of imminence is not favorable to the view, that it is one peculiarly promotive of rational piety. The systematic way, says Dr. Brown, in which Paul lays out with ample detail "the scheme of events that would throw the Advent into the distant future, shows that he saw some peculiar evils in the womb of that notion, and contemplated with concern and grief its possible progress in the church." Again: "Some of the prime delusions to which powerful but enthusiastic and feverish minds have given birth, have been associated with the very expectation to which the Apostle refers, and have derived from that expectation a pabulum which has rallied them when otherwise languishing, and without which they would neither have had the attractions which invested them

while they lived, nor been kept so long from sinking into the merited oblivion which at length they have found." It would be superfluous to trace the tendencies of this pre-millennial hope through the centuries and cite the extravagances it engendered in Cerinthus, the romancing Papias, the Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchy men, Millerites, Irvingites and other ardent advocates of it, who made it the moulding thought of their religious creed. The effects claimed for it as to edification and experimental faith are wholly illusory.

Is the apprehension of a crisis needful as a spiritual tonic? Is it a moral motive? The wicked are frequently excited by the vision of impending death, but is it not more often alarm than spiritual conviction? But if the stimulus of a crisis be wholesome, why not draw our incentive from the nearness of death. Its nearness is certain, while that of the second Advent is at best but probable and precarious. These are equally blessings to the child of God. Each brings him into the presence of the Beloved. If imminence be the pungent quality in the needed motive, why should the expectation of going up speedily to the enthroned Christ, to be with him and like him, be less conducive to piety than that of the probably far more remote return of him to us on this earth? Few pre-millenarians really regard it as more probable that Christ will come this year than that they will die during this period. The blessedness of the saints now in the realms of light, is so inconceivably great, that even if a participation in an earthly reign with the returned Christ be a higher and more glorious state, that fact is inappreciable to our dull conceptions, save as we picture a sensuous element in the latter, attractive to our carnal natures by the materialistic conception it compels us to form. Why should not belief in an order that God actually instituted for all the saints who have preceded us, and which is doubtless appointed for us also, be less sanctifying than one he did not appoint for them, and doubtless has not for us? We cannot believe that holiness can be the product of a mistaken expectation any more than we can that super-

stition generally is sanctifying. Is it the ideal hope that we are to omit heaven and be retained on earth, though we are told that here we are but pilgrims, and that our citizenship is in heaven?

We charge the pre-millennial system with making too little of the blessedness that immediately follows death. Many of its ablest advocates fall into this mistake. Speaking of the second Advent and the early pagan converts, Dr. Brookes says: "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 traveller on his way to the New Jerusalem.'" Dr. W. P. Mackey, of England: "Men talk about dying and going to heaven. This 'going to heaven' is a mere sentimental phrase invented by man's mind. 'To be with Christ' is too personal, too Scriptural, and has too much of God in it, to be popular with world Christianity. So the 'going to heaven' phraseology has taken its place as being sufficient to look holy in talk, but not too far to commit one to a Person." Says Dr. C. K. Imbrie: "All the glorious pictures by the prophets of our earth's future and the race's future are relegated to the scenes of some distant place called Heaven." Says Dr. Gordon: "Let who can shout 'victory' as the grave opens and the darkness and corruption creep on, and the touch of the icy hand is laid upon the brow, but we are sure the Scriptures do not require us to commit such a solecism." Again he exclaims against those who "idealize this hidden enemy (death) into a good angel! as if it were his bony fingers that were commissioned to bring us our reward and unlock for us the gates of life." "Death has been thrust into the place that belongs to Christ himself, and the crown of welcome which we should ever be waiting to put on the head of him who at his Coming will swallow up death in victory, is put upon the ghastly brow of him who is daily swallowing up life in defeat." If the impatience which these manifest at the heavenly felicity that interposes between

them and the millennial kingdom on the earth be not cured at their death, then celestial joys will be commingled with a restless temper, and their serenity will not be secured by even the blissful sight of the Lord himself.

There is more of earth than heaven in this repressing of the hope of heaven. It is a clinging to the flesh. It is a minimizing the fact that God has other and satisfying joys than those of the Millennium. It is sensuous. It sees in the salvation of the elect the gathering out of a people to reign on the earth, not a people to "be with him, where he is." Not thus should Christians view their death. The vision, granted to the martyr Stephen, of Jesus standing with outstretched hand in the midst of the rended heavens, overshadows the cruel blows of the persecutors and makes his not a horrible but a triumphant departure. Since Jesus has lain in the grave its gloom is dispelled and its terrors banished. Go the full length of the pre-millennial tendency, and we must impoverish our hymnology by discarding those words of thrilling comfort and sweetest solace, which begin: "How blest the righteous when he dies;" and those other: "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep." It still stands that to the believer to die is gain, and that there is no richer hope than to depart and be with Christ. "This language," says Dr. F. R. Beattie, "not only shows that Paul did not look for Christ's second Coming as the climax of his glory, but to his own departure to the presence of Christ as the highest possible felicity, and clearly indicates how Paul's piety was fostered by the thought of going to Christ rather than by Christ coming to the earth." The Epistle to the Hebrews emphasized the great fact that the promises to Israel were typical and spiritual, and had fulfilment in that heavenly rest upon which the believers entered. This was their sanctifying hope. We, too, have an inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven.

We should love and wait for the appearing of our Lord today, because then will his Kingdom receive its consummation and we our resurrection unto life; and because we enjoy to-

day the first fruits of the Spirit, which are a foretaste and pledge of the blessings we are to receive in their fulness at the Advent. That there are revealed reasons why the dawning of that blessed day may yet be remote, does not make us love it less. Our attitude toward the Coming should ever be that of eager desire and patient waiting, and of prayer for the accomplishment of those objects which we have reason from Scripture to believe must be fulfilled before the accomplishment of that crowning event.

Suffer an extract from a letter from that honored father, that champion of the truth and moulder of men, whose recent translation so profoundly impressed our Southern Zion, Dr. R. L. Dabney. It was written a few weeks before his death : "In my teaching on this subject, I have always urged, what seemed to me perfectly plain, that since our bodily death will place us in the personal presense of the Redeemer as definitely as would his pre-advent to this earth ; since this bodily death is certain for all of us, may be very near to many, and cannot be far off from any, this fact ought to furnish every possible stimulus to Christian watchfulness. I can see nothing at all in the other prospect of an early Advent more stimulating than this prosaic, familiar fact, except the romance of the picture. I have also referred to the clear language of Paul in 2 Thess. 2:1-11, which is dead against the pre-adventists. Their favorite position is that God intends every generation of Christians, including the earliest, to feel the pungent stimulus to holy living, arising out of the belief that this glorious and awful second Coming may take place within their own earthly lives, and that he commands us all, in every age, to cherish this probable expectation and watch accordingly. If words mean anything I hear the Apostle Paul contradict them, and say in substance : 'I do not teach any such expectation to believers of my own generation or any near subsequent ones.' He learned that the Thessalonians had thus misconstrued his first Epistle and become excited over the romantic notion. He now writes this second Epistle, in large part, to reject and re-

fute that notion. He gives his reasons why they should not have misunderstood him as teaching it, because he knew of truths which rendered the romance impossible. They were these : Christ's second Advent cannot take place until after the development and the whole wicked career of Popery. True, the germs of that heresy already existed and had begun to ferment. But there then existed a grand obstacle to the rise of Prelacy and Popery, an obstacle so powerful that the apostacy could not grow, until it was taken out of the way. This obstacle was the Pagan Roman Empire, then new and in its full vigor. Paul as much as says to them : 'Brethren, we shall certainly all be dead before the second Advent can occur, because all these things have got to happen first. So don't excite yourselves about the romance of the thing, but try to prepare for death with all your might?' To me it seems also plain that it would not be worthy of the truth and candor of Christ and his Apostles to make use of a scare, which they knew must prove false, in order to spur believers of those generations up to their duty. The inspired men must have known, what fact has proved, that the second Advent was in the far distance. I cannot think that they would deem a fable, which time must continually refute, either a wise or honest expedient for keeping men to their duty. Hence I must hold that many of the 'Comings' of the Lord mentioned in the New Testament, are not his actual second Advent, (in which I believe as fully as anybody,) but his personal presence with his people, by some other means."

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