

THE
PRINCETON
REVIEW.

By Whom, all things; for Whom, all things.

FIFTY-FIFTH YEAR.

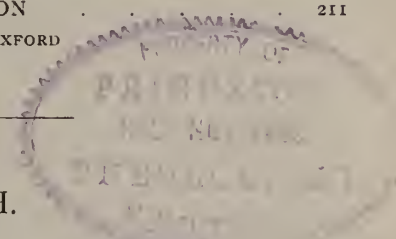
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PRE-MILLENARIANISM.

THE dogma of the Pre-Millennial Advent of Christ is but one article of a complex system which should be compactly stated. The particular views which are associated with it and are held by its recognized exponents are multiform, and, to some extent, contradictory. We would have welcomed the publication, by the recent New York Conference, of an eschatological creed embracing all the articles in which its members concurred. The resolutions which were adopted do not amount to that. Failing to get it, we present the following outline of the

PRE-MILLENARIAN SYSTEM.

Though the Lord Jesus Christ now reigns on his divine Father's throne, the kingdom promised to him as the descendant of David has not yet been set up. He is to return in the body to earth for the purpose of gloriously establishing that kingdom and visibly reigning in it over nations of men in flesh and blood. It is not the intention of God to convert the world before that advent. The Holy Spirit will not act for that end, through the preaching of the Gospel and other instrumentalities, without the bodily presence of Jesus. It is only his purpose to gather out from the nations an elect people who shall afterwards reign with him on earth. No radical spiritual change in the condition of the world will take place, on the contrary, it will grow worse and worse, under the present dispensation. Its subjection to Jesus is only to be brought about by unprecedented displays of his wrath, and most notably by the revelation of him, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on his adversaries.

When the complement of the elect Gentiles shall have come in, the Jews will be restored to their land. Under the lead of

Antichrist, "a real person in human form," the apostate and wicked Gentiles will make war upon them. Natural portents in the sun, moon, and stars will manifest the approach of the Son of Man. He will call forth the bodies of the righteous dead from their graves, and change those of the righteous who shall still be alive; and the two classes, united in one as his Bride, the church of the first-born, will ascend to meet him in the air. His judgments in their full fury will be poured out upon Antichrist, the beast, the kings of the earth and their armed followers. The predicted conflagration of the last day will commence. With his glorified saints, who shall have ascended to meet him, Jesus will visibly descend upon Mount Olivet. The restored Jews, reduced to a remnant by the terrible sufferings through which they shall have passed, beholding their pierced Saviour, will submit to him. Satan will be bound, so that he may not tempt men and lead them into sin. Jerusalem will be rebuilt in more than its ancient magnificence, and will be, to the world, what it formerly was to Palestine. It will be the centre and capital of Christ's earthly empire, from which his glorified saints, associated with him in his government, will go forth continually, first to convert the nations and then to rule them.

Thus will commence the millennial kingdom. It will have its court in or over Jerusalem, exalted positions in which will be the rewards that the great King will bestow upon his faithful saints for the tribulations through which they have passed. In it the Jews will be advanced to special honor. Gathered back as the twelve tribes into their own land, they will be under the rule of the twelve apostles, will be Christ's armed instruments of vengeance, and will also constitute the priesthood of the new dispensation: for the temple will be rebuilt; the ritualistic services, including the sacrifices of the Old Testament, will be restored; and the nations will, from season to season, go up to Jerusalem as the centre of worship.

The era thus introduced will, for a thousand years (it was suggested in the Conference that this may mean 365,000 years) be one of perfect peace and almost perfect holiness over all the earth. The successive generations of men will be converted as they come into being. There will be no outbreaks of transgression. Nor will sickness and sorrow be felt. Those who

shall then be born will die, but life will be much longer than it is now—the antediluvian longevity probably restored.

The religious life will in one respect be greatly different from what it is now. It will be one of sight, and will not be a warfare and a struggle. The greater portion of the Bible will have no application to it. Some new revelation may take its place, to be used by the Lord in the salvation of men. “Now is the time of preaching; then the time of liturgy of the great congregation shall come.” The sacraments will disappear, *ex necessitate rei*.

Not only will the spiritual condition of men be mightily transformed and gloriously exalted, but the earth will be beautified and fructified, and restored to more than its paradisiacal goodness.

Great, however, as will be the blessedness of that age, its holiness will not be perfect at the root. There will be a lurking spirit of rebellion among the nations, which, at the close of the thousand years, will break forth under the lead of Satan, who will be permitted to come up from the bottomless pit and again for a little season deceive them. But the rebels and their leader will be destroyed by fire from heaven, and cast into the everlasting place of torment.

Then will take place the resurrection and judgment, and banishment into the same place of torment, of the wicked dead who had been left in their graves when the just were raised at the opening of the millennium. The judgment-day will extend over that whole millennial period, though there will be a grand assize in the morning and another in the evening; for it will essentially consist in the administration of the Davidic government.

The renovation of the earth by fire, commencing at the second advent, will be completed at the end of the little season; and on it, throughout the everlasting ages, human beings will continue to be born. Sin and suffering will, however, have ceased. The race will be as if Adam had never fallen. Every child will be new-born as it enters the world. Thus the atonement of Jesus will be made availing for and applied to perpetual generations. The human race will keep multiplying, marrying, and giving in marriage, children being produced and in their turn producing children, and so on for evermore. In other words, the kingdom of Christ, to be established on his return, a

kingdom like that of David, but purified and perfect, will continue as an everlasting kingdom over men born and living in flesh and blood on earth, though exempt from sin and pain and death.

Different particulars in this statement will be repudiated by different believers in the system. They were not all made obtrusive in the proceedings of the Conference. For instance, we cannot recall the assertion that the throne will be literally set up in Jerusalem ; and Dr. Cooper said, "The kingdom will be on earth, but it does not follow that the seat of that kingdom will be there." This, however, with variations, is presented by representative writers ; and all the features that we have outlined have been maintained by recognized advocates. They are bound up in the principles on which there is agreement. Extravagances, for which the sober class of pre-millenarians cannot fairly be held responsible, have been carefully omitted from our statement.

CONCESSIONS.

It ought to be at once admitted that there is an apparent foundation in the Bible for much of this system. It has been and is held by some of the best and most spiritually-minded believers in the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures—men who cannot be accused of deliberately desiring to wrest the words of God to a wrong meaning. "This doctrine," says the latest church history which has come into our hands, "though ultimately rejected by the Catholic Church, was too frequently held by the early Fathers to be ranked among heresies." As regards the Presbyterian Church, in which some would have us believe the judicial axe is being sharpened, we should be emphatic in repudiating the idea of disciplinary process against any who have been captivated by it. We do not believe a pre-millenarian, with his view of the first and second resurrections, would express his faith in the form of Ch. 32, Sec. 3, of the Confession of Faith ; for that does not conform to the claim which is made, that "wherever the resurrections of both the good and the bad are spoken of, the resurrection of the righteous is always named first, and that of the wicked afterwards." It is claimed that the last clause of the Confession favors their view. But the eighty-eighth answer of the Larger Catechism disposes of the ground

from which that inference is drawn. The standards, however, do not explicitly pronounce upon the questions involved; and the rejection of the pre-millennial advent has never been understood as required by our ordination vows, though some of its concomitants might be held and advanced in such a way as to subject their advocates to process.

While making this concession, however, may we without offence ask whether those Christians who are fascinated by the dogma do not, in general, belong to the class in whom the emotional prevails over the logical? To a sensitive and imaginative nature, in this sublunary state and amid the struggles of this only partially sanctified life, there is something captivating in it. It contains "elements which at once fascinate the carnal and attract the spiritual." We often wish we could believe it. We wish that our Lord would at once, and by one stroke of his vengeance, close the warfare that is going on between good and evil and put a sudden end to the violence and vice that now reign; just as oftentimes when we feel the struggle in our own being between the old and the new, and the evil asserts itself, we wish he would suddenly come by death and take us to the blessed land, where we shall be released from all the constitutional weaknesses of the flesh.

Fairminded men on both sides of the question will also admit that inexplicable difficulties may be raised against each by its opponents. That is essentially involved in the nature of unfulfilled prophecy. It is creditable to Professor Kellogg that he declared in the Conference: "We are shut up to a choice of difficulties whichever side we take." On the other hand, any who may incline to be bitterly sweeping in their denunciations of pre-millenarians should observe the moderation and the deference with which such a man as Dr. Charles Hodge, while a decided post-millennialist, deals with the subject: "All this is said with diffidence and submission. The interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, experience teaches, is exceedingly precarious. There is every reason to believe that the predictions concerning the second advent of Christ, and the events which are to attend and follow it, will disappoint the expectations of commentators, as the expectations of the Jews were disappointed in the manner in which the prophecies concerning the first advent were accomplished" ("Systematic Theology," iii. 844).

ASSERTIONS AGAINST POST-MILLENARIANISM.

Pre-millenarians make the following sweeping assertions against post-millenarianism :

1. It is nowhere declared in the Bible that the object of the preaching of the Gospel under this dispensation of the Spirit is the conversion of the world and the conquest of the nations. But if the command and the encouragement contained in the great commission to the church for its work during the bodily absence of its King do not essentially involve that, we know not what meaning they have : “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo ! *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” An existing and perpetual presence of the Redeemer was the force with which the apostles were sent out for the tremendous work of Christianizing the world. Could any one infer from the words of that commission that the glorious bodily return of Jesus to earth, with fire and sword, would be necessary for the disciplining of the nations ?

2. No clear revelation can be produced from the New Testament, especially from the Epistles, of an age of universal gospel triumph before the second advent. We think, as will be seen, that Rev. 19 : 11—20 : 6 covers such an age. But what if the Old Testament part of the one organic revelation contained enough about that period ? What if the Lord knew that his people would, for their daily life here, be more in need of the repeated warnings against sin and the practical line upon line, precept upon precept, with which the Epistles abound ? What if reaching into and through the millennial age itself those warnings and precepts will, under the more mighty effectual work of the Spirit, be the means of its peace, purity, and power ? What if in the compact word which he has given to the church he saw them to be more essential than repetitions of the glimpses of the latter-day glory, many of which, as it is, may really belong to the final and glorious consummation in heaven ?

3. But the parables of our Lord especially teach that the state of the church down to the second advent is to be a mixed

one. The fact is admitted, but not the inference from it. Those seven parables (in Matt. 13) by which the Redeemer illustrated the nature of his kingdom bear strongly against pre-millenarianism. By one breath they sweep away the pleading with which Professor Lummis, in the Conference, endeavored to prove that the church is in no sense the kingdom. They shut out the idea of the erection of the kingdom, or its glorious advancement at any crisis, by fire or sword. If the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven are coextensive in time with the others, all reaching to the second advent, where in them can you find the ideas that the mustard-tree is to grow more and more stunted ; that, instead of the church leavening the world more and more from age to age, the world is more and more to corrupt the church, both growing worse and worse, until the Lord comes with force and vengeance? The parables of the tares and wheat, and of the bad and good fish, do indeed teach that the state of the church will to the end be a mixed one. So it will be through the millennium, and pre-eminently during the little season at the close of which the complete and everlasting separation between the true and the false will be effected. It is nowhere declared in the Bible that all the professed subjects of our king in the millennial age will be perfectly holy. Tares will still be found, not so numerous, not so large, as now, but still in existence, and making the parable applicable.

4. The New Testament represents the second coming as imminent, liable to occur at any moment, and enjoins believers to be always watching for it. But the following considerations show, as has been pithily said, that the Divine "soons" and "quick-lics" are not to be measured by our impatient arithmetic :

a. As a fact, two millennia have passed since the inspired declarations were penned. "Surely I come quickly," said Jesus from heaven nearly eighteen hundred years ago. But he has not yet come. His words, therefore, were not intended to mean that his return could take place at any time during that period. Dr. Gordon, in the Conference, illustrated the pre-millenarian view by saying that once, when he left home, he thoughtlessly said to his children that they might expect him any day ; and the consequence was that every day they were washed and in clean clothes at the depot, watching for him when the train arrived. But if Dr. Gordon had known that

he would not return any of those days would he have inflicted those daily disappointments upon his children? *b.* The apostles themselves did not understand the words which they wrote as intimating the probability or possibility of a speedy return. A mistake in this respect is charged upon them by the enemies of revelation, and admitted by some pre-millenarians in a way which would destroy the idea of their inspiration. Rationalists are very fond of the notion "that the apostles fully believed and even taught that the second advent, with all its glorious consequences, would occur in their day." It undermines so effectually the orthodox doctrine of inspiration that they may gladly seize hold upon the idea. But it is amazing to find orthodox pre-millenarians appealing to such men as "coldly unprejudiced," and therefore the best interpreters! Even Mead, the pre-millennial giant, admits "it was not possible the apostles should expect the end of the world to be in their own time when they knew so many things were to come to pass, as could not be fulfilled in a short time." Certainly Paul shows, in 2 Thess. 2: 1-12, that he was informed to the contrary. The Epistles to the Thessalonians stand chronologically at the beginning of the New Testament, dating about the year 53. The Book of Matthew only, if even that, was written earlier. We cannot permit the expressions of the later books to be so interpreted as to overturn Paul's clear revelation. Moreover, the Lord himself (in Mark 13: 21-23) had plainly declared that his second coming would not be in connection with the capture of Jerusalem. Now remember that all the New Testament books but John's were written before that event; and it must be concluded that the other divine declarations recorded in them were not intended to teach that the glorious appearance might be any day before or in connection with that. The strongest of all the apostolic expressions is the "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" of 1 Thess. 4: 15, 17. If we had nothing else, we would understand it to mean that Paul expected that he and others of his generation would live to see the glorious event. So the Thessalonians understood it: the day was at hand. Unsettled minds and excited feelings were the consequence. They were "shaken in mind" or "out of their senses." The apostle, therefore, hastened to correct the misconstruction by his second letter. Dean Alford translates

the "is at hand" (of 2 : 2) as "on hand, has set in, has come, is present, has already arrived." Dr. J. H. Brookes ("Maranatha," p. 527) emphasizes this; and making the second advent double, the first act an invisible coming *for* the saints, the other a visible appearance *with* them for the triumphant establishment of the kingdom, he says what troubled the Thessalonians was the idea that Jesus had invisibly come, and, as they had not been caught up, they were shut out from the blessedness of the kingdom. This is ingenious, though, as a pre-millenarian position, suicidal. But however this may be, it does not touch the fact that Paul knew and taught that the second coming was not really impending in his day. Remembering that the apostolic letters were designed for the church in all ages, the last generation of which as it reads them will be found alive when Jesus returns, we have no trouble with Paul's earlier expressions.

c. Our view of inspiration will not allow us to believe that the apostles used words which can fairly make on other minds a different impression from that which they themselves had. Dr. Brookes has charged upon post-millenarians the error "dangerous to the souls of men," and "dishonoring to God," of "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." It seems to us that it is against the pre-millenarians that this indictment really lies. They make not only the inspired men to have been mistaken, but (we write the words hesitatingly and with a tender reverence) they unintentionally and unknowingly impute a mistake to the Holy Ghost himself.

d. It is claimed that the injunctions to look and watch constantly for the event are inconsistent with the idea that it is not always imminent, but that a millennium must pass before it can occur. There is force in this. If the difficulty were not solved by express Bible words, it would, from a human point of view, be overmastering. But Peter cuts the knot, and shows that, however it may appear to us, there is in the Divine mind no inconsistency between the two truths, any more than there is between his sovereignty and our free agency, though men may seek to array them against each other. For the apostle, in the third chapter of his second epistle, first asserts in verses 1-3 that the event was not then near at hand, and yet a few verses further on, 11, 12, he exhorts his readers to

look for and hasten the coming of it. This answer is, through a concession made by Dr. Brookes, conclusive. He admits that "the day" which Peter in v. 12 urges us to look for is the end of the millennium, instead of the events that shall occur at its commencement ("Maranatha," 528). What then becomes of the oft-repeated cry, that it is "worse than idle" to watch for an event which cannot come for more than a thousand years?

THE PRESUMPTION AGAINST PRE-MILLENARIANISM.

There are two facts which, in a historic mind, must raise a strong presumption against pre-millenarianism :

(1) The view of Christ's kingdom that underlies it seems to be the one which the Jews had derived from the Old Testament, and which in them, and in his apostles especially, Jesus combated during his earthly life. Because he claimed to be the Messiah, and yet was not the kind of a king the apostate people looked for, they put him to death. It is true the force of this might be broken by the statement that their error consisted in overlooking the humiliation-sections of the prophecies which portrayed his kingly exaltation. But the apostles, who labored under the same error up to the crucifixion, were freed from it by the forty days' communion with their risen Lord ; and their epistles written after his exaltation breathe the spirituality which their Master's oral utterances, during his humiliation, had expressed to them and to the Jews. Pre-millenarianism points confessedly to a reproduction, in the future, of Judaism, even to its sacrifices, and to a perpetuation of the fleshly distinction between Jews and Gentiles. "In the ecclesia of the New Testament," said Mr. Parsons in the Conference, "no distinction of nationality appears," but there comes "the millennial dawn of *the new Judaic dispensation*!" Now if the Epistle to the Hebrews pre-eminently does not teach that those past distinctions have been forever done away, we know not what truth can unquestionably be drawn from it.

(2) This system is not enunciated in the creed of any section of the church. It has only been held by individuals. And as to them, it is a significant remark of Dr. Shedd ("Hist. of Christian Doctrine," ii. 390) that it was "a peculiarity of the Jewish-Christian as distinguished from the Gentile-Christian branch of the church ;" and another equally significant of Neander

(i. 651), that "wherever we meet with Chiliasm in Papias, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, every thing goes to indicate that it was diffused from one country and from a single fountain-head, the natural home of a sensual, enthusiastic religious spirit." Professor Kellogg admits, too, that "the most of the Reformers" rejected the first and second resurrections a thousand years apart and the personal reign of Jesus upon earth, though he contends they denied also the doctrine of a converted world previous to the coming. Now the absence of this dogma from all the known creeds does not conclusively prove it to be erroneous. We are not of those who hold that the past has discovered and infallibly expressed all the Bible truths. But it is a strong adverse presumption that what is claimed to be so prominent, clear, and important has never been crystallized in clean-cut terms in a church confession. And it causes the assertions of some pre-millenarians to appear in a very strange light. Thus Dr. Seiss ("Last Times," pp. 246-7) has described post-millennialism as papistic. Dr. Brookes, in the Conference, branded it as the "post-millennial heresy." Even Dr. Craven admitted and claimed that their doctrine is "inconsistent with the now prevalent doctrine of the Protestant Church" concerning the office of the Spirit; and he asserted that that Protestant doctrine is "neither Catholic nor scriptural." Moreover, it is sorrowfully suggestive of danger that Dr. S. H. Tyng, Jr., was driven, by the stress of his argument, to slur the Catholic expression of the doctrine of the Trinity.

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT.

1. The pre-millenarian system assumes that the prophetic declarations of the Bible should be interpreted with a strict literality; and it claims that by such an interpretation it is drawn from the inspired books.

But if the prophecies, much more the didactic parts of Revelation, should be so construed; and we submit that a rule which would turn the bread and wine of the sacrament into the body and blood of Jesus is self-condemned. It is against the laws of language and the practice of men, and emphatically against interpretations which the Bible has put upon itself. "Two things are remarkable about the prophecies of Scripture, which have already been accomplished. The one is that the ful-

filment has, in many cases, been very different from that which a literal interpretation led men to anticipate. The other is that in some cases they have been fulfilled even to the most minute details." Luthardt, though tinctured with pre-millennialism, says of prophecy ("The Saving Truths of Christianity," p. 264): "It is scarcely possible here to distinguish between figure and reality, for the whole subject lies entirely beyond our present experiences." And in a note (p. 362) he utters this significant warning: "I cannot refrain from reminding that the doctrine of the last things presupposes the knowledge and understanding of the other branches of Christian doctrine, and without these may easily perplex the mind; also, that the Revelation of St. John is the last and not the first book of Holy Scripture." Pre-millenarianism is based upon the violation of the "old maxim in divinity, that doctrines are not to be built upon prophetic or symbolic scripture." Moreover, its adherents play fast and loose in the application of their principle. They do not, they cannot, carry it out consistently. Hence the impossibility of stating the full-blown system without being called to order at almost every step. "The torch of the literalist is an 'ignis fatuus,' leading those who follow it they know not whither," and bringing them into many collisions with each other. It is a happy thing that it is so; for their principle would "turn the Gospel upside down."

2. It is another underlying assumption of this system, that in every case, after the appearance of Christ in the flesh, when his coming is spoken of, the reference is to that glorious, visible, bodily return to earth which is designated in Heb. 9:28 as "the second" coming.

There is one declaration of the Lord himself which undermines that assumption. In Matt. 16:28 he said: "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" (Col. Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27). Either the pre-millenarian principle is wrong, or some of the apostles are still living on the earth. The way in which Dr. Joseph A. Seiss meets this almost takes away the breath of the reader of his "Last Times." On p. 37 he has a paragraph in which he iterates, reiterates, and re-reiterates that "all the passages respecting the coming of the Son of Man which have not been fulfilled in his first

coming apply directly and only to his next coming at the judgment." But on pp. 212, 213 he comes across this declaration in Matt. 16 : 28. He admits that "this coming in his kingdom, which some of the disciples were to live to see, is not the final advent ; for the disciples are all dead, and the final advent is still future." But the Transfiguration took place a week after the declaration was made, and that was, "in some sense, the coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom"! Will it be considered presumption for us to prefer the interpretation which our Divine Master has transmitted to us of his own words? He said to Peter concerning John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" His disciples were then leavened with the pre-millenarian error. They understood him to refer to his glorious return at the end of the world. Hence "this saying went 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." And Jesus did so will. John lived until the Lord came in the sense in which he had promised in Matt. 10 : 23 : "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." Remarkable manifestations of the kingly power of Christ, which exhibit the principles that are to have their grand manifestation at *the* second advent in the body, are comings of him. Such was pre-eminently his destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish theocracy, and John at least lived through that.

At this point emerges one of the most surprising variations of the system. Dr. Brookes, in his "Maranatha," while claiming (p. 534) "that in the New Testament the coming of Christ is *always* to be understood literally," yet, as we have seen, breaks up the second advent itself into two, and contends (p. 531) that "Christ comes *for* his people before he appears *with* them." The whole of the last chapter in that book is an embodiment of the inherent weakness of the system. Dr. Brookes lays out his strength in the endeavor to harmonize its diversities, to clarify it, to roll it up out of the fog ; but it is the most remarkable intellectual Sisyphus exhibition that we are familiar with. Moreover, it is claimed by pre-millenarians that Rev. 19 describes the second advent. We might ask : Literally on a white horse? *Many* crowns literally on the head? Out of the literal mouth

a literal sharp sword? The birds literally picking the flesh of Christ's enemies? But it is enough to note that that coming is for the raising of the righteous dead, and yet is to be invisible! In the body, but invisible! A public, glorious manifestation, but unseen! Raising the dead and transforming the living saints, who mysteriously disappear from earth and are missed by their ungodly neighbors! The "voice," the "shout," the "trump," will not be heard ("Maranatha," 527). Literality! Nothing physical and visible after all!

3. We have one inspired interpretation of prophecy, made at a time when the utmost plainness would be expected, which destroys the pre-millennial idea of the Davidic kingdom of Christ as yet to be set up: Acts: 2: 29-36. We have time and again prayerfully pondered that, and we cannot see how it can have any other meaning than that the predicted sitting of Christ upon the throne of David, in the sense which the Holy Ghost intended, was then an accomplished fact. David knew that God "would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;" "This Jesus *hath* God raised up." If Professor Lummis, in his long Conference paper on "The Kingdom and the Church," or Dr. Seiss in his Discourse on the Kingdom which literally is studded with italic and small-capital quotations of verses that seem to sustain his view, or Dr. Brookes in the whole of his "Maranatha," endeavors to explain that inspired interpretation of Peter, we cannot recall it. But it breaks the backbone of their system.

4. The doctrine of the twofold resurrection is presented as the crucial point of the system.

But (i) The general and didactic declarations of the Bible would not suggest two resurrections, a thousand years or any long period apart. Acts 24: 15: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust"—not two resurrections of the dead. John 5: 28, 29: "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Daniel 12: 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Will it have any effect on our brethren who are disposed to accept the Rabbinical gloss, "Many from out of the sleepers in the dust shall awake; *these*

(*i.e.*, those who awake shall be) to everlasting life, and *those* (who do not then awake shall be) to everlasting contempt," to remind them that it was thereby made to teach that none but the just, the Israelites, the learned in the law, should ever rise?

(2) 1 Cor. 15 : 23, 24 : "Every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end:" undoubtedly suggests a succession. But to say that "first," "afterward," "then," involve necessarily the idea that because a long period intervenes between the resurrection of Christ and that of his people, there must be another long period between their resurrection and that of the wicked, is a straining of words beyond their natural signification. There are three facts against it: *a.* The resurrection of the wicked is not at all referred to in the whole chapter. Pre-millenarians remember this in one of their arguments, but forget it on this point. *b.* The theory is that Christ rose eighteen hundred years ago; the righteous dead will rise at the commencement of the millennium; at the end of that, which will be the last day, the wicked dead will be raised. But Jesus had specifically declared that at that end, or last day, his saved people will be raised. "Then the end," says the apostle; when, comment pre-millennialists, the wicked will be raised; but, says Jesus, John 6 : 40 : "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (Also v. 44.) Thus believers are to be raised at the very stage which this theory assigns to the wicked. *c.* Apply the same principle to 1 Thess. 4 : 16, 17 : "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." Any long period between that "first" and "then"?

(3) It is far-fetched to say that because there are portions of the Word of God, such as 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4, in which the resurrection of the just alone is referred to, there is this separation in time between it and that of the wicked. Between the two are grand differences which make it eminently proper to allude to the one alone, especially when comforting sorrowing Christians. We have preached many sermons and delivered funeral addresses not a few, in which we have spoken exclusively of the happy resurrection, without supposing that any one

would infer we held this theory. Would any minister have the bad taste to declaim at such times about the resurrection unto damnation?

(4) The translation of *ἐκ*, as "from among," thereby indicating an eclectic resurrection, has an apparent ground and is of force. But granting it as proper, it would not carry all that has been claimed for it. It would mean either from the place or state of the dead. We would be rather eager to admit that *ἐκ νεκρῶν* did express the idea of the just being first called forth from among the rest (as we suppose will be the case, though with no great interval), and give that shade of meaning to the apostle's earnest desire in Phil. 3 : 11, and to the Master's declaration in Luke 20 : 35 ; and so meet the point, why should the apostle use "if" about attaining as a great boon what is certain for all, and why should Christ pronounce a worthiness upon what includes also the evil? But we have inspired comments to show that the resurrection "*of the dead*" and "*from the dead*" mean the same thing (Acts 17 : 31, 32 ; also Acts 24 : 15). And the lower "*of*" is applied to the just alone (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. 15 : 12), and even to Jesus, notably in that verse which contains the key-stone of the proof of the essential deity of our Redeemer where we might have expected the more exclusive "*from*"—Rom. 1 : 4. But, as we have intimated, no contest over this is necessary ; for we do not feel called upon to deny that there may be a brief interval between the raising of the just and of the unjust, which would justify such an expression.

(5) The only passage which, on first reading, seems to be open to this interpretation of two bodily resurrections a thousand years apart, and which has caused it to be put upon the other passages, is Rev. 20. But,

a. The strictest literal interpretation cannot get the resurrection of *all the just* from the fourth and fifth verses. The passage includes only martyrs, though there are two classes of them. First, "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." They had appeared before in Rev. 6 : 9-11. Then their fellow-servants and brethren that should be killed as they were are the second class : "Such as did not worship the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands."

They also had been described in Rev. 13 : 15-17. The persecuted and the slain, the martyrs, are, then, the only portion of the just that a literal interpretation can find in the passage.

b. If it does assert a bodily resurrection of all the just, as some contend by making the first clause co-ordinate with and not comprehensive of the other two, the meaning which pre-millenarians put upon it still reveals an astounding failure in their system. They hold a resurrection of the righteous dead at that time ; and then at the close of the thousand years a resurrection of the unjust only. No resurrection is provided for the just who shall die during the millennium. This militates against the completeness of Christ's redemption. It leaves disembodied souls forever in the universe.

c. The terms in vs. 4-6 do not necessarily assert a bodily resurrection ; and vs. 11-15 do assert a universal resurrection. In the first the seer says nothing about graves surrendering their dead, nor the bodies coming up. He sees the souls of the beheaded living and reigning with Christ. Then in the second, he does not say the "rest of the dead" (who in v. 5 he had declared "lived not again until the thousand years were finished") rose, as would have been natural if the just were to rise at the one time and only the wicked at the other. But "the dead, small and great," without limitation : "the sea gave up the dead which were in it," "death and hell delivered up their dead." "They were judged every man." There is a literality and a universality in the latter scene which is not in the former. And surely the mention of the Book of Life were unnecessary if those whose names are written in it had already, a thousand years before, been separated from the vast mass.

d. Our Saviour's words in John 5 : 25, 28, 29, should be placed beside this as suggesting an explanation of it : v. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." That is not a future resurrection ; it "now is ;" nor the resurrection of the body, but the spiritual resurrection of dead souls to life. But further, vs. 28, 29, "the hour is coming" (it is not added, "now is"), "in which all that are in the graves" (see the difference, bodies from the graves) "shall hear his voice and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection

of damnation." Hence, vs. 28 and 29 foretell the future bodily resurrection of good and bad ; v. 25 describes a present and continuous resurrection of dead souls to life in regeneration. This demolishes the reason which Alford gives for interpreting "the first resurrection" in Rev. 20 as a bodily one. His criticism would wreck the first of our Saviour's utterances.

Now, we place John 5 : 25 parallel to Rev. 20 : 4-6 ; and John 5 : 28, 29 to Rev. 20 : 11-15. Then we find that when individuals, or a body of men, return from a life of sin they are said to live again, as the restored prodigal "was dead and is alive," and as Paul, in Rom. 11 : 15, speaking of the conversion of the Jews and the extensive propagation of the Gospel among the Gentiles which would accompany it, says : "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" We find, too, that when men, or a race of men, arise who exhibit the same spirit which another man or race of men had exhibited in an earlier age, those of the earlier age are said to live over again. It was predicted that Elijah should appear before the coming of Christ. The Jews expected the old prophet to come back to earth ; but the prediction was fulfilled in the appearance of John in "the spirit and power of Elijah." Then finding the prayer of the martyrs in Rev. 6 : 9-11 for vengeance, we see, in 20 : 4, 5, the answer ; and we are satisfied with this explanation which Dr. David Brown has elaborated : The vision reveals a period in the history of the church when the martyrs for Jesus, whom paganism and the Papacy put to death, will live in the rising up of a race of men who will exhibit the devotion to Christ which was exhibited by them. They shall not only live, but reign ; judgment shall be given unto them in the destruction of all the enemies of the church. No human power shall be in existence who will exhibit the persecuting spirit which the enemies of the martyrs possessed. The great anti-christian powers shall have been destroyed ; the remnant of the opponents of Christ shall have been slain for a season ; the devil shall have been shut up so that he cannot deceive the nations ; though the sinful heart of men will remain it will not be tempted to the open and high-handed opposition to Christ which Satan now encourages ; vital religion will be prevalent ; a type of it will be exhibited which we have never yet seen ;

the church in its spirituality will be the ruling power of earth ; the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High'' (Daniel 7 : 27).

If this chapter stood by itself, such an interpretation would seem strained. Puzzling question may be raised about it. But we place it in the light of the whole Word of God. We decline to force the clear statements of didactic portions of the book into a non-natural agreement with a possible meaning of a prophecy.

5. Our space will not allow us to draw out the arguments which may be arrayed against the system on account of its doctrine of the judgment ; the everlasting division which it teaches as existing among the redeemed people of Christ—two radically different sections of them ; and its everlasting line of demarcation, even in the church of the first-born, between Jews and Gentiles. In all these respects it puts asunder what we believe God has joined together.

There are two natural difficulties which, though they would not make us reject pre-millenarianism if it were clearly revealed, have force under the arguments which we have arrayed against it, and which, with the light we have, are conclusive.

(1) As we understand, it teaches that the earth's regeneration by fire is to commence with the second coming, extend through the millennium, and be completed at the end of it. If the whole millennium be the day of judgment, that must be the case under the declaration of 2 Peter 3 : 10, 12. Now we can understand how the risen and transformed saints, in their spiritual bodies, could be in the midst of that conflagration without being harmed by it, or could be carried above it ; but how beings of flesh and blood, such as we are, could exist and carry on sub-lunary occupations and be longer lived, amid such a conflagration, passes comprehension. To meet this, some say the conflagration will only be partial or local and temporary ; but that cannot satisfy the inspired words.

(2) It teaches that after the little season, and the complete restoration of the earth, human beings will continue to be produced here throughout eternity. Children will be born, as would have been the case with Adam's descendants if he had not sinned, and will grow up and procreate children, and so forever and ever an endless succession of births—but no deaths.

Will there be room upon this finite earth for an infinite succession of human beings? To meet this the theory is advanced of the translation of the successive generations. Bickersteth, in his "Yesterday, To-Day, and Forever," depicts such a translation to other orbs, making ours the place from which the infinite worlds that constitute the universe are to be supplied with inhabitants. In a note he advocates this, not as a poetical conceit, but a sober fact. As a flight of imagination, it is grand; as a fact to be believed, there is not a revealed word to sustain it.

But (we hope we do not violate the law of charity in saying) arguments are blunted by the fact that some, at least, of our pre-millenarian brethren evidently have the impression that they enjoy a revelation, or at least illumination, which enables them to understand what the rest of us cannot comprehend. In other respects the system also unhinges many of the minds who receive it. It trenches dangerously on some of the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel. Inexorably carried out, it would destroy important articles in the accepted theology of the churches. One charge, however, which is made against it is unjust—that it must cut the nerve of preaching and of missionary effort. Calvinists certainly cannot indorse that unless they dignify an Arminian slander; for pre-millenarians hold that an elect people are to be gathered out from the nations through the preaching of the truth. Remember the splendid peroration of Dr. Griffin's sermon on "The Kingdom of Christ," about "the conversion of a single pagan;" and abandon that charge. For ourselves, we confess that among our personal friends who hold this error are the most spiritually-minded of Christians and the most earnest and successful of pastors and preachers. It would be well if all who assail them were as effective. If it be retorted that the practical life of those who are thus in labors more abundant is not the logical development of their mental state, let us thank God, in view of the intellectual errors that abound in this imperfect world, that very few indeed are inexorably logical. And let us all, while loving and looking for the glorious appearing, hasten it by faithfulness in the work which the Master has committed to us.

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