

THE WORD AND WORK

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SET TO DECLARE THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

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THE PREMILLENNIAL POSITION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

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VOLUME LII, SEPTEMBER, 1958

E. L. JORGENSEN AND J. R. CLARK, EDITORS

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And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

— Peter, 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Foreword

He who aims at nothing will hit it every time! This little book is not without aim. In fact, it has a threefold objective: 1. To establish believers in their convictions by putting pertinent information within easy reach. This is the first and primary objective. 2. To challenge honest seekers after truth to see and accept this phase of God's Word by bringing together a wealth of testimony of which they may be unaware. 3. To provoke to love and a spirit of unity some who have been misled into thinking they were doing God's service in partaking with those who cast out good brethren over differences in prophetic teaching. If these brethren can receive you, then you should receive them!

The first section of this paper is chiefly gleanings from E. L. Jorgenson's "Faith of Our Fathers," cut to a minimum, and chronologically arranged, so as to be useful to busy Christians who want this wealth of testimony at finger tips. Other books and tracts consulted in preparing this study were: "Jesus Is Coming" by W. E. Blackstone, "Are Premillennialists Right?" by Samuel Henry Kellogg, D.D., L.L.D., "The Kingdom of God" by R. H. Boll; two tracts "A Brief History of Premillennialism" by Edward V. Wood, and "Premillennial - Why?" by William Ray Dobbins, D.D. Above all, this study is based on the Word of God. Every testimony dips into the Word, and expresses certain conviction relative to its teaching.

Many have learned what they know (or think they know) about the millennium from attacks and warnings against the teaching by well-meaning but ill-instructed preachers. Perhaps it has never occurred to them to make an honest, open-hearted, courageous study of what the Bible actually says on the subject. The testimony is clear, convincing, Biblical. Personally I could not be a plain New Testament Christian if I were not free to face honestly these things that the primitive Christians believed. One is not only responsible for living up to the light that he has, but he is also responsible for accepting and seeking additional light.

The wife of an elder of my home church, where I grew up, said to me in recent years, after a service: "They should call upon you for prayer. Why you are one of our boys." "Yes," I said, "and I believe the same things I believed when I attended here." "Yes, and more too," she responded. "That's correct," I said, "In all these years if I had not learned some new truth, I would have been a poor Christian indeed."

J. R. Clark.

Author's Introduction

If one of the apostles of our Lord were suddenly to stand before you and declare that the Lord Jesus is coming to reign for a thousand years, would you believe it? Are you free to think this matter out for yourself and arrive at an honest conclusion?

If added to the above affirmation of an apostle a great array of reliable witnesses who touched the life of John the Revelator, or the life of the early church for two and a half centuries, and if reliable historians, almost to a man, would join their voices in saying that the church for these first two hundred and fifty years was pre-millennial in belief, would you be impressed?

If it could be shown that the first opposition to the literal import of Revelation 19 and 20 was directed against the inspiration of the Book of Revelation itself, and that not until a (known) heretic taught the church to spiritualize the teaching of Revelation 19 and 20 did men know how to retain the Book of Revelation as a part of the sacred canon and yet reject the literal reign of Christ — if that could be shown to be true, would it shed light on the subject?

While we cannot expect an apostle to stand suddenly before us, yet an apostle does plainly state in the New Testament that Jesus is coming to reign, and all the witnesses referred to above will be summoned and their testimony heard in this pamphlet. Two lines of testimony interlock in support of the fact that for two hundred and fifty years the New Testament church believed in the future thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints on the earth. These two lines of testimony are: 1. the Holy Scriptures: 2. a great array of reliable historical witnesses.

Some shy away from the teaching and criticize its disciples because they think it causes divisions in the body of Christ. If you knew that the Bible taught a certain thing, would you feel free to believe and teach it? If not, you are not a free Christian — a simple New Testament Christian, committed to the whole Word. Besides, unity exists in the body of Christ quite apart from agreement on these future things. In Ephesians 2:16 the *cross* of Christ is said to weld the body of Christ together. In Ephesians 4:3 the *Spirit* is said to give unity — “the unity of the Spirit.” Those who are drawn to the *cross* for salvation receive the *Holy Spirit* into their hearts (Acts 2:38), which two, in turn, generate Christian love. “We love because he first loved us,” and “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us” (1 John 4:19; Rom. 5:5). Thus do the *cross* and the *Spirit*

generate love, which binds Christians together, enabling them to be free Christians, first of all loyal to God, without disturbing their oneness in Christ.

If this is God's unity plan for those who stand together on the fundamentals of the faith (and it is) then even if division *seems* to result from teaching Bible truth, that is not the real cause. The real cause lies in the fact that some have not espoused God's unity plan. If one pours vinegar over soda there will be a disturbance. The soda sees to it that there is a disturbance. The reason the church finds it difficult to hold together while she is investigating truth is that she is spiritually threadbare. She is plagued with legalism and sectarianism. Shall we forego our great heritage as free Christians to study and teach the whole counsel of God simply because some brethren have not learned the basic lessons of true unity, and seem uninclined to do so?

Says W. D. Frazee, a pioneer preacher: "One thing I have ever observed, that in every revival of pure religion the spirit of toleration revives with it, and as religion declines, intolerance increases. Pure religion expands souls of Christians, but bigotry contracts them."

F. L. Young said at Abilene in 1919: "I have resolved never to make anything a test of fellowship that the Holy Spirit has not made a condition of salvation."

J. N. Armstrong, then president of Harding College, wrote on January 17, 1919: "This is my rule: what the Lord has made a condition of salvation I will make a test of fellowship. We need to forbear one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

Says E. L. Jorgenson: "Slender indeed must be 'the tie that binds' if it cannot bear the strain of differences on such a matter among brethren, and when disagreements that should cause nothing worse than a more eager and earnest investigation lead to strife and division."

What shall we say of those who shy away from an honest investigation of future prophecy as a safety-first measure? We say, first, that for anyone to close his eyes to any truth of God's Word is exceedingly dangerous and unbecoming to a plain Bible Christian. In 2 Thes. 2 it is said that to those who receive not "the love of the truth" God sends a working of error that they might believe a lie and be damned. Our attitude toward God's Word is highly important! It reveals a trend in the right or wrong direction.

Besides, if one really plays safe on the teaching of Revelation 19 and 20 he will take it for what it grammatically says. It is not safe to close one's eyes to a portion of God's Word, and fail to give it

an honest hearing. It is not a safety-first plan to line up with those who disfellowship brethren for believing Revelation 19 and 20 literally. For if I take this passage for what it says, and find at last that God meant it figuratively, I could say: "But Lord, you said thus and thus and I thought you meant what you said. Besides, I didn't disfellowship those who differed with me." And He might answer: "You poor, simple person, it is true I said what you thought, but I meant it figuratively. But since you did take me at my word, you may go on in." But suppose the spiritualizing brother was wrong and he came before the Lord. He might say: "Lord, I didn't think you meant what you said. I took Revelation 19 and 20 figuratively." The Lord would surely frown on him and say something like this: "Child, did I not warn against adding to and taking from my Word — yea, in this very book? You have rejected my Word, and as if this were not enough, you have cast brethren out of your fellowship over it. Your attitude toward my Word was evil."

If you are in doubt and bewildered about future prophecies, the safety-first plan is simply to take God at His Word and hold a spirit of love and tolerance toward those who disagree with you, taking care not to participate in their sectarian practice of setting brethren at naught.

Now, before we present testimony, we wish to cite an accepted rule of interpretation, which is very important. A passage of Scripture stands on its simple exegetical meaning, interpreted by the laws of grammar and the usage and meaning of words. No mere argument or supposed proof that your interpretation of the passage is heresy or has ill effects is sufficient to disturb it. Rather it must be shown that your interpretation of the passage in question is wrong.

Samuel Henry Kellogg has this to say: "It must be shown that the premillennial interpretation of the passages cited in proof is erroneous, as judged by the laws of grammar and the usage of words. Dr. Charles Hodge, when considering objections to the doctrine of the atonement has most justly said: "The only legitimate method of controverting a doctrine which purports to be founded on the Scriptures is the exegetical.'" As long as the exegesis stands the belief supported thereby stands!

THE PREMILLENNIAL POSITION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

John's Premillennial Statement

The evidence is so strong and conclusive that for over two hundred years—as long as the United States has been a nation—the primitive church of our Lord believed in the premillennial coming of Christ that to deny it is to array one's self against the universal testimony of authoritative voices. Overwhelming testimony, not only from believers, but also from infidel historians, and even from leading advocates of opposite millennial views, not to mention the Bible itself, can be cited in proof of the fact that the early church was premillennial. These are strong, sweeping statements, but it is the purpose of this pamphlet to submit just such testimony.

The most complete and clearest Bible statement of this premillennial belief is from the inspired pen of the apostle John in Revelation 19 and 20. (It is to be noted that the word "millennium", derived from the Latin words, "mille", meaning a thousand, and "annum", a year simply means "a thousand years." Those who are premillennial believe that Jesus will come before the thousand years spoken of by the Revelator, and those who are post-millennial believe that this golden age of peace and righteousness will precede the coming of the Lord. Amillennialists, or anti-millennialists either do not believe there will be a millennium at all, or they believe that it refers to the present church age.)

Turning to John's statement in Revelation 19 and 20 and taking it at face value we are introduced to the following events:

1. *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Rev. 19:9-10.)

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. . . ."

2. *The Second Coming of Christ With the Armies of Heaven* (Rev. 19:11-16).

"And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a gar-

ment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

3. *The Destruction of the Kings of the Earth and of their Armies: Notorious Leaders Committed to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:17-21).*

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; ...

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image; they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

4. *The Binding of Satan for a Thousand Years (Rev. 20:1-3).*

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

5. *The First Resurrection and Thousand-Year Reign of Christ and His Saints (Rev. 20:4-6).*

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

6. *The Little Season, at Which Time Satan is to be Loosed, to Deceive the Nations to Their Own Destruction, and to be Cast into the Lake of Fire* (Rev. 20:7-10).

"And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

7. *The "Rest of the Dead" Judged Before the Great White Throne, and Consigned to the Lake of Fire, if not Found in the Book of Life* (Rev. 20:11-15).

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

A certain preacher, in discussing a portion of this passage from Revelation said, "One would have to have help to misunderstand this passage." It is plain enough if our minds have not been prejudiced and confused by such help.

While other Bible writers do not give as detailed a statement of these coming events, they do refer to this golden age over and over in their writings. These illustrious witnesses stretch from Moses to Jesus and on to the Apostle John, including such worthies as Nathan, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Zechariah, Malachi, Paul, Peter, and James. For the whole picture we must bring together the sum of God's Word. "The sum of thy word is truth." We will reserve this task for another paper.

Testimony of The Fathers

Having presented the prophecy of the apostle John in which he sets forth the premillennial coming of the Lord—the belief of the early church—we wish next to tie in the testimony of devout Christian writers *who touched the life of John* and of the early church. What do they have to say about the belief of the primitive church?

Polycarp, who was born in A. D. 69 and died a martyr at the stake in 167, was a *disciple and friend of the Apostle John*. Of the age to come he wrote, "If we obey Christ and please him in this age, we shall receive the age to come. He will raise us from the dead, and we shall live and reign with Him. The saints shall judge the world."

Barnabas, the *companion of Paul*, wrote an epistle in about A. D. 71, in which he says, "The day of the Lord is at hand, in which all things shall be destroyed, together with the wicked one. The Lord is near and his reward is with him." On the creation week he says, "Consider, my children what this signifies, he finished them in six days. The meaning is this: that in six thousand years the Lord God shall bring all things to an end. . . . And what is that he saith, 'And he rested the seventh day'; he meaneth this, that when his Son shall come and abolish the wicked one, and judge the ungodly; and shall change the sun, and moon and stars; then he shall gloriously rest on the seventh day" (i. e., millennium). —Apostolic Fathers p. 186.

Clement, whom *Paul spoke of as a fellow laborer* whose name was in the book of Life, left two epistles. He wrote about 95 A. D. He says, "Let us be followers of those who went about in goat skins and sheep skins, preaching the coming of Christ. Such were the prophets." And again, "If therefore we shall do what is just in the sight of God, we shall enter into his kingdom, and shall receive the promises, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. Wherefore let us every hour expect the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, because we know not the day of God's appearing."

Papias was pronounced by Eusebius and Jerome to have been a *disciple and friend of John the Revelator*. He was also the intimate friend and companion of Polycarp, another disciple of John. In about A. D. 116 he wrote "A Narrative of the Sayings of Our Lord." In that he says, "If I met with any that had been conversant with the elders, from him I diligently inquired what were the sayings of the elders. The *elders who had seen St. John, the disciples of our Lord*, taught concerning these things (the thousand years) and said,

"The days come when the vine shall bring forth abundantly—and all fruits,—and all the animals shall become peaceful and harmonious, one to the other, being perfectly obedient to man. But these things are credible only to those who have faith. Then Judas, the betrayer, not believing and asking how such fertility should be brought about, our Lord said, "They shall see who come to these times.'" Papias further says, "There will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on the earth."

Justin Martyr, a learned writer of Greek origin, born in A. D. 89, flourished as a writer from A. D. 140-160 and died a martyr in A. D. 163. He was for a few years *contemporary with Polycarp, Papias, and Irenaeus*. He says, "I, and whatsoever Christians are orthodox in all things, do know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in the city of Jerusalem, built, adorned, and enlarged according to the prophets." He also says, "Moreover, a certain man among us, whose name is John, being one of the Apostles of Christ, in that revelation which was shown him, prophesied that those who believed in Christ should live a thousand years in Jerusalem."

Irenaeus wrote about A. D. 178. He was a *contemporary of Polycarp, Papias, and Justin Martyr*. Basil styles him, "*one near the Apostles*." He was a pupil to and trained under the tutorage of Papias and Polycarp, both of whom were disciples of John the Revelator" ("Voice of the Church"). Writing to Florinus, he says: "When I was very young, I saw you in the lower Asia with Polycarp. I can remember circumstances of that time better than those which have happened more recently; for the things which we learn in childhood grow up with the soul and unite themselves to it; insomuch that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, the manner of his life, the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people; and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings and the things which he heard of them concerning the Lord, both concerning his miracles and doctrine, as he had received them from eye-witnesses of the Lord of Life; all of which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures."

He further wrote, "But when the Antichrist shall have devastated all things in the world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the Temple at Jerusalem: and then shall the Lord come from Heaven in clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those that follow him into the lake of fire; but bring-

ing for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared that many coming from the east and west should sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.'” Again, he says, “And therefore when in the end the church shall suddenly be caught up from this, it is said, ‘There shall be Tribulation such as had not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’”

Tertullian lived from A. D. 160 to A. D. 240 and flourished as a writer from 199 to 220. He is reputed to be one of the most eminent Christians of that age.” Of the age to come, he said, “We profess that a kingdom is promised us on earth, before that in Heaven, but in another state, namely—after the resurrection: for it will be one thousand years in a city of divine workmanship, viz., Jerusalem brought down from Heaven; and this city Ezekiel knew and John saw.”

Cyprian was lauded by many as a writer of eminent merit. He flourished as a writer from A. D. 220 to 250, and died a martyr in 258. He said, “It were a self-contradictory and incompatible thing for us, who pray that the Kingdom of God may quickly come, to be looking for a long life here below. Let us in anxiety and cautiousness be waiting the sudden advent of the Lord, for those things which were foretold are come to pass, as also those things will follow which are promised: the Lord Himself giving assurance and saying, ‘When you see these things begin to come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is at hand.’”

Nepos wrote about 250 A. D. when allegorizing of Revelation 19 and 20 began to creep into the church under the influence of Origen. “Nepos wrote a book against Allegorists and in defense of his Millenarian views” says Professor Stuart. Even Whitby, who opposed the premillennial teaching (in the seventeenth century) admits that Nepos taught “after this (first) resurrection the Kingdom of Christ was to be upon earth a thousand years, and the saints were to reign with him.”

Lactantius, said to be one of the most learned of the Latin Fathers, wrote about the year A. D. 300 and died in 330. We quote from him, “It is so arranged by God that the same Christ should come to earth twice, once to announce to the nations the one God, then again to reign. Then the Heaven will be opened in a tempest and Christ shall descend with great power, and there shall go before Him a fiery brightness and a countless host of angels, and all that multitude of the wicked shall be destroyed, and torrents of blood

shall flow. But the nations shall not be entirely extinguished, but some shall be left as a victory for God. About the same time the prince of the devils shall be bound with chains and shall be imprisoned during the thousand years of Heavenly rule of righteousness which shall reign in the world. They who shall be raised from the dead shall preside over the living as judges. Throughout this time the beasts shall not be nourished by blood, nor the birds by prey. The King and Conqueror shall Himself reign with them (the saints) on the earth, and will build the Holy City, and this Kingdom of the Righteous shall be for a thousand years."

Some may be inclined to brush aside the foregoing testimony of the Fathers on the ground that they are uninspired men, and occasionally about other things they are wrong in their statements. True. But may we call attention to the unanimity of their testimony (it is not as though we had found only isolated statements): to the high caliber of the witnesses selected, their sterling Christian character, their willingness to live and die for the Lord; to their proximity to John himself, some being actual disciples of John, or disciples of those disciples; and lastly to the plain literal teaching of Revelation 19 and 20, which they are verifying. For we can all see what John *said*; but the question is, "Did he mean it literally or figuratively?" Their testimony thus strikes with irresistible force.

Testimony of Church Historians

Reliable church historians and other authorities on antiquity are overwhelmingly unanimous in corroborating the foregoing testimony of the primitive Fathers, i. e., that for 250 years the early church was premillennial in belief.

Henry Alford, one of the ablest and most noted commentators, has this to say: "Those who lived next to the Apostles and the whole church for 300 years, understood them (the words of Rev. 20:4-6) in the plain, literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents."

Schaff Church Histories "The most striking point in the eschatology of the Ante-Nicene Age (i. e., before the council of Nice, A. D. 325) is the prominent chiliasm or millenarianism, that is, the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth for a thousand years before the general resurrection and judgment."—Vol. 2, p. 614.

(Keep in mind the definition of "chiliasm" as given above.)

Mosheim, Church Historian: "The prevailing opinion that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men before the final dissolution of the world had met with no opposition previous to the time of Origen" (Vol. 1, p. 89). (Origen lived about 250.)

Gibbon, Infidel Historian: "The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium... was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus who conversed with the immediate disciples of the Apostles, down to Lactantius who was the preceptor of the son of Constantine. ... It appears to have been the reigning sentiment of all orthodox believers."

Encyclopedia Britannica: "Faith in the nearness of Christ's Second Advent, and in the establishment of his reign of glory on the earth, was undoubtedly a strong point in the primitive Christian church. ... Amongst these was the expectation that the future kingdom of Christ on earth should have a ... duration of one thousand years."

Gieseler: "In all the works of this period (the first two centuries) Millenarianism is so prominent that we cannot hesitate to consider it universal."

The American Encyclopedia: "Chiliasm, or the expectation of a blessed Millennium, became a universal belief among the Christians of the first centuries. ... This faith the Christians of the first centuries were unanimous in adopting and promulgating."

Bishop Russell, a strong anti-millenarian of Scotland, Professor of Ecclesiastical History: "The Apostles clung to the expectation of the Millennium during their whole lives. ... So far as we view the question in reference to the sure and certain hope entertained by the Christian world, that the Redeemer would appear on earth, and exercise authority during a thousand years, there is good ground for the assertion ... that down to the beginning of the fourth century, the belief was universal and undisputed."

Neander, famous church historian, born 1789, wrote of the early church as follows: "They believed that the struggle of the Christian church with the heathen state would continue on, until the victory should be conceded to it through the immediate interposition of God, and through the return of Christ. ... This was the idea of millennial reign, which the Messiah should establish on earth at the close of the whole career of the world, during which all the saints of all ages were to live together in holy communion with each other."

Samuel Henry Kellogg in *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, "It is commonly agreed by the best modern historians that from the death of the apostles to the time of Origen, premillennialism was the

general faith of those who were regarded as strictly orthodox Christians."

Chillingworth, "Whatever doctrine is believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of any age of the church and by none of their contemporaries opposed or condemned, that is to be esteemed the catholic (universal) doctrine of the church of those times. But the doctrine of the millenarians was believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the age next after the apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned; therefore it was the catholic doctrine of those times." —Chillingworth's Works, Philadelphia Edit., 1844, p. 730.

Bishop Henshaw: "The fact is, that the commonly received opinion of a spiritual millennium, consisting in a universal triumph of the gospel and conversion of all nations for a thousand years before the coming of Christ, is a novel doctrine unknown to the church for the space of sixteen hundred years. So far as we have been able to investigate its history, it was first advanced by the Rev. Dr. Whitby . . . and has been received without careful investigation by the majority of divines in the present day. But we may safely challenge its advocates to produce one distinguished writer in its favor who lived before the commencement of the eighteenth century. If antiquity is to be considered as any test of truth, the advocates of the premillennial advent and personal reign of Christ with his saints upon earth need have no fear of the result of a comparison of authorities with the supporters of the opposite theory."

Semisch, a German writer, remarks that "Chiliasm constituted in the second century so decided an article of faith, that Justin held it up as a criterion of perfect orthodoxy."

Says the *London Journal of Prophecy*: "The Millenarian Fathers were the great upholders of orthodoxy. They fought the battles with the Gnostics, and most vigorously condemned and confuted Cerinthianism: that very Cerinthianism which they have been not seldom identified with, but which they ably opposed. Millenarianism and orthodoxy went hand in hand; millenarianism and heresy were resolute and irreconcilable foes."

Munscher, a German theologian, and no friend of the Millenarians, makes the following statement: "How widely the doctrine of millenarianism prevailed in the first centuries of Christianity appears from this, that it was universally received by almost all teachers."

Dr. Burnet writes: "The Millennial Kingdom of Christ was the general doctrine of the primitive church from the times of the Apos-

cles to the Council of Nice (A. D. 325), inclusively."

Giessler says of the first centuries: "Millenarianism became the general belief of the times."

Dr. Kitto: "The millennial doctrine may be regarded as generally prevalent in the second century."

Mede: "This was the opinion of the whole orthodox church in the age immediately following St. John."

Bishop Newton: "The doctrine of the millennium was generally believed in the three first and purest centuries."

Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia: "None of the prevailing views, except Premillennialism, can be historically traced in the Church to a date nearer the Apostles than about 200 A. D." —Samuel Kellogg.

Jeremiah Taylor: "The doctrine of the Millennium was in the best ages no heresy, but true catholic (universal) doctrine."

Whitby (Opposer of the premillennial teaching and father of the spiritualizing school, born in 1638) admits: "The doctrine of the millennium, or the reign of saints on earth a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants, and yet it passed among the best of Christians for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical: and as such was delivered by many Fathers of the second and third centuries, who spoke of it as the tradition of our Lord and His Apostles, and of all the ancients that lived before them; who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, and say that it was held by all Christians who were exactly orthodox."

Of Whitby's testimony the *London Journal of Prophecy* says: "The above comes to us with the weight of an irresistible testimony."

When we sum up the testimony submitted thus far in this paper it is difficult to conceive how any sincere Christian, committed to the whole Word of God, could oppose the plain teaching of Revelation 19 and 20. Let it be remembered that a plain Bible Christian must demand his right to investigate and to accept the whole counsel of God on any subject. The reason that the foregoing testimony from authorities on antiquity is so irresistible is that it ties in with the teaching of the Bible. The Bible testimony is the final court of appeal, but when two such sources of testimony clasp hands there is nothing left for us to do but to humbly accept it, or rebel against God's holy Word. Remember, this testimony was all but universal, that some of the witnesses touched the life of John the Revelator, and that their testimony harmonized with John's inspired statement.

Decline of The Doctrine

If it is such an evident fact that the early church held to the advent of Christ, followed by a thousand years of peace, how do we account for the decline of this belief?

We have already quoted one author who said, "Millenarianism and orthodoxy went hand in hand; Millenarianism and heresy were resolute and irreconcilable foes." The only opposition that the plain teaching of John in Revelation 19 and 20 met in the first centuries was that offered by heretics. D. T. Taylor in "The Voice of the Church" says: "The heretics were the opponents of Millenarianism. The Gnostics could not tolerate it. The whole Alexandrian School with the Arian Dionysius took weapons against it. The Allogi hated it. Platonism and heathen philosophy set itself with zeal to overthrow it. Socinius of later date, attacked it, and Rome has ever been its enemy."

Says the *London Journal of Prophecy*: "The Millenarian Fathers were the great upholders of orthodoxy. They fought the battle with the Gnostics, and most vigorously condemned and confuted Cerinthianism."

"The first distinguished opponent of this doctrine was *Origen* (250), who attacked it with great earnestness and ingenuity, and seems, in spite of some opposition, to have thrown it into general discredit."—*Wadlington's History*.

"In the first centuries great stress was laid upon this passage (Rev. 20). It was considered the stronghold of Chiliasm—so strong and decided was its testimony deemed, that Anti-Chiliasts deemed their only escape from it was total denial of the Apocalypse. Chiliasm, and the Apocalypse, were deemed inseparable. They could only get rid of the former by rejecting the latter. They never thought it possible to deny that the Apocalypse taught Chiliasm. This was not disputed; and hence those who disliked Chiliasm could not tolerate the Apocalypse. It was not till the church had learned to Platonize, or had taken lessons in the school of Origen, that they could condemn Chiliasm without disputing the inspiration of the Revelation."—*Horatius Bonar*.

"In the end of the fourth century, to guard against Chiliasm, quite a number doubted the genuineness of the Apocalypse—did not receive it as canonical, and carefully abstained from appealing to it; but after this period we find only here and there a solitary voice raised against it, until at length its reception became all but universal. When the question of Chiliasm had ceased to excite any

special interest in the churches... all opposition to the Apocalypse either ceased or became inactive and indifferent." —Prof. Stuart.

Origen, who more than any other man gave to Chiliasm of the first two centuries a death blow was a heretic. He taught that "the Scriptures were of little use, if we understand them as they were written"; that "the Scriptures are full of mysteries, and have a threefold sense, viz., a literal, a moral, and a mystical, and that the literal sense was worthless." He taught the pre-existence of human souls previous to the creation, a spiritual or ethereal resurrection of the body; the universal restoration of the damned, after a limited punishment, to a state of probation. The Universalists have usually claimed Origen as one of their faith. He brought in a torrent of allegory on the church which, according to Mosheim and other good authority, laid the foundation for the rise of the Papal hierarchy.

Mosheim says that Origen's system of interpretation was "wild, fanciful, chimerical, mystical, licentious." Of the doctrine of the Millennium, he says: "Now its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen." Saurin says, "All his philosophy was taken from the ideas of Plato." —*Milner's Church History*, Vol. 1, p. 435.

Jerome, who was born in A. D. 330 and died in 420, was a bitter Anti-Millenarian, a monk, and a Roman Catholic. The London Quarterly Journal of Prophecy says: "Jerome, in whose works the seeds of most every Popish error may be found, led the opposition against the Millennium." He held the Origenistic system and, says Elliott, he taught that "the Apocalypse was all to be spiritually understood." Said Luther, "Jerome is to be avoided."

Augustine was a contemporary of Jerome. He was born A. D. 358 and died in 434. Augustine, while continuing evangelical in faith followed in the footsteps of Origen in adopting an allegorical view of Revelation 19 and 20.

Origen, by his allegorical interpretation, taught the church how to retain the Book of Revelation in the canon of Scripture and yet reject the plain import of Revelation 19 and 20. Even "Origen, Augustine, and Jerome do not deny that the prediction of the restoration of the Israelites, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the first resurrection, and the reign of the Messiah, teach, if taken in the literal sense, what the Chiliasts ascribe to them. They admit it; but they maintain that that is not their true sense."

Another contributing factor to the corruption of this pure teaching was the role of *Emperor Constantine* who became Roman Emperor in 306. He was pro-Christian and made Christianity the

state religion. Under penalty of death he forced those in his realm to accept Christianity, says Edward V. Wood in his "Brief History of Premillennialism." Heathen temples were converted into church edifices. Heathen and Christian values were intermingled. Men were elated, and came to the conclusion that this was the beginning of the millennium. "Paganism was fallen, but the Papacy was hastening to its birth, and even in its embryo was hung all over with idolatry."

From Gibbon, Neander and Mosheim, we learn that in the "fourth century monks, monasteries, convents, penance, church councils, with church control of conscience, excommunication, the perfume of flowers, the smoke of incense, wax tapers, . . . idolatrous frequenting of martyrs' tombs, pictures and images of tutelar saints, veneration of bones and relics, gorgeous robes, tiaras, croises, pomp, splendor, and mysticism, were seen everywhere and were the order of the day." "The pastors of the church had gradually changed the light and life of the gospel into the very superstitions they were commissioned to disperse; and thus they paganized Christianity in order to Christianize paganism." All of this, affirms Dr. Duffield, was the genuine offspring of the allegorical system and Platonic philosophy of Origen, who made the church on earth the mystic kingdom of heaven.

This period, hailed as the millennium, turned out to be Satan's millennium, continuing for a thousand years to the great Reformation. Says James Challen, highly honored pioneer of the "Restoration Movement": "Then came for one thousand years, the dark ages in which nothing shone but the gilded temples, the glittering crowns and jeweled tiaras of the papacy. Rome and its priesthood; its shrines and its altars; its feast days and fasts; its rituals and offerings; its wealth and its kingdom, were the only millennium the church needed or desired. It was the Eden of the sensualist, the paradise of the serpent, the kingdom of the clergy—the empire of Satan!

"During the dark ages the theological skies became clouded and the doctrine of the Second Coming was almost lost due to the corruption and worldliness in the Church. But the Waldenses and Paulikians remained loyal through 'dungeon, fire and sword.'" Continues Challen: "A few of the faithful still lived in the mountains; in caves and in dens; or in broken forests; or hid themselves in the catacombs beneath the imperial city. They retained the ancient faith, and hope; but they were persecuted and slain. But there was light in their dwellings. They lived in Goshen—all beyond them was Egypt and Babylon."

Origen and his friends, abetted by the decrees of Constantine, succeeded in pushing up a great satellite error of a spiritual millennium, and the church of Rome kept it in orbit for a thousand years, until the Reformation.

"Through the presentation and final reception of a new and erroneous millennial theory more suited to the times, the Apocalyptic doctrine of the Millennium as held by the primitive church wasted away, and ultimately well nigh died—died, not at the hands of orthodox Christians, but at the hands of men noted for their unsoundness in the faith—died at the hands of the infant Harlot, Rome! And, alas! how much truth died with it—how much error lived when it died! But it did not die utterly for

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers!"

Voice of the Church.

The Reformation

"Finally, the Reformation dawned and the Reformers thundered their great doctrines of faith." During the dark ages the State Church robbed Christians both of their faith and hope: salvation by grace, apart from works, and the hope of the premillennial coming of the Lord. But during the Reformation the Scriptures were taken out of their cloisters in which they had been buried, and the one hope and one faith again gladdened the hearts of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and others, in spite of imperfections in their belief and practices.

John Wycliffe, who was born in England in about 1324, was called "the morning star of the Reformation." LeBas says that Wycliffe regarded the Redeemer's appearing as the object of the hope and constant expectation of the church of God. Other stalwarts of this period were Hugh Latimer, John Knox, Philip Melancthon, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Thomas Cranmer and Martin Luther.

Calvin said, "There is nothing left to the faithful but with wakeful minds to be always ready, intent on His second advent."

Bishop Latimer: "I believe the Lord may come in my day, as old as I am."

John Knox: "We know that he shall return and that with expedition." On the doctrine of the earth's renovation Knox writes: "To reform the face of the whole earth, which never was, nor yet

shall be till that righteous King and Judge appears for the restoration of all things."

Thomas Cranmer: "We ask that this kingdom may come, because that as yet we see not all things subject to Christ: . . . As yet Antichrist is not slain; whence it is that we desire and pray that at length it may come to pass, and be fulfilled: and that Christ alone may reign with his saints, according to the divine promise; . . ."

Martin Luther: "I ardently hope that amidst these internal dissensions on earth, Jesus Christ will hasten the day of his coming."

Seventeenth Century

Church leaders of the seventeenth century, among them such men as Joseph Mede, William Twisse, James Ussher, John Milton, Jeremiah Taylor, Samuel Rutherford, John Bunyan, Matthew Henry, and a host of others proclaimed the premillennial return of Christ.

First and highest on the list stands the illustrious *Mede*, whom David Brown, of Scotland, styles "The Prince of Millenarians." Mede said, "When at first I perceived the Millennium to be a state of the church consequent to the times of the beast, I was averse from the proper acceptation of that resurrection, taking it for a rising of the church from a dead estate: yet afterward, more seriously considering and weighing all things, I found no ground nor footing for any sense but the literal."

John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*, speaking of the personal reign of Christ, remarks: "That this reign will be on earth is evident from many passages." (He names several.)

Baptist Confession of Faith, dated, 1660, signed by forty-one leaders and approved by 20,000 others—an excerpt: "We believe that there will be an order in the resurrection: Christ is the first fruits, and then next, or after, they that are Christ's at his coming; then, or afterward cometh the end. Concerning the kingdom and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we do believe that he is now in heaven at His Father's right hand, so we do believe that at the time appointed of the Father he shall come again in power and great glory; and that at or after his coming the second time, he will not only raise the dead, and judge and restore the world, but will also take to himself his kingdom, and will, according to the Scriptures, reign on the throne of his father David on Mount Zion in Jerusalem forever." —Crosby's *History of the Baptists*, vol. 2, Appendix 85.

Matthew Henry: "The creature, that is now thus burdened, shall, at the time of the restitution of all things, be delivered from this bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Again: "All the curse and filth that now adheres to the creature shall be done away then, when those that have suffered with Christ upon earth shall reign with him upon earth. This the whole creation looks and longs for."

John Bunyan (1660): "In the seventh thousand years of the world will be the Sabbath when Christ shall set up his Kingdom on earth: according to that which is written, 'They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.'" (Vol. 6, p. 329.)

Jeremiah Taylor: "The doctrine of the Millennium was in the best ages no heresy, but true catholic (universal) doctrine."

Samuel Wesley: "We believe, as all Christians of the purest ages did, that the saints shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years. At the beginning of the thousand years, shall be the first resurrection wherein martyrs and holy men shall reign here with spiritual delights."

John Wesley: "From the time that the Church and State, the Kingdom of Christ and the World, were so strangely and unnaturally blended together, Christianity and heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other that they will hardly ever be divided until Christ comes to reign upon the earth."

Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century included such stalwarts as Sir Isaac Newton, Bengel, Philip Doddridge, Watts, Robert Hall, Fletcher, Toplady, Cowper, Thomas Coke, Charles Wesley, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and many others who believed in the future reign of Christ.

Charles Wesley, (1770), known as the "millennial poet," wrote hundreds of songs confirming his belief in the doctrine. He sings:

"Trusting in the literal word,
We look for Christ on earth again;
Come, our everlasting Lord,
With all thy saints to reign."

Augustus M. Toplady (1770), says, "I am one of those old fashioned people who believe the doctrine of the Millennium, and there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead; first of the just, and

second of the unjust; which last resurrection of the reprobate will not commence till a thousand years after the resurrection of the elect."

William Cowper writes (1789),

"Come, then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
'Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant 'ere nature's birth."

Alexander Pope (1740), author of "The Messiah," puts it this way:

"No more shall nation against nation rise,
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
Nor fields with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er,
'The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
And the broad falchion in a plowshare end."

Isaac Watts:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Archbishop William Newcome, writing on Rev. 20:4, says: "I understand this not figuratively of a peaceful and flourishing state of the church on earth, but literally of a real resurrection, and of a real reign of Christ, who will display His Royal Glory in Jerusalem. This is the great Sabbath, or rest of the Church."

Sir Isaac Newton: "About the time of the end, in all probability, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamor and opposition." Says Dr. Duffield of Newton: "He gave his powerful mind two whole years to the study of the prophecies, and has avowed his belief in the premillennial coming of Christ." (His prophecy of what would take place about the end of time certainly seems to have come to pass.)

The Restoration Movement

In the early part of the nineteenth century there was inaugurated what is known as the Restoration Movement, a movement back to the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. At first there were at least two sections of this movement: one led by Alexander Campbell, and the other by Barton W. Stone. These separate endeavors merged into one and enjoyed phenomenal success under strong pioneer preachers. Some one has said that this restoration movement was born premillennial. Stone was outspokenly and boldly premillennial, and Campbell was—to say the least—free and tolerant. At least, it was indeed born free, free from the shackles of sectarianism, free to investigate and accept the whole truth of God, including the whole teaching on future things. This freedom is our heritage as simple Christians, which, if surrendered, renders those who do so no longer simple Christians in fact. Many of these early pioneer preachers, who are revered by nearly all today who claim to stand as Christians only, believed and taught the premillennial coming of the Lord and that without disturbing the peace of “our Zion.” We will now quote from some of these revered pioneers.

Alexander Campbell: Some one has said that Alexander Campbell's life is a story of growth. It is said that he liked to read a passage of Scripture as if he had never seen it before, and allow it to strike him with pure virgin force. He was a free Christian and open on the subject of prophecy. He says, “To us it appears equally strange how any one, well read in sacred learning, could imagine that Satan has been bound for the last thousand years, and that we have had a reign of Christ for a thousand years.” —Millennial Harbinger, 1843, p. 231.

Again Campbell says, “No kingdom of this world has yet become a kingdom of Christ... till Jesus appears in the clouds... his cause and his people can never gain the ascendancy. ... He appears as harbinger of the Millennium.” —Mil. Har., 1833.

Barton W. Stone: “The second coming of Christ is at the commencement of his millennial reign on earth. Here on earth he will reign till the thousand years be finished....” On the future restoration of Israel Stone says, “This doctrine has never been disputed till a few years past, ... I must still view it as one of the signs of the Lord's coming. . . .”

Moses E. Lard: “At his coming the holy dead will be raised, the righteous living changed, and the Millennium will have set in.”—Commentary, Rom. 11:15.

T. W. Brents: "If this does not express a literal reign with Christ for a thousand years, we know not what assemblage of words would be capable of expressing the thought."—On Rev. 20:4-6.

J. A. Harding: "Jesus plainly shows that the faithful are to be made rulers."—On Parable of the Pounds. He says further, "These facts point clearly to this period of a thousand years as the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God. . . That this millennial reign will be on the earth is clearly indicated by the fact that at the beginning of it Christ and His saints are on the earth, and so they are at the end of it."

Robert Milligan: "When Satan shall be bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6), and the saints of the Most High possess the Kingdom (Dan. 7:14, 18, 22), the prophesy of Isaiah (11:6-9) may be more literally fulfilled than we now anticipate." Again, "Palestine will certainly again be restored to Israel for an everlasting possession."—Mil. Har., 1856.

Daniel Sommer: "What may we say to those who declare that Christ will not come again till at the close of the Millennial age? We may say 'Ye do greatly err!'"—Questions and Answers. He further says, "The word millennium is composed of two Latin words which together mean—a thousand years. That God intends to introduce such a period is as plainly stated in this chapter (Rev. 20) as that he intended to bring a flood of waters on the earth is set forth in Genesis, sixth chapter. Mankind will live on the earth then, even as they are now living, except they will not be tempted of the devil."

J. W. McGarvey, in commenting on Amos 9:11-15 says, "This refers undoubtedly to the reign of Christ, in which the throne of David is restored. . . All this is in the future, and it is to occur under the reign of the risen and glorified Son of David."—Christian Standard, 1903, p. 660.

Wm. Ruble: "We can, then, take it as a settled fact that after the Lord comes again, and sits upon the glorious throne and reigns over the earth, his glorified saints, who take part in the first resurrection, not only reign with their Lord, but are active and spiritual members of his Kingdom, and joint-heirs in his inheritance." (Rom. 8:17.)—Letters to Jews and Gentiles, published by John F. Rowe. 1896.

J. A. Begg: "Unless, then, we identify the throne of David with that of the Eternal Father, which would be blasphemy, we must acknowledge that the session of Messiah on his own throne is a distinct event, and belonging to another period."—Mil. Har., 1832.

David Lipscomb: "Heaven must receive him until the 'times of

restoration of all things'. Then, 'the times of the restoration of all things' must be when Jesus returns again to earth—the restoration of all things to their original relation to God. . . . When Jesus comes again, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and all things in the world will be restored to harmonious relations with God, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe." —*Queries and Answers*.

Stanford Chambers: "Certainly that which is called 'The Restoration Movement' was born premillennial. If the teaching was not heresy then, neither is it heresy now."

J. B. Rotherham: "It is a dominion yet to be realized in the coming habitable earth; which as we have seen, means the earth as it is to be ordered under Messiah's reign." —Author of *Emphasized Bible*.

Walter Scott: "Israel was organized civilly before they were organized religiously; in Christianity this order is reversed. We have received the inner government first; but the time will come 'when the saints' as Daniel says, 'shall possess the government', and all power, authority and rule be recovered to God by His Son and His saints." —*Pioneer Sermons and Addresses*, p. 178.

S. McCorkle: "I believe the Jews are to return to their own land in peace." —*Mil. Har.*, 1834, pp. 20-25.

E. G. Sewell: "But there will be such a reign, and it shall be glorious to them that are in it; and it is perfectly certain that none but the righteous shall be in it. . . . After the thousand years' reign, and the bound state of Satan, he is to be loosed for a little time," etc., —*Gospel Advocate*, Apr. 12, 1900.

James Challen: "The premillennial view of the second advent of Christ was held by all the 'Fathers' in the first two centuries of the church, as all must admit." —*Wester Preacher*, Vol. 1, pp. 170-184.

C. W. Sewell: "The Bible plainly says that he (Satan) was not bound when Paul, Peter, John and James wrote to these churches. If he was not bound then, I can see no reason for thinking he is bound now." —*Christian Leader*, Nov. 25, 1913.

J. B. Briney: "In my younger days, when my enthusiasm dominated my judgment, I thought the Gospel would convert the people and bring in the Millennium, at the close of which the Lord would come. But . . . a more careful study of the Scriptures has convinced me that I was wrong, and that the Master will come to introduce the millennium and personally reign on earth during that period."

Mark Collis: "My mind, like that of Brother Briney, has undergone a change with regard to the time of our Lord's return. I believe now that it will be before the millennium."

World Evangelists

Some few years ago I was reading a book in which the author, though anti-millennial, stated that all the great world evangelists of modern times were premillennial in faith. The book is "Millennial Studies" by Murray. This statement takes in such men as R. A. Torrey, D. L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, Charles H. Spurgeon, Gypsy Smith, Billy Sunday, Hyman Appleman, Billy Graham, and others that you may think of.

R. A. Torrey, in commenting on the book "Jesus Is Coming," by W. E. Blackstone, said, "I am already become convinced that our Lord's coming would be before the millennium. . . . It was this that first brought me to definite convictions and made the doctrine not only clear, but very precious."

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): "I do look for His premillennial advent and expect He will come again. Jesus, our Lord is to be King of all the earth, and rule all nations in a glorious personal reign."

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899): "The church is cold and formal: may God wake it up! And I know of no better way to do this than to get the church to look for the return of our Lord."

Billy Sunday preached a great sermon on "The Coming of Christ" in Louisville, Ky., in the twenties, which was reproduced in the daily paper. It was premillennial to the core.

I heard *Hyman Appleman*, the Russian Jew preacher, express his premillennial views in one of his Louisville campaigns.

One of the criticisms of *Billy Graham*, expressed before his Louisville campaign, was that he was premillennial. So it goes among the big evangelists.

It would be interesting to know the combined circulation of Christian magazines, such as the Sunday School Times, Moody Monthly, King's Business, Prophecy Monthly, etc., which hold to this belief. Readers would doubtless be numbered by the tens of thousands and thousands upon thousands. Also many Christian colleges are committed to this belief. If the people of all generations who believed that Christ would come before the millennium could be gathered together in one great assembly, there would be millions upon millions of them! Even if a count could be made of such believers who are living today the number would be staggering. Those who give Brother R. H. Boll credit for this teaching by calling it "Bollism" display gross ignorance of religious history.

Whitbyism

The progress of the full restoration of the pure millennial teaching of the first two centuries of the church was challenged by Dr. Daniel Whitby of the Church of England in the early eighteenth century. He was called a "man of transcendent genius and learning" by James Challen. He, following the footsteps of Augustine, and the mystical principles of interpretation of the Origen School, opposed the reign of Christ on earth, and gave the passages bearing on that subject a mystical sense, becoming father to the modern anti and post-millennial movements and of all who seek to spiritualize away the teaching of Revelation 19 and 20.

Dr. Duffield of Princeton, N. J., said: "The doctrine of a millennium before the advent of Christ is not to be found in any of the standards of the churches of the Reformation: by several it is expressly repudiated. It is a modern novelty, suggested but 150 years ago by Whitby, and avowedly a new hypothesis."

Even Dr. Whitby admits that the premillennial advent of Christ "was believed and taught by the early church," and that all "the best Christians for 250 years," regarded it as a tradition apostolic." He himself calls his theory of the millennium "A New Hypothesis."

Thus, those who advocate a spiritual millennium rather than literal, are affiliated with a relatively modern movement. Even if they span the dark ages, to tie in with the earliest advocates of an allegorical view of Revelation 19 and 20, they could get no closer to the Apostles than Augustine, Jerome, and Origen—about 200 years.

By two lines of testimony which corroborate and strengthen one another we have shown that the primitive church for the first two hundred and fifty years believed in the future thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints on earth as set forth by John in Revelation 19 and 20. The fact that this truth is both stated in the Holy Scriptures and vouched for as the belief of the early church by so universal an array of authorities and religious leaders establishes it twice over. We fail to see how any honest heart, after examining the evidence, can oppose it. Most certainly, if they are not ready to accept it, they should not oppose those who do!

It has been customary and quite acceptable to appeal in this way to these same "fathers" and early writers on the subject of baptism by immersion; why not on the subject under discussion here?

Answers to Charges

In our introduction we pointed out that "the only legitimate method of controverting a doctrine which purports to be founded on the Scripture is the exegetical." Arguments made against the premillennial belief, consisting of charges based on supposed ill-effects, and reasonings otherwise, fall short unless it can be pointed out that the claimed exegetical meaning of the passage, as interpreted by the laws of grammar and the usage and meaning of words, is wrong. Until the doctrine is so refuted it must stand as a true teaching of God's Word, and any charges hurled against it break and fall to the ground, and really need no refuting. There can be no valid objection raised against a teaching as long as its exegetical force is unimpaired!

As the smoke of theological battle clears away the citadel of Revelation 19 and 20 still stands as impregnable as it has stood for nineteen centuries. It stands on its simple exegetical meaning, based on the laws of grammar, the usage and meaning of words. As long as the teaching itself is unrefuted, and stands as God's Word, the charges made against its ill-effects are worthless. Is it not true that whenever brethren accept this passage in its simple, grammatical sense they drop all charges?

The premillennial teaching therefore is not guilty of the charges made against it. It does not make the church an afterthought, for, indeed, God in Ephesians 3 includes the church in His eternal purpose. It does not rob God of any authority, nor in any way clash with the program of spreading the Gospel, nor exclude the Gentiles from salvation now, nor make God a respecter of persons, nor foster modernism or sectarianism, nor cause its adherents to become sectarian, "ists" or "ites". If it is true Bible teaching—and it is—all objections to it are invalid, whether from honest or dishonest hearts. However, we shall notice a few objections.

Some charge that the teaching fosters modernism. We wonder if those who so charge know what modernism is. It is a commonly known fact that no premillennialist (so-called) is a modernist. Those who are looking for the imminent coming of the Lord believe He is the Son of God, that He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, died as our substitute, arose from the grave, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. They believe that the Bible from cover to cover is the very Word of God. Says Wm. Ray Dobbins, D. D., "As far as I am aware, no higher critic is a premillennialist!" Modernism must look elsewhere for recruits!

Regarding missions, Samuel Henry Kellogg, D. D., L. L. D., says, "It is quite time, in view of the facts, that this common popular objection to the premillennial doctrine—that it is fatal to interest in missions—should be dropped, as a baseless slander."

A letter from the Secretary of China Inland Mission (March 21, 1936) reads: "In our mission of nearly 1400 missionaries we do not know of one worker who is not premillennial. Indeed, this truth was one of the great incentives that led our founder, J. Hudson Taylor, to found the Mission, and he has ranked high in the missionary world. So far as we are aware, every one of the founders and leaders, as well as most, if not all, the workers in the faith missions that send workers to the various mission fields of the world, are premillennial. To say that this faith 'cuts the nerve of missionary endeavor' is entirely incorrect and there is abundant proof that it is incorrect." —Chas. H. Judd.

There is a certain urgency in believing in the imminent coming of the Lord that causes one to make haste to carry the Gospel to those who have never heard. Don Carlos Janes of church of Christ ranks was one of the earliest promoters of foreign missions among us. That he was of the premillennial persuasion is of course well known.

As to the charge that those who are premillennial do not believe that the Lord now has all authority, we answer that we do believe that the Lord now has all authority, and we believe that He is now exercising the same measure of authority as those who differ with us ascribe to Him. They believe that He is exercising full authority over the church and as our sole Head, and so do we. While He now has "all authority" and exercises as much of that authority as our critics think, yet we believe, with good Scriptural reason, that He will exercise even more of His authority as needs arise. For example, in Revelation 11:18 it is said that "the time of the dead to be judged" is on God's time table. (The time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give rewards, surely refers to future judgment.) When that time comes Christ will exercise that judging power which He *now* has. In the same paragraph of Revelation 11, that passage says, "because thou hast *taken* thy great power, and didst reign." The two events, the judgment and the reign, are projected on the curtain of the future—each in the same tense and in the same text. They were not present events when John wrote, for in this whole section of Revelation God was showing John things "which must come to pass hereafter" (Rev. 4:1). David, as we know, was anointed king long before he took his throne; so Christ, though He has the power all the time, will take it, and exercise it in God's own

good time. We believe that Christ is exercising the same measure *now* as others say He is, and that besides, He will exercise additional power as needs arise. Thus, rather than limiting His power, we magnify it!

The charge of sectarianism is based upon a misconception of what sectarianism is. If brethren are kind, considerate and tolerant, they are thereby marked as soft and sectarian. This does not follow. Sectarianism, like all Christian principles, pertains to the heart. Some do a little outward measuring and base their charges of sectarianism on that. They draw a circle around themselves and certain understood beliefs, and count all others out. Perhaps it does not occur to them that those within the non-sectarian circle can be the worst sort of sectarians in spirit by drawing lines against other Christians, and by thus cutting themselves off from others of their brethren. Such conduct is sectarian, and especially unbecoming to those who have espoused a non-sectarian position. Of course there are other ways of being sectarian which we all oppose, such as erecting human creeds, human names, and closed communion barriers. However, unwritten creed barriers amount to the same thing.

But when some attempt to be genuinely non-sectarian (by exercising true freedom in the whole word, love, and tolerance, at the same time granting others the same freedom of simple Christians) they are accused of being sectarian! This does not follow. Those who are truly simple New Testament Christians must stand on a platform accessible to all other Christians. We call to others of God's people to stand with us, for here is unity ground. Those on both sides of the future-prophecy teaching stand for the "Why not be just a Christian" position. Both sides have put out the well-known tract of that title by the thousands. It appeared in substance recently in our daily paper. Either side could have turned it in for publication, for it speaks for all of us. But for any among us to draw lines against the other is to forfeit the right to this simple New Testament position.

R. H. Boll once said, "Both sides in said controversy acknowledge their agreement in other matters. If either side therefore disfellowships the other it means that those who thus disfellowship their brethren forfeit their own standing as undenominational, non-sectarian Christians."

To have true non-sectarian unity there must indeed be Christian liberty; "there must be meekness, lowliness, long-suffering, forbearance, and love. This is the unity of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit; and it has often been realized in the midst of much diversity,

both of doctrine and of judgment; whereas it has often been absent even where intellectual agreement prevailed. Moreover, this is the only unity that leaves men unenslaved and free—free to grow in grace and knowledge, and to go on with God. It stands in sharpest contradistinction to that uncertain, unstable, legalistic unity that is hammered out by the hardest, and that is maintained only by the threat of excommunication held over the heads of any who dare to differ from its leaders.” —E. L. Jorgenson.

We can have the unity of the Spirit NOW. This is in God's unity plan for us.

In answer to those who condemn the premillennial teaching on account of “fruits” we quote from Gibbon (an objective view of a non-believer): “As long as for wise purposes this error (so-called by him) was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself and all the various races of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge.” We think that close investigation would uphold Gibbon in his view that the premillennial position has a salutary effect on the faith and practice of God's children.

We close with a good word from the late R. H. Boll: “Unless what we learn of prophecy, of the Lord's coming, of the age to come, as well as any other truth, makes us more humble, more obedient, more loving and Christlike, we have indeed learned in vain.”

NEWS AND NOTES

Jeffersontown, Ky.: Our recent meeting with Howard Marsh as evangelist resulted in thirty responses: 9 for baptism, 2 for membership, 3 others for baptism awaiting consent of parents, and the remainder reconsecrations. We had a good V.B.S. with an average attendance of 96 plus. Also we attained a new record in Sunday school of 74. —John Pound.

Louisville, Ky.: In recent weeks two placed membership with the Ormsby Avenue church. Another who was baptized at summer camp cast her lot with us. Our gospel meeting with Herman Fox, Jr., as evangelist is scheduled to begin September 15. —J. R. Clark.

Jeffersonville, Ind.: Our fall meeting at the Parksville, Ky., church is scheduled for October 5-15 with Herman Fox, Jr., as evangelist. The house where we are to live is under construc-

tion. We are hoping to be able to move at least two weeks prior to the meeting date in order to have opportunity to do some ground work for a real revival and soul-saving meeting.—Pray for us. —Frank Gill.

Ingallwood Park, La.: The Lord has wrought a great work in giving to us Ingallwood Park—fifteen acres of beautiful wooded land. Through the hard work of many there are now fourteen cabins, two modern concrete shower houses, and a modern concrete block dining hall and kitchen which will accommodate 200 at once.

Our first week of camp was gloriously blessed with 28 baptisms and at least 35 to 40 responses for reconsecration. Senior week begins tomorrow, the Lord willing.

A great man of God left earth scenes with the passing of Brother Tom Gabhart. —Frank M. Mullins, Sr.

Gainesville, Tex.: Thirty-nine years ago today (August 1) Brother Boll was in a meeting at Tom Bean, Texas, and it was Friday. The reason I remember it so well is that it was the day that I obeyed the Gospel of our Lord.—James M. Miller.

Louisville, Ky.: We were saddened by the news of the passing of our beloved Brother Tommy Gabbart at Mackville, Ky. Long a great man of faith, he was among our most devout students of the Word of God. He attended the first meeting of the Christian Educational Corporation of Kentucky. We thank God that he served the Lord so well.—N. Wilson Burks.

Hapeville, Ga.: When Brother Bob Ross' name was mentioned to the church here as one who might be interested in taking up the work as its minister, the one who made the suggestion also commented that the church would be very fortunate to have him. We are certainly inclined to agree, from all that we hear and know. He seems to have made a fine impression on those who met and heard him last Sunday, and we know that you will be glad to learn that he has made a definite decision to accept the invitation extended to him.—Carl Kitzmiller.

Tell City, Ind.: Brother Frank Mullins, Sr., was with us at Lily Dale for a meeting from June 23 through July 2. Even though there were no responses to the invitation, we felt that we had had a good meeting.—Lily Dale Young People.

Tell City, Ind.: August 17 has been set as the day for our annual homecoming at Lily Dale. Also on that date an evangelistic meeting shall begin with Brother J. Edward Boyd as evangelist. The meeting shall close on Sunday evening, August 24.—Delmer Browning.

Amite, La.: We praise the Lord for His blessing upon the Hayden Grove meeting. Brother Ken Istre brought messages that stirred the souls of every one present and drew us all closer to the Master's feet. Last week we attended the Christian Workers' Clinic at Ingallwood Park near DeRidder. Brother Frank Mullins made the book of Romans really live; Brother Richard Ramsey's class on Evangelism was wonderful, and we were made to realize our failures along that line; Brother Ken Istre opened up our vision to the great possibilities of the Sunday school. All in all it was wonderful. We had

39 present this year (last year 26). Pray for the Christian Youth Encampment which runs from August 3 through August 16.—Antoine Valdetero.

Maryville, Mo.: The work here in Maryville is going along very well. Our attendance has increased about 10 per Sunday since our coming here the first of the year, and interest is fine. July 13 we closed a very fine meeting with Glenn Baber as evangelist. Attendance was good with visitors from several congregations in this area. The preaching was used of God to strengthen the church, and Brother David Fapp of Hopkins did a fine job of leading our singing. His congregation cooperated in a fine way. On the last night almost the whole congregation, including a number from visiting congregations came forward to confess their faults and to express a desire for a closer walk with the Lord. The prospect here is real good if we can continue on. Our greatest difficulty is that of finances. Please pray for us.—Asa Baber.

Kowloon, Hong Kong: This has been a very hot Sunday. We are so thankful for the air conditioner. I was thankful to be able to buy another ceiling fan Friday at the auction for about \$11 U.S. I also bought a new baby bed for Carol for about \$5. Yesterday it seemed we had a steady stream of callers. One man came bringing the loudspeaker which we left in Manila. We used it some today. Victor sent one tape of Cantonese and English songs—part of them recorded by the SCC Chorus. We haven't heard singing like that in a long time. I wrote to Winston two weeks ago about Mr. Won's son's coming to SCC to study. He had planned to go to the University of Oklahoma, but was not admitted. He is a very fine young man, and I feel very sure he would fit in well there.—Dennis Allen.

Dallas, Texas: The Lord was very gracious to us on our trip. I was privileged to speak in Pomona, Calif., Springfield, Oregon, and at Lewiston, Idaho, in addition to various personal contacts along the way.

We enjoyed our stay in the home of Eugene and Mary Lou Mullins while conducting meetings at the Alta Vista church in Porterville and at Alpaugh (Calif.). I wish the work they are doing were more widely known, and better supported. I am amazed that working between self-support, half-support,

and no-support (at various times), they have been able to accomplish so much. The people of the congregation are workers and pray-ers, as is shown by their excellent (almost 100 per cent) attendance during the meeting, and by the fact that more than 20 unsaved adults came out to hear the word. There were visitors at every service.—Gordon R. Linscott.

Brother Linscott closed his tour with a few nights with the church at Hamilton, Montana, and then returned to Dallas.

Brazil: Five months of Brazilian life has passed for me. Everything is well. My Lord has been faithful to His Word, and I am happy in Him. Portuguese is progressing day by day. I can understand many things of conversation and of church services now, which makes life much more pleasant and less lonely and confusing. I plan to go to a school of Portuguese in the southern part of Brazil. Before leaving the north, I want to make a short observation of the mission work in the interior of this state. —Robert S. Johnson.

Louisville, Ky.: It certainly has been a pleasure working for the Lord during the past year at Sylvania, Ky. We have found that the people at Sylvania have a deep love for the Lord. Although the attendance has fluctuated we had a high of 81 recently in Sunday school.

We began a young people's meeting shortly after we started working here in September. The highest number we have had in this group is 27. The interest of our people has now risen to such an extent that our young people have requested that they help in visitation work. We have a teacher training program for our older teenage girls, which is supervised by Sister Lois Campbell.

Our building fund has increased greatly and we plan to build over our basement structure. Men of the church plan to do the labor and would welcome help from other brethren.

Since the first of the year we have been blessed with 9 baptisms and 44 reconsecrations. Thirty-three of the reconsecrations came during the recent meeting conducted by Herman Fox, Jr. Our Vacation Bible School, which preceded the meeting had the following attendance: 71, 45, 112, 118. —Kenneth Stockdell.

Manila, Philippines: I suppose that you and others around Louisville are very busy getting things ready for the Bible Conference. This will be the first one I've missed since the first one you had in 1948. It has always been a season of refreshing and revival. Please give regards to all the brethren. —Harold R. Preston.

WELCOME VISITORS!

The Word and Work Book Store wishes to join the Louisville churches in welcoming visitors to the Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. We have stocked many good fundamental books in our store. We invite one and all to come down between sessions and browse around. What we may not have in stock we can order direct to you from publisher. —F. G. and J. R. C.

ORDERS ARE COMING IN

Many may wish to see September Word and Work before ordering extra copies for distribution. However, some orders have come in. We plan to print extras, anticipating further requests. The theme of September: "The Pre-millennial Position of the Primitive Church," and of October, "What Lies Ahead—What Saith the Lord?" We plan to bind the two issues in a little book. Price: single copies of either September or October, 25 cents; in lots of five or more, 20 cents each. The combination book, 50 cents.

Up Indiana Way: Enjoyable meetings were ours at Berea, Linton, Sullivan, and Dugger. We were at Berea, "home church", eight days. Representatives of other congregations also rejoiced our hearts. Preaching brethren cooperating were Collins and Neal of Sullivan, Clymore of Dugger, Bailey, Pound, and Reeves, of Linton. We hope later to be with other congregations in those regions.

A situation exists at Sullivan which does not present a beautiful picture. Three groups meet separately and do not exercise fellowship or cooperation with each other. East Jackson, cooperating with the afore-mentioned meetings, is disfellowshipped by North-State and North Court. The reason given is teaching, or alleged teaching, on prophecy, though some of the objectionable things were taught by Daniel Sommer, who established the congregation over sixty years ago. This writer attended. East Jackson is the oldest congregation. North State makes a test of fellowship of the issue (East Jackson does not.) North Court ob-

jects to the class method of teaching practiced by the other two and objects to East Jackson's teaching on prophecy. East Jackson allows that a congregation may pursue its own course and method of teaching, just so it teaches the Word, and allows that people may be honestly mistaken in their interpretation of Bible forecasts and yet be obedient to our Lord's commands, rendering acceptable service to Him.

If East Jackson will agree to keep silent on the prophetic word and give up the class method of teaching, North Court will fraternize, and North State would not require but the one concession, that is, the first mentioned. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And we'll not be agreed, unless you agree with me! See?

Some correspondents have failed to note our new address—4519 Jewell Ave., Louisville, Ky.

—Stanford Chambers.

Alexandria, La.: Within the last year the church of Christ at MacArthur Drive and Peach Street has enjoyed an increase in members. Eight have been baptized into Christ and two have placed membership with us. Interest in Bible study and in song indicate spiritual growth. Brother Mac LeDoux a student preacher, is doing a com-

mendable work with us. He is planning on taking his bachelor degree at mid-term. —W. J. Johnson.

Louisville Kentucky

Brother Overman's meeting now in progress at the East Jefferson Street Church is well attended and interest is good. Other churches have been good to support the meeting. There have been three baptisms, two for membership and five restorations to date and the meeting is not due to close until Sunday night, August 17.

In the Alice Waller School on Dixie Highway, a meeting began last Sunday night. To date there have been three baptisms and one restoration. The meeting is to continue throughout the week. Brother Herman Fox is preaching. Pray for these meetings.

The Jefferson Street meeting ended with five baptisms, two for membership, and thirty-six rededications.

Brother Brent Hickman of the Eight-cent Street Church, brought us a week's meeting in July with messages on the Holy Spirit. This was in preparation for our recent meeting with Orell Overman as evangelist. We thank the Lord for our faithful minister, Brother Jimmie Hardison, and for his untiring efforts.—James Wilson.

GOOD BOOKS FOR YOUR LIBRARY

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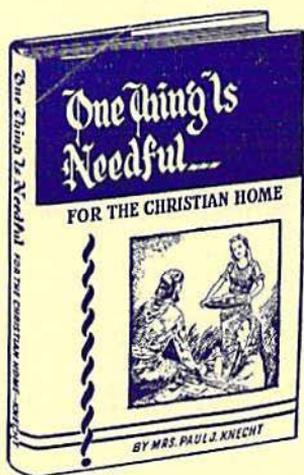
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