

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

THE ILLIBERALITY OF THE DOGMA OF PROBATION AFTER DEATH.

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By "Probation after death" we understand a probation which turns upon a definite, formal presentment to the disembodied soul of the historic Christ, and a conscious, deliberate acceptance or rejection of Christ under such presentation.

Other notions, more vague and rationalistic, drifting at large in the popular mind, imagining some limitless amnesty in the future world, have undoubtedly to some extent usurped the name "probation." But even Andover, not always careful enough to discriminate its views from the popular counterfeit, has desired us to set at once aside all such loose travesties upon its position. It is, then, the introduction and accentuation of the factor of the "historic Christ" which alone turns the commonplace, hazy dream of a future probation into anything clear enough to define or weighty enough even to demand a Christian suffrage.

From the standpoint of foreign scholarship especially, this is the only phase of the general notion of probation after

## ARTICLE II.

## PREMILLENNIALISM: ITS RELATIONS TO DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

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THE great and increasing interest in eschatology is one of the most conspicuous features of the religious life of our times. It is manifest even in the secular sphere. The various schemes of socialism, communism, and even anarchism, are all essentially eschatologic in their character, in that they all seek to produce an ideally perfect state on earth, the absolute ultimatum of human progress.<sup>1</sup> In the religious sphere the same interest is evinced by the activity of discussion concerning the future of the individual,—conditional immortality, restorationism, future probation, and so on; as also in the increasing study of unfulfilled prophecy regarding the future of the race on earth. Under this last head specially noticeable is the evidently rising interest in the question of the premillennial advent. As on the doctrinal side the question has come up in connection with the interpretation of Scripture by eminent exegetes like Alford, Tregelles, Lange, Ellicott, and others, so it no less naturally emerges on the practical side of Christian life, in connection with the great revival of active interest in the evangelization of the world. For the more that this work demands of men and money, the more urgent it is felt to be that, if possible, the church should be assured beyond doubt as to the Scripture teaching concerning the purpose of the Lord in this work. Hence interest in the controversy steadily increases, and, more and more, men among the ablest in the church are coming out as participants in the discussion on the one side of the

<sup>1</sup>See Auberlen, *Der Prophet Daniel*, u. s. w., p. 213.

question or the other. While there are many by whom premillennialism is, to say the least, exceedingly disliked, and who would that, if it were possible, the present agitation of the subject might die out, yet when the generation has brought forth men such as Alford, Godet, Delitzsch, Birks, Auberlen, Van Oosterzee, and many others of like standing, as advocates of one form or other of premillennialism, it is felt more and more that the subject cannot well be ignored, as if it were merely a fantastic dream of weak-minded and fanatical enthusiasts, or of ill-balanced and ill-educated theologians.

And yet because many have been accustomed all their life to associate in their minds such views with such a class of persons, and have therefore not thought it worth their while to examine into the subject closely,<sup>2</sup> one often has occasion to observe that many otherwise intelligent Christians, and even some learned theologians, labor under the most erroneous impressions as to what those beliefs really are which premillennialists commonly regard as essential to their eschatology, and naturally also entertain no less imperfect or mistaken views as to their bearing on Christian doctrine and practice. It is proposed in the present article to indicate what appear to be the essential elements in the premillennial eschatology, so far as it may be possible to gather these from the teachings of its most competent advocates; then briefly to state the leading arguments which they adduce for their beliefs; and, finally, to point out the apparent doctrinal affinities and practical bearing of this type of eschatology.

I. The propositions which seem to be essential and fundamental to premillennial eschatology, in all its various forms, may, we believe, be stated as follows:—

(1) The Scriptures teach us to expect on the earth a

<sup>2</sup>Even Dr. Charles Hodge in his "Systematic Theology" begins the discussion of the Second Advent by remarking that "the subject cannot be adequately discussed without taking a survey of all the prophetic teachings of the Scriptures," which "cannot be satisfactorily accomplished by any one who has not made the study of the prophecies a specialty;" and then with admirable candor, tells the reader that he himself "has no such qualifications for the work"! *Op. cit.*, Vol. iii. p. 790.

universal triumph of the gospel, and a prolonged supremacy of righteousness and truth.

(2) They also teach that we are to expect a personal, visible return of the risen and ascended Christ, in the glory of his Father.

(3) The teachings of the Scripture forbid us to place the predicted reign of righteousness on this side the personal advent; they therefore compel us to place it on the other side of that event. Whence it follows that we must conclude that—

(4) The purpose of the return of Christ to the earth is to set up and administer the promised kingdom of righteousness, by establishing over the whole earth a theocratic government, vested in the Son of man and his risen and glorified people who shall have believed on him up to the time of his appearing.

Obviously, in the first two of these propositions premillennialists are at one with most evangelical Christians. The controversy centres on the latter two, and primarily on the third. As is well known, there are many other beliefs, more or less closely and universally connected with these, upon some of which there is a difference of opinion among premillennialists themselves. Such are the doctrine concerning the restoration of Israel, and the position of that nation in the expected new order of things; the interpretation of the prophecies concerning the antichrist; the distinction in time between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked, etc. But we believe that none of these, even the last named, is so inseparable from the premillennial system as to be entitled to a place among its fundamental affirmations. On some of these, indeed, many of their opponents have agreed with them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Thus Professor Moses Stuart, of Andover, no millenarian, as every one knows, in his (preteristic) "Commentary on the Revelation of John," criticises Vitringa and others for regarding Rev. xx. 5 as "doubtful" ground for the doctrine of a literal first resurrection, and thinks any exegesis which would make it teach anything else "incongruous." See *Op. cit.*, Vol. i. pp.

In this connection it will be desirable to advert to certain points upon which one often meets with misconception as to premillennialist beliefs. In the first place, it should be emphasized that it is not involved in the system that a time is fixed for the second advent. This was done by Mr. Miller, among the first in recent times; and to this day, in arguing with premillennialists, reference is often made to the disastrous mistakes of himself and his followers in this matter. But Mr. Miller was not a premillennialist, in the sense in which the term is now commonly used. In common with post-millennialists he expected that the appearing of the Lord would bring the history of the race on earth to an immediate close, which premillennialists, with scarcely an exception, deny. And although here and there individual premillennialists, in direct opposition to Christ's plain words, have ventured to name a year in which the Lord might be expected, it would be difficult to name a man of representative standing who has done so. On the contrary, their testimony against this error has been in general as outspoken as that of their opponents. A bare reference to such names as those of the Bonars, Canons Fausset and Birks, Tregelles, Alford, Godet, and many others, will suffice to show how groundless is the vulgar impression on this matter. It is true, indeed, that not a few, agreeing with the principles of interpretation adopted by Mede, Newton, Faber, and other interpreters of the historical school, both premillennialist and post-millennialist, have believed that the limits of certain dispensational periods were

176, 178, 397; ii. pp. 360, 475-477. More lately, Duesterdieck, in his anti-millennarian Commentary on the same book, also maintains on exegetical grounds the literal sense of Rev. xx. 4-6, as predicting a resurrection of saints before the rest of the dead; but thinks that in his conception of the thousand-years' reign the writer of this book erred, and teaches what is opposed to the analogy of Scripture. See Hand-Book to the Revelation of John, translated by H. E. Jacobs, D. D., pp. 465, 85. In the recent "Symposium on the Second Advent," in *The British Weekly*, Principal Edwards, arguing against millennarians, also affirms his own belief in the same interpretation of Rev. xx. 5, so far as regards a literal resurrection before the millennium.

revealed in Scripture, after the analogy of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks in connection with the first advent. But no one, that we are aware, among reputable interpreters of this class, has ventured, even on this hypothesis, to maintain that the beginning, or, by consequence, the end, of such periods could be certainly known to a year; and still less that any such supposed terminal date indicated the year in which the personal advent was without doubt to be expected.

The belief of premillennialist interpreters of this school is no more than this; that such chronological data indicate "the approaching end of the age."<sup>4</sup> A large part, however, of modern premillennialists are of the *futurist* school of interpretation, and insist that we have no chronological data in Scripture which indicate even the approach of the end.

Again, it is important to understand that modern premillennialists do not believe that the second advent of Christ will immediately end the existence of men in the flesh upon the earth. While others believe that the present dispensation is final, and that its end will be the end of history and of the progress of the race upon the earth, premillennialists, with the exception of a small School of the "Adventists," deny this, and agree that for at least a long time after the advent and the resurrection of "the church of the first-born,"<sup>5</sup> human life on earth will continue.<sup>6</sup> Through a failure to understand their belief in this respect, the objection is often made to what is imagined to be premillennialism, that it is incredible that with the resources of the earth yet scarcely touched, and human progress, as it would seem, scarcely begun, the second advent

<sup>4</sup> Such is, *e. g.*, the position of Mr. Grattan Guinness in his recent work so named; in which he says:—"According to the testimony of the sure word of prophecy, the end is near, but none can say how near, or determine its actual epoch." *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 471. To the same effect write Professor Birks, of Cambridge University, in *Thoughts on Sacred Prophecy*, pp. 105, 119; Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, 5th ed., pp. 238, 239, *et passim*; and many others.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xii. 22.

<sup>6</sup> See, *e. g.*, Birks, *Four Prophetic Empires*, pp. 310-326; and his *Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, pp. 317-319.

should occur, and the world and all upon it be destroyed, *possibly* in the near future. To this it is sufficient to reply that premillennialists generally have no expectation that the advent will put an immediate end to the progress and development of the human race on earth, but only that it will place that progress under new conditions, and those far more favorable than the present.<sup>7</sup> The appearing of Christ, in their belief, marks the end indeed of the *aion*, or "age," but not of the *kosmos*, or "world." It is true that we read of a destruction of the world by fire in "the day of the Lord;" but premillennialists understand that phrase to denote a prolonged period of time, after the analogy, for instance, of the "days" of the creation; nor do they believe that the Scripture language is such as to compel us to believe that even the fiery catastrophe predicted as to occur in "the day of the Lord," must occur at its very beginning, or shall of necessity destroy the planet, though it shall issue in the appearing of "a new earth."<sup>8</sup>

From this it follows, and is of consequence to observe, that the most of modern premillennialists believe that the coming age which the second advent shall introduce, will be marked by a twofold order of humanity: (1st) The saints of the first resurrection, to whom, jointly with the Son of man, the government of the race shall then be committed; and (2d) The nations in the flesh,—the then converted remnant of Israel and the Gentiles,—who shall be the subjects, as the former class shall be the rulers, in the coming kingdom. Through a failure to apprehend this distinction, beliefs have

<sup>7</sup> So, *e. g.*, Professor Godet says that after the Parousia "all will go on as it did before; only the mind of humanity will have been transformed by this divine manifestation. . . . Then will begin what is called in the Revelation the reign of a thousand years. This reign will be the great period of Christian civilization." "Symposium on the Second Advent," in the *British Weekly*, July 15, 1887. See also, Lange's Commentary on the Revelation, Am. ed., "Excursus on The New Jerusalem" by the Am. Editor, Rev. E. R. Craven, D. D., p. 391; Ebrard, *Christliche Dogmatik*, pp. 748, 749; Luthardt, *Lehre von den Letzten Dingen*, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 13.

been imputed to premillennialists which they utterly repudiate. It is, for instance, a great mistake to represent them as believing that in the resurrection the saints "shall rise and reign in the flesh."<sup>9</sup> In opposition to such a gross imagination they agree with all Christians in maintaining the obvious sense of those words of our Lord, that the sons of the resurrection neither "marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God."<sup>10</sup>

It should be further said that it is not even essential to the premillennial eschatology that one shall maintain the continued and local presence of the Lord and of his saints in resurrection life at any particular place on earth during the millennial period; nor do we know of any reputable authority who would insist that because Christ and the risen saints shall in that age administer the government of the world, therefore they must mingle with men in the flesh after the manner in which we mingle with one another now.<sup>11</sup> In reference to this question, premillennialists often refer to the relation which the risen Lord sustained to his disciples still in the fleshly life, during the forty days before his public ascension, as very possibly a suggestion of the state of things which may exist in the days of the coming kingdom.<sup>12</sup> However opinion may vary on this matter, we believe that most intelligent premillennialists would regard no more as *essential* to their eschatology than simply the personal return of the Lord and

<sup>9</sup> Even the late Professor A. A. Hodge, D. D., strangely fell into this misapprehension. See his *Outlines of Theology*, rev. ed., p. 571.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. xxii. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Professor Godet's words deserve to be noted here. He says, after affirming that the Parousia will be premillennial, "There will be no mingling here below of immortal risen ones with sinners who have still to die—an opinion which Professor Beet wrongly ascribes to millennarians. The living may perhaps be able to hold more free communion with them than is now possible between the dwellers in earth and heaven. But neither in the Epistles of Paul nor in the Revelation, is there the least indication of the *visible and permanent* presence of the Lord and his elect on earth during all that period." *The British Weekly*, July 15, 1887, p. 16a.

<sup>12</sup> So, *e. g.*, Ebrard, *Christliche Dogmatik*, Vol. ii. p. 737.



the resurrection of the righteous at the beginning of the new age, and the establishment therewith of theocratic rule over the whole world in the place of present earthly politics.

Recent controversy on this subject makes it necessary to add that, however here and there some premillennarians may have expressed themselves in a way that may have justly laid them open to misapprehension, it is nevertheless not true, as some have supposed, that the premillennial eschatology involves the denial of the present exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ on the mediatorial throne. No stronger declarations of this vital truth can be found than we meet in the writings of the strongest premillennialists.<sup>13</sup>

II. After this brief exposition of what appear to be the most essential and fundamental elements in the premillennial eschatology, we have now to indicate, briefly, the general line of argument upon which its advocates depend for its support.

Of the first and second of the above four fundamental propositions, there is no need here to give the proof. They belong to the general belief of all evangelical Christians, and the Scripture testimony both as to the final subjection of the world to Christ and the future personal second advent, is familiar to all. As for the proof of the remaining two propositions, which embody what belongs distinctively to premillennialist belief, it should be premised that premillennialists would not generally admit the correctness of the frequent statement that the truth or falsity of the whole system turns on the interpretation of the famous passage concerning the "thousand years" in Rev. xx. One and all would claim that however strong the argument, in their opinion, from that passage, especially as regards the length of interval be-

<sup>13</sup> Illustrations of this fact may be found on every hand. See, *e. g.*, Van Oosterzee, *Christian Dogmatics*, Sec. cxiii., and especially the admirable chapter in *The Image of Christ*, on "The God-Man in the World;" also, Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Vol. i. p. 109; Ebrard, *Christliche Dogmatik*, pp. 291-294.

tween the resurrections, yet the truth of the system as embodied in propositions (3) and (4) above, would not be affected though it were to be dropped out of the Scripture. No more is the frequent statement justified by facts, that the proof of premillennialism turns on the interpretation of the symbolical rather than the plain and literal portions of the Scriptures.

Of propositions (3) and (4), as given above, it will be observed that the former refers to the chronological relation of the second advent to the expected triumph of the kingdom of Christ ; and the latter to the purpose of that advent. In opposition to so-called post-millennialists of every variety, premillennialists affirm that the advent *precedes* the promised earthly triumph of the gospel. This proposition they support by a great variety of Scripture proof, the most of which may be summed up in the comprehensive affirmation that the representation which the Scriptures of the New Testament give of the character and history of the period between the first and the second advents is such as to exclude the possibility within its limits of any such happy state of things as the Old Testament prophets predict in connection with Messiah's reign. They urge that whereas the Old Testament predictions of the kingdom of Christ are universalistic in their character, the New Testament representations of the period before the second advent are the opposite of this ; that where the former tell us of "all nations" serving and obeying the Christ of God,<sup>14</sup> the New Testament tells us that whereas "many are called, few are chosen," and represents this state of things as continuing through the dispensation till the marriage feast is set.<sup>15</sup> Again, they call attention to the fact, that, while the Old and New Testament prophecies agree in predicting the national repentance of Israel as the event which shall be as "life from the dead"<sup>16</sup> to the sinful world, and so usher in the final triumph of

<sup>14</sup> Ps. lxxii. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Matt. xxii. 2-14.

<sup>16</sup> Rom. xj. 15,

the kingdom of Christ, it appears, from a comparison of the versions of the Olivet discourse in Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi., that our Lord represents the tribulation upon Israel as continuing until "the times of the Gentiles" are ended, and the signs appear which usher in the glorious epiphany of the "Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." It is further noted, as strictly accordant with this, that Peter urges his nation to repent by this very consideration, that so God "may send the Christ appointed for them, even Jesus."<sup>17</sup>

It is thus argued that if the triumph of Christ's kingdom on earth only begins when Israel repents, and if, according to our Lord, Israel's apostasy spans the whole period from the crucifixion to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, then, obviously, the predicted period of earthly blessing lies the other side the advent.

Another argument of analogous character is derived from the prediction of "the apostasy" and the appearing of "the man of sin" as given by Paul in 2 Thess. ii., where premillennialists affirm that the development and history of the apostasy is made to cover the whole time from the date of that Epistle until "the manifestation of Christ's presence,"—words which the apostle, both in this Epistle and elsewhere, uses only of a visible personal advent. Obviously, they say, this steady growth of the apostasy is incompatible with the assumption that during any part of the period so occupied, Christ's kingdom will obtain any such universal ascendancy as the Old Testament prophets predict.

The premillennialist school urge in addition that their understanding of these passages is confirmed not only by the silence of our Lord and his apostles as to any such blessed period to be expected this side his second coming, but by the additional fact that whenever they have occasion to give any formal description of the state of things in the world as the advent draws near, they depict it in very dark colors. Not, indeed, that they see nothing good in those last days; they

<sup>17</sup> Acts iii. 20, Greek and R. V.

all agree in representing them as marked by a universal dissemination of the gospel: but none the less it is said that the last days shall be characterized by a prevalence of the "form of godliness" without its power,<sup>18</sup> and by the clamor of a scepticism denying the advent altogether, on the ground of the observed uniformity of natural law.<sup>19</sup>

Yet further, premillennialists point to the fact, that, in contrast with many in these days, our Lord and his apostles never, in connection with the duty of the universal preaching of the gospel, hold up the predicted conversion of the world as an event to be attained by this means before his own return; but that, on the contrary, our Lord said that when the gospel should be preached in all nations sufficiently to serve the purpose in the divine mind of "a witness," then should come that "end of the age" of which his apostles had asked him.<sup>20</sup>

Not to go further into the detail of their argument from Scripture, it should be added that they affirm that the common anticipation of centuries of universal righteousness as yet certainly to intervene before the second advent, makes it impossible to maintain that attitude of constant watchfulness for Christ's appearing which he repeatedly enjoined; and that such a view thus stands in practical contradiction to the declaration of our Lord, that his disciples knew not but that he might come even "in the first watch" of the night.<sup>21</sup>

While properly resting the weight of their argument on what they understand to be the teaching of Scripture regarding the time of the advent, premillennialists are wont to lay no little stress on the extra-scriptural fact that, as is commonly admitted by the best modern church historians, no trace can be found in the writings of any Christian Father of the first two centuries, of that expectation of a conversion of the world

<sup>18</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Matt. xxiv. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Mark xiii. 35.

before the advent, which has now become so common; but that, on the contrary, a number of the most eminent among them formally avow premillennial beliefs.

From such arguments as these, and many others of like character, premillennialists draw the conclusion that the Scriptures leave no place for the interposition of the expected age of universal righteousness anywhere on this side of the second coming; and thus feel that they are shut up to the belief that the numerous predictions of that blessed time must have their fulfilment only after and in connection with the Lord's glorious return. Thus they are led to affirm proposition (4), as above given; namely, the word of God teaches that *the purpose of the return of Christ to the earth is to set up and administer the promised kingdom of righteousness.* They all agree that, according to the Scriptures, he will do this by setting up over the whole earth a theocratic government, which shall be vested in the Son of man and the persons of his saints, who shall be raised from the dead, or, if living, changed and translated at his coming. According to this view, the triumph of the kingdom of Christ in the world will not consist merely in an improvement of such forms of government and social organization as now exist, through the moral and spiritual influence of the gospel, but will instead be brought about through their judgment and destruction, and by the transfer of the ruling power on earth from the hands of fallen men to the Christ of God, acting with and through the risen and glorified Church, as the executive of his will.

The line of argument which brings premillennialists to this conclusion, as one may gather it from their most representative writers, is, in general, as follows:—

In the first place, such a conclusion seems to be an almost necessary corollary from the previous proposition respecting the predicted order of events, if that be granted to have Scripture warrant. Again, it is said that the analogy of past fulfilments of Messianic prophecy, if we will be consistent in interpretation, compels us to expect an earthly manifes-

tation of Christ in his kingly glory, no less literal, and local, and visible, than his former manifestation in humiliation. Premillennarians remind us of the minute literality of the fulfilment of predictions concerning the suffering Christ;—a literality which, even when *a priori* such a fulfilment might have seemed impossible, has been such as to fill us with wonder that the Jews cannot see in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah predicted in their Scriptures.

He was, for example, to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem Ephratah; should “not strive nor cry;” should be “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” “despised and rejected of men,” “having no beauty that men should desire him;” he was to be “numbered with the transgressors,” his hands and his feet should be “pierced;” he should receive “gall and vinegar to drink;” men should “part his garments among them, and for his vesture cast lots;” he should “make his grave with the wicked, and be with the rich in his death;” and still, though he should thus die, yet he should live forever, and “the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.” No evangelical Christian disputes either the fact of these predictions and many others like them, or the fact of their most literal fulfilment. On the literality of this fulfilment the missionary to the Jews everywhere rests his argument for the Messiahship of Jesus.

But, argues the premillennialist, the Old Testament contains another class of prophecies concerning the Messiah, often occurring in the closest textual connection with these others; prophecies which speak of Messiah’s kingly glory, and represent it as manifested, not in heaven, but on earth, and, like his sufferings, in special connection with the people and land of Israel.

It is said, for instance, that of the increase of the government and peace of Messiah’s kingdom “there shall be no end upon the throne of David;”<sup>22</sup> that “he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever;”<sup>23</sup> that in the day when the

<sup>22</sup> Isa. ix. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Luke i. 33.

Lord shall become King over the whole earth, he will come "with all his saints" and "his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," amid terrific convulsions of surrounding nature, etc.<sup>24</sup> Now the premillennialist asks, What sufficient reason can be shown why such predictions as these should be interpreted on different principles from those which have been exemplified in the fulfilment of the predictions of Messiah's humiliation? He asks how we can blame the orthodox Jew for his interpretation of the latter, if we adopt a similar method in our interpretation of the former. If one point to unanswerable difficulties which arise if we assume the literal fulfilment of the predictions touching Messiah's kingly glory, the premillennialist admits them, but replies that there are no such difficulties greater than many which, antecedent to fulfilment, must have appeared in the literal understanding of the predictions concerning the first coming. If you point to the extreme improbability of any such kingly manifestation of the Son of God on earth as the literal interpretation of these passages leads one to expect, he answers, that, great as it may be, it certainly cannot be regarded as *a priori* more improbable than was the literal fulfilment of many prophecies touching the first advent, involving, as they did, the incarnation of the Godhead in human nature, and—more astounding still—the crucifixion, death, and burial of the Incarnate One.

Probably most premillennarians would be inclined to assign to this line of argument a primary position in its bearing on the question debated. Much emphasis, however, is laid, by writers like Professor Birks, of Cambridge, Elliott, and other representative men, on the teaching of the visions recorded in Dan. ii. and vii. concerning the four great world-powers, which are represented as following one another in chronological succession till the triumphant establishment on

<sup>24</sup> Zech. xiv. 4-9. See remarks of Delitzsch on this passage, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, transl. by T. L. Kingsbury, M. A., Vol. ii. p. 361.

earth of Messiah's kingdom. For reasons fully given by Pusey, Birks, and others, most premillennialists strenuously insist, in opposition to many modern interpreters, though in full agreement with the ordinary Christian and Jewish interpretation throughout the centuries since Christ, that the fourth predicted world-power is the Roman, represented as including both the earlier undivided empire and the smaller states succeeding to the dominion of the Roman territory. They differ indeed as to whether that particular tenfold division predicted in Dan. vii. has already appeared or is still in the future; but this does not affect the general argument which they base on these prophecies, namely, that, whereas the view of their opponents regards the kingdom of Christ as reaching its final victory on earth by means of the christianization of the now existing forms of political power, and therefore contemporaneously with their dominion, Daniel represents Messiah's kingdom as coming to supremacy by means of a destruction of the political world-power, and as succeeding in time to the last form of that power precisely as each political power had succeeded in time to its predecessor.<sup>26</sup> And they note, further, that in the second of these two visions this triumph of the kingdom of God is represented as connected with an event which is described as a coming of one like unto the Son of man in the clouds of heaven,—words which (as is commonly agreed) our Lord appropriated to describe his future second visible appearing. The premillennarian is unable to see how, by any legitimate exegesis, the symbols and their inspired interpretation can be made to signify anything else than the establishment on earth of a theocratic kingdom, to be introduced by the destruction of then existing forms of political power, for which it becomes the substitute.

<sup>25</sup>As, *e. g.*, Principal Edwards, in the "Symposium on the Second Advent," *British Weekly*, July 8, 1887, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup>So, *e. g.*, Auberlen, *Der Prophet Daniel*, pp. 229, 230, 328, *et passim*. Cf. remarks of Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. cit., Vol. ii. p. 365.



They further argue that this view is confirmed by the fact that, although, in consequence of these prophecies, the Jews in the time of Christ all cherished the expectation of such a theocratic kingdom, as to be established by Messiah, yet our Lord, who corrected their views respecting it in several particulars,—especially as regards the conditions on which it was to be inherited,—never intimated that they were wrong as regards the expectation itself. Nor, when, after his ascension, the disciples asked him whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel (in the theocratic sense of that phrase), did he intimate that they were wrong in expecting this, but only answered that “the times and the seasons” were not for them to know; <sup>27</sup>—which language, it is argued, assumes the correctness of their expectation of such a restoration. Premillennialists point further to the fact that both our Lord and his apostles habitually connect his second advent with the establishment of the kingdom. We are reminded how Christ described his advent as a time when he, the Son of man, should “sit on the throne of his glory;” <sup>28</sup> a throne which he elsewhere distinguishes from that mediatorial throne of the Father which he at present occupies; <sup>29</sup> and defines the time when he should reward his faithful servants and destroy his enemies as the time when he should return, “having received the kingdom;” <sup>30</sup> in strict accord with which Paul connects the advent and kingdom of Christ together as concomitant, <sup>31</sup> and John represents the time when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, as the time of the dead when they shall be judged and the ancient prophets rewarded. <sup>32</sup>

In harmony with all this, as premillennialists think, is the additional fact that promises were repeatedly made by our

<sup>27</sup> Acts i. 6, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Matt. xxv. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. iii. 21; cf. Luke ix. 26.

<sup>30</sup> Luke xix. 15.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Rev. xi. 15–18.

Lord to his disciples of governmental powers over the nations, which they have never exercised, and which, having long since departed this life, they cannot exercise except it be in resurrection at his second coming. Notable among such passages to which they appeal is that to the believers of Thyatira, "He that overcometh, . . . to him will I give authority over the nations, . . . even as I received of my Father;"<sup>83</sup> to which may be added the special promises made to the apostles, of governmental powers to be exercised by them "in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory."<sup>84</sup> It seems to premillennialists that such representations as these and others could only have had the effect of confirming the admitted belief of those who first heard them, that it was the destiny of the Messiah to set up a theocratic kingdom, in which his servants should with him have dominion.

As is well known, premillennialists all agree with Dean Alford, and many others of equal eminence as expositors, that the same doctrine is taught in the famous passage in Rev. xx. concerning the first resurrection and the thousand-years' reign of the saints; though, as already remarked, they do not regard this passage as essential to proof, but as amplifying teaching already given regarding the resurrection and kingdom of Christ.

It is also often further argued that if we but read the New Testament passages which speak of the future "judgment" of the world by Christ in the light of those Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament which furnish the original of the phraseology, they will forbid us to limit the content of this term in all places to the mere rendition of judicial decisions touching the destiny of individuals. For they observe, with Delitzsch, that the LXX. often "uses the Greek term *κρίσις*" of "just, impartial government" as in Psalm lxxii. 2, (cited by Delitzsch);<sup>85</sup> as also Ps. xcvi. 10; lxvii. 4, etc., where

<sup>83</sup>Rev. ii. 26, 27.

<sup>84</sup>Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>85</sup>Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, ed. cit., Vol. ii. p. 191.

the parallelism indicates this broader sense of the word. Now it is said that when Christ's contemporaries heard him claim these functions of "judging" for himself, familiar as they were with these Messianic promises, they must have understood him (apart from explanations, which were not given) as assuming the correctness of their anticipations in this particular. And it is added that this broader interpretation is even demanded in those passages in which the saints are represented as being hereafter associated with Christ in judging, all which must be read in the light of such promises to the saints as we find in Dan. vii. 27 and elsewhere.

Premillennialists also appeal to the numerous passages in which we read of the "day of the Lord," which is yet to come. Accepting as undoubted teaching of Scripture the catholic doctrine concerning that day, that therein "the quick and the dead" shall be judged and rewarded, they insist that if we will regard the passages of the Old Testament from which the phrase was derived, we cannot restrict its duration to a short period, nor the events which shall occupy it, as is commonly done, to a general assize of humanity. They point to the fact that in the Old Testament "the day of the Lord" is represented as a prolonged period which is marked by a universal reign of Jehovah, following upon tremendous judgments by which it is introduced. The prophecy of "the day of the Lord" which is found in Zech. xiv. is often referred to as a cardinal example of this class of passages. It is said that the destruction of Jerusalem which is predicted in this chapter corresponds to no such overthrow in the past, and must therefore still await its fulfilment. Attention is called to the declarations that "in that day" the feet of the Lord "shall stand upon the Mount of Olives," and that "the Lord God will come, and all his saints with him;" language, which, we are reminded, is referred by Paul to the future personal advent of Christ, in that day of the Lord of which he warns the Thessalonians.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 13.

Further it is urged that Zechariah represents that day as marked not only (in accord with 2 Pet. iii.) by terrible convulsions of physical nature, connected with this "coming of the Lord," but also, as the result of this epiphany, by the universal subjection of the world to Him; — "the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day the Lord shall be one and his name one."<sup>87</sup> That there are difficulties and obscurities in this, as in many other prophecies of the last times, every candid premillennialist will admit; but they insist that these are not such as can warrant us in refusing to recognize it as a fact that it is in "the day of the Lord," introduced by "the coming of the Lord with all his saints," that the Old Testament prophets place that universal reign of Christ which all expect.

From all this it is plain to what exegetical school premillennialists belong. Whether their conclusions be right or wrong, their arguments evidently depend on the rigid application of the grammatico-historical, inductive method of interpretation, which Bengel in the last century did so much to introduce, and which, it is not too much to say, has secured the adhesion of the chief part of the most eminent exegetes of our day. Premillennialists, therefore, are everywhere marked by the most emphatic rejection and repudiation alike of the allegorical, the dogmatic, and the so-called rational systems of interpretation, as also of the eschatological conclusions which the application of one or other of these methods has led men to adopt.

III. We have now to indicate what appear to be the doctrinal affinities of the premillennial eschatology. As regards their doctrinal position, it is indeed quite true that

<sup>87</sup> So, for example, Oehler, referring to this prophecy of Zechariah, tells us that it is "in this consummation of redemption" that "the theocratic relation in which Jehovah in Old Testament times stood to all Israel, is transferred to all mankind," and "the Lord has become the king of all nations." *Theology of the Old Testament*. Translated by Professor Day. Funk and Wagnalls, N. Y., 1883, p. 517. In this connection, the whole of pp. 499-520, in this valuable work, may be most profitably studied.

premillennialists may be found among men of widely differing, or even antagonistic, theological beliefs; and this admission should be borne in mind in its bearing on what follows. But in general, we think, it may be rightly said that the *logical* relations of premillennialism connect it more closely with the Augustinian than with any other theological system. This seems to be evidenced in part by the theological position of a large proportion of those known to be premillennialists. No doubt, among these are some whose tendencies would appear to be more or less distinctly Arminian; but such seem to be exceptions to the general rule. Among the larger denominations, the largest proportion seems to be found in the Anglican Church, in which it is said that the majority of the evangelical Low-Church party are on the premillennialist side. The Reformed Episcopalians have incorporated the premillennial advent into their articles of faith, as also the Free Church of Italy. A further illustration of the state of the case is furnished by the Premillennial Conference in New York in 1878, which may be presumed to have been a fairly representative body. In the list of those who signed the call for that Conference, excluding those whose theological position is not known to the present writer, the remaining one hundred and eight are distributed as follows:—

Presbyterians.....	31	Reformed Episcopalians.....	10
United Presbyterians.....	10	Congregationalists.....	10
Reformed (Dutch).....	3	Methodists.....	6
Episcopalians.....	10	Adventists.....	5
Baptists.....	22	Lutheran.....	1

From these figures it appears that fifty-six per cent. of the signers to the call were adherents either of the Westminster or Heidelberg Standards, or of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England; to which must be added twenty-two per cent. from the Baptists, known to be strongly Calvinistic; making seventy-eight per cent. of the total number, who are known to hold to an Augustinian theology. But to these we should probably add also the ten Congregationalists, which will make the proportion of Augustinians in the whole to be

eighty-eight per cent. The significance of this is emphasized by the contrasted fact that the Methodists, although one of the largest denominations of Christians in the country, were represented by only six names. The writer's observation would lead him to believe that analyses of similar gatherings since held on both sides of the Atlantic, would yield a similar result. Such facts can hardly be accidental. That they are the outward expression of a degree of logical affinity between premillennial eschatology and the Augustinian type of theology, can, we think, easily be shown.

It may be observed, as preliminary, that premillennialism, held as a creed, is vitally related to those strict views of the supreme and infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures on which Augustinians have always strongly insisted. The connection is evident. For premillennialism is at the opposite pole of thought from rationalism. The premillennialist eschatology is certainly not one which any person would think of establishing on merely rational grounds. Those who receive it, in the nature of the case, can be found only among those who have so high a regard for the authority of Scripture as to be willing to rest their belief wholly upon it, even when its declarations, taken in their normal and most obvious sense, might seem to discountenance the anticipations of reason, or contradict the traditions of the dogmaticians, or the imaginings of the "Christian consciousness." The premillennialism of our day may therefore be truly said to represent the most extreme form of protest in the church against all tendencies to exalt any human authority, whether it be of the reason, tradition, or Christian consciousness, above the supreme authority of the word of God; and, especially, against current doubts as to the possibility or the probability of supernatural intervention in the history of mankind.

Premillennialism logically presupposes an *anthropology* essentially Augustinian. The ordinary Calvinism affirms the absolute helplessness of the individual for self-regeneration and self-redemption. Premillennialism proceeds to insist that the same must be affirmed also as no less true of that corporate

humanity which is made up of such individuals. It may make this matter clearer if we observe the affinity which the different prevailing types of eschatological expectation have with the three familiar types of anthropology which divide the theologians. At the one extreme of these we have, of course, Pelagianism, with its affirmation of the plenary ability of the sinful individual to save himself; at the other, Augustinianism, denying the native goodness of man and his competency for self-redemption *in toto*; while between the two we have those various types of doctrine, of which semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism, Wesleyanism, etc., are various modifications, which, recognizing man's need of divine grace, insist that he has still a degree of ability, natural or gracious, sufficient to enable him to coöperate efficiently with God in his own salvation. Current eschatological anticipations with regard to the earthly future of the race may be readily classified with reference to their logical affinities with one or other of these three types of anthropology. At the one extreme we have all naturalistic theories, of such as maintain that we are to expect a gradual perfecting of the race, solely in virtue of the laws of its being, through a process of evolution, eliminating by slow degrees the elements of evil, and issuing in the final supremacy of those moral elements which are fittest to survive. Such theories evidently presuppose a Pelagian anthropology; they can scarcely claim to be called Christian, though they are involved in much of political and social theory and practice in modern Christendom. Again, we have a class of eschatologies which, recognizing man's sinful condition and need of divine grace, yet anticipate that the expected triumph of the kingdom of God on earth, and the redemption of the race in its organic unity, will be brought about simply by the coöperation of man with the work of the Holy Ghost, in the use of existing material, moral, and spiritual agencies. Although such expectations and theories are held by many who regard themselves as Calvinists, yet they seem to be *logically* cognate rather with various synergistic types of belief, resting on an

anthropology which affirms the necessity of divine grace, but also asserts the competency of the individual, thus assisted, to work out his own salvation. But while such eschatological anticipations are cherished by many good men, yet we apprehend that most thoughtful premillennarians would regard them as out of harmony with what they believe to be Scripture teaching as to the natural condition and salvation of the individual. For they understand the Scriptures to teach that, even with divine grace being given, the triumph of the kingdom of God in the individual is not to be expected through any use, however diligent, of existing agencies in this present order of things, but only through his translation from the present to a higher order, by the destruction of the flesh, and resurrection from the dead. If this be true as respects the individual, it would seem that the analogy should hold as regards the race ; and so, in fact, it is, if we mistake not, that, consciously or unconsciously, the premillennialist goes on to apply to organic humanity what the ordinary Augustinianism affirms only of the individual. As the triumph of the kingdom of God in no single member of the race is to be expected in the present order, even by any blessing of the Spirit on existing agencies, so neither, as the premillennialist believes, shall we see such a triumph in the race as a corporate unity, so long as the present order lasts. It affirms a supernatural intervention of divine power, in connection with a resurrection from the dead, and the introduction of humanity into a new order, to be no less necessary in the one case than in the other.

In a word, we may say that premillennialists simply affirm of the macrocosm what the common Augustinianism affirms only of the microcosm. In this, premillennialists believe, as we have seen, that they are sustained by what seem to them most explicit predictions of the word of God, foretelling the ultimate failure of all arrangements and institutions, political or ecclesiastical, to effect a social regeneration, bring in the kingdom of God, and therewith deliver the world from the dominance of evil in the present age. They



understand the same Scriptures to teach that it is the purpose of God to bring about this blessed issue only through the introduction of a new dispensation, in connection with the return of the glorified Son of man to cast out Satan, put all enemies under his feet, and establish at last the everlasting kingdom.

It is thus evident that the anthropological presuppositions on which premillennialism seems to rest, must carry with them a corresponding *soteriology*. This may be further illustrated in many ways. It is natural, for example, that we should find, as we do, that premillennialists are eminent, even among evangelical Christians, for the emphasis which they place upon the divine person and work of Christ as the Incarnate Son of God. For believing in such a total ruin, not only of individual men, but also and no less of the race which they jointly constitute, and yet at the same time believing in a predicted final "restoration of all things" to their original perfection, it is plain that they must exalt in the highest degree the person and work of the Son of God. The salvation of even a single human person from the death and doom of sin, and his perfect restoration to the image of God, is regarded by all evangelical Christians as a work of such magnitude as to require the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of the co-equal Son of God, in order to its accomplishment. But when beyond this we look, not merely for the salvation of an aggregate of individuals out of the race, but also at last of the race itself in its organic unity,—a salvation involving the complete mastery of all the complex social forces of humanity, and even a profound change in the physical conditions of the earth as its material abode,—this necessity becomes, if possible, still more absolute and momentous. It is logically inevitable that those who expect that Christ will really accomplish a work of such colossal magnitude, should hold the most exalted ideas conceivable of his person and glory. In comparison with their beliefs and anticipations, fashionable

modern schemes for the regeneration of the race under existing conditions, by moral suasion, ethical reform, universal suffrage, and democratic rule, and such like, seem to them but trifling devices,—a mere playing with the surface of things; and that such reformers should too frequently offer humanity only a human Christ as the Ideal Man, our perfect example, appears only logically consistent.

On the other hand, it may be further remarked that premillennialists seem to be everywhere distinguished by the emphasis which, in full consistency with their eschatology, they also place upon the doctrine of our Lord's humanity as a permanent and everlasting fact. Many in our day so explain the resurrection and ascension of our Lord as to explain them away, making the resurrection a practical nullity, and in effect denying the veritable reality of his glorified corporeity. And yet, strangest of all, such seem to be conscious of no loss to faith and hope, but rather imagine advantage! But that the risen Son of God exists to-day in human nature and is manifested in the highest heaven in a substantial and material body, even that body which hung upon the cross and rose again, this with all premillennialists takes the place of a vital truth. If others also affirm it, they greatly magnify it, and, according to what they believe to be divinely revealed eschatological truth, they could not do otherwise. For, as we have seen, they believe it to be revealed that Christ's redemption is to reach not only the spiritual, but the material also; both our material bodies and also this material world, which is their environment. From this point of view, the fact of our Lord's continued existence in a glorified body must appear as of primary importance and of prophetic significance. It can no longer be left as a matter merely for curious speculation, on which men may be permitted almost any vagaries of thought.

When we consider the question of the application of redemption, the Augustinian affinity of the premillennialist eschatology becomes still more manifest. For nothing is more marked than the emphasis with which premillennialists

constantly insist that, as regards the application of salvation, the present dispensation is strictly elective. They all maintain, most strenuously, that, according to the Scripture, the immediate object of the present dispensation is not the salvation of the world or of the race, but only the salvation of an election out of the world, to reign with Christ in the age which is to come. Herein they regard the present as contrasted with the future dispensation which they expect,—which shall really have as its objective point that which current modern opinions regard as the object of the present dispensation; namely, the redemption of the nations, and, at last, of all humanity in its collective organic unity, as existing on the earth. The place which they assign to election appears especially in the prominence which many of them give to the Scripture representations of the church of the present age, as “the church of the first-born,” or as “the bride of the Lamb,” chosen of God in Christ Jesus, not merely to obtain the salvation which is in Christ but to obtain it “with eternal glory,” in co-regency with the Son of God in the age to come. So much stress is laid by premillennialists upon conceptions of this kind, that it is difficult to see how any but an Augustinian can really accept the system. In the light of this fact alone, one can easily see a reason for the statistics given at the beginning of this article.

There is special reason for calling attention to the fact that in the premillennialist conception both of the present and the future dispensation of grace, great stress is laid upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit. That this should be so is a logical necessity. It is therefore all the more singular, to any one familiar with the actual facts, that one of the most common objections to premillennialism is that it dishonors and depreciates the work of the Holy Ghost! So far is it from being true that the actual tendency of premillennialism is in that direction, that it would be difficult to find a class of Christians who more strenuously maintain the evangelical doctrine on this subject. If the above exposition of their anthropology and soteriology

be correct, it should be plain that in this premillennialists are not only scriptural, but thoroughly consistent with their own system. How could those who so insist on the total ruin of man, his absolute impotence for self-redemption, whether personal or social and governmental, and who place the doctrine of a divine election in the very foreground of their system, do otherwise than magnify to the utmost the dignity and office of the Holy Spirit in redemption?

But it is none the less often insisted by their opponents, that, inasmuch as they teach that the world will not be turned to God by the Holy Ghost as the result of his operation through present agencies, and apart from the visible appearing of the Son of man, therefore they in fact do derogate from the power and glory of the adorable Spirit. If the objection were sustained by facts, it would certainly be exceedingly grave; and we do not wonder that, sincerely believing this, many excellent men find in this supposed fact sufficient reason for even declining to give premillennialism the slightest consideration. But the objection proceeds from a total misapprehension of what premillennialists believe. In the first place, the objection is often pressed as if premillennialists believed that from the time of the return of the Lord, it would thenceforward be not the Holy Spirit, but the Son, who by his visible appearing, would effect the regeneration of men. Nothing could well be more foreign to the belief of intelligent premillennialists than this. They all believe, as much as their opponents, that in the economy of redemption, the Regenerator in all dispensations, is, not the Son, but the Holy Spirit. They believe that no means whatever, however potent, have any efficiency apart from his working, and that not even the appearing of the Son of man in his glory will furnish any exception to the principle. Saul of Tarsus was converted (instrumentally) by the visible appearing of the Lord Jesus in glory; but is there anything in that fact which even seems to any Christian to derogate aught from the dignity of the Holy Spirit? Was he not regenerated by the Holy Spirit, even as others

who are brought to believe by ordinary means? Premillennialists simply believe that what took place in a single instance, in the case of Saul, shall be repeated, much more extensively, in connection with our Saviour's second advent. Whether they are right or wrong, it is difficult to see how there is derogation from the glory of the Holy Spirit any more in the one case than in the other.

The objection is again sometimes stated, as if premillennialism denied, by implication at least, the ability of the Holy Ghost to convert all nations apart from the appearing of Christ. But this is no less a strange misapprehension of their belief. It is not, in their minds, a question of the ability of the Holy Spirit, which no Christian can doubt: it is simply a question of His purpose and intention. A premillennialist answers that on the same principle a perfectionist might argue that those who deny that any man will attain to perfect sinlessness in this life, thereby derogate from the glory of the Holy Ghost as Sanctifier; to which it would be fairly replied that it was not a question of the ability of the Spirit to sanctify a man perfectly in this life, but only of His revealed purpose. Or it might fairly be asked whether, if we accept the statement of Scripture that Saul was converted by the visible appearing of Christ on the road to Damascus, we are therefore compelled to conclude that the Holy Spirit was unable to convert him by the preaching of Stephen or the apostles?

There is, then, no foundation for this common misapprehension as to premillennialist belief regarding the office and work of the Holy Spirit. The question between them and their opponents is not as to the *agent* in the regeneration of our race, but only as to the predicted *instrumentality* by which this shall be brought about. In their position on this point they are in strict logical consistence with their general Augustinian theological creed, as in agreement with all evangelical Christians.<sup>38</sup>

The Augustinian affinity of the premillennialist escha-

<sup>38</sup> On this point see an excellent paper by Rev. E. R. Craven, D. D., in *Premillennial Essays*, pp. 463-466.

tology will perhaps appear still more clearly if we consider the implications of their system with the question of the logical order of the divine decrees, so fundamental to theological thought. On this the present writer cannot indeed claim to speak with authority; he is not aware that any formal attempt has been made to deal with this difficult theological problem from a premillennialist standpoint. We should presume, however, that most premillennarians would hesitate to accept the representations of the subject given by theologians of either the supralapsarian, infralapsarian, Arminian, or the modified Calvinism of the Saumurian school, as satisfying fully the demands of Scripture. That the Arminian theory would be ruled out seems a logical necessity from what has been already set forth as premillennarian doctrine. As for the other theories named, we should judge that most premillennarians would be inclined to object to the first two that in making the redemptive decree to have respect only to the salvation of certain elect persons in the present age, due force was not allowed to that large class of universalistic expressions wherein the Scriptures affirm the object of Christ's work to have been the redemption of the world. Many, certainly, would feel that such universal expressions of purpose as, *e. g.*, *ἵνα σώσω τὸν κόσμον*, "that I might save the world," are as distinct declarations of purpose,—and, as all Augustinians would agree, of a purpose which could not be defeated,—as the narrower declarations of purpose, on which many Calvinists chiefly or exclusively insist.

Yet the attempt of the French theologians of Saumur to make out a scheme which should find a place for both classes of passages, and so, while retaining the doctrine of unconditional election, concede full force to the universalistic declarations of Scripture, can hardly be regarded as a success. The order suggested by these theologians, as the reader will remember, stood as follows: (1) The purpose to permit the fall; (2) The purpose to send Christ for the salvation of all men; (3) The purpose, based on the divine foresight that

none would of themselves accept the redemption provided, to elect some to everlasting life and effectually apply to them the purchased salvation. But, as has been often urged, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this *schema* of the order of the divine purposes either with the Calvinistic doctrine on other points, or with the perfections of God. For it certainly seems to sacrifice to the maintenance of the universalism the doctrine of the certain efficiency of the divine purposes; assuming that God had a purpose in sending Christ (*viz.*, of saving all) which he failed to carry out; or else that God proposed what he foreknew would be a nullity. For such reasons it has seemed to many that this well-intended attempt to reconcile particularism and universalism must be judged a failure; and, from a premillennialist point of view, it would be very difficult to see how it could be anything else. For it is self-limited by the assumption that the present dispensation is final, and that therefore the ultimate outcome of redemption, and hence God's ultimate purpose regarding the creature, must be sought within its bounds.

But whether the difficulty which the universalistic statements of Scripture present to the Augustinian system can be resolved or not, that it exists is patent to all, and the premillennialist cannot well shut his eyes to it. To this it might be added that premillennialists generally would doubtless find a further defect in all these schemes alike, in that they none of them give any logical place for the teaching of the Word regarding the redemption of the material creation from the effects of sin, as comprehended also in the purpose of Christ's death.

While we have found no formulated expression of doctrine on this subject, from any premillennialist theologian, it appears to us from the teachings of representative authorities among them, that their eschatology would, logically at least, imply some such *schema* of the divine purposes as the following :—

After the purpose to permit the fall and all its consequences

in man and nature, first, in logical order, would come the divine purpose to effect the complete redemption of the world, or, as the Scripture phrase is, "the restoration of all things."<sup>39</sup> Second, would come the purpose ordaining the means to this end, namely, the incarnation, death, resurrection, and second coming of the Son of God, securing the redemption of a people elected from the present age, to coöperate with him in the age to come in resurrection life, in bringing in, and by theocratic rule maintaining, that redemption of the race and of the habitable world which was the final object, as regards the creature, of the mission of the Son of God.

Thus the electing purpose of God takes its place as included in the broader purpose to save the world by means of a people chosen unto this high destiny through salvation out of the present evil age. Subsidiary to this purpose of the salvation of the election, again, would be the declared purpose on God's part that the gospel of this kingdom should be preached throughout all the world, not merely "for a witness" to the unbelieving,—as is often unjustly represented,—but that by this means the chosen people may be gathered out from among all nations to God's name, to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ to the coming kingdom, and reign with him in glory.

If some such scheme as this, is logically presupposed in the premillennial eschatology, then we may remark upon it, first, that it would be at least quite consistent with Augustinianism, in that it refers the salvation of men out of the present age, to the electing purpose of God. It seems to be of necessity involved, moreover, that this election must be sovereign and absolute. For, however any might argue that salvation, considered merely as a radical change of character, cannot be referred wholly to the sovereignty of God, but to the free choice of the agent, surely when the question is of the occupation of certain high positions in the kingdom, election unto this dignity must be referred wholly to the sovereign pleasure of the appointing God; according to the

<sup>39</sup>Acts iii. 21.



Saviour's express word in Matt. xx. 23. But while we describe premillennialism as logically Augustinian, it is, on the other hand, broader than the common Calvinism, in that it makes the term "election," or "the church," as used in the New Testament, to have a (technical) reference only to the saved out of the present age, and denies that the salvation of this "election" in the present dispensation exhausts the revealed purpose of God in redemption. For, while it maintains, no less strenuously than the old Calvinism, that we must give full force to the elective and particularistic element in the New Testament representations of the divine purpose in redemption as very precious truth, it also insists that, in some way, place shall also be given to the no less explicit universalistic statements of the holy word. To these very many, even among Augustinians, have felt that many theologians have not always been inclined to do full justice; or, if they have sought to do so, it has been, as in the case of the theologians of Saumur, at the expense of logical consistency, and an unintended derogation from the divine glory.

It would thus appear that premillennialism may be regarded as the result of an attempt to give full and equal recognition to both these elements in revelation, and exhibit their true relation to each other. The premillennialist, if we understand their position aright, believes that he discovers that relation in what he understands to be the Scripture teaching that the particular election from the present dispensation, is not, as other schools of theology have taught, the ultimate end of redemption, but a means to a more comprehensive end, and that universalistic; namely, a "restoration of all things"—*i. e.*, the human race on the earth, and therewith the material creation—to more than pristine perfection and glory. In other words, what the Scripture terms the "election" has reference to the present dispensation; its universal statements look beyond the present to the dispensation of the kingdom which is coming. And thus evangelical premillennialists believe that full force may be allowed to both classes of statements, without, on the other hand, going

the length of restorationists like, *e. g.*, Mr. Jukes, who make the election from the present age the intended means to the salvation, in the ages to come, of every individual sinful being.

It will be further observed, that if this premillennialist scheme be established as scriptural, it fully meets and nullifies not only this objection against Calvinism as dealing unfairly with the universalistic element in Scripture, but also the common practical objection, that making, as it does, the salvation of a certain number of elect persons the total object, as regards sinful men, of Christ's redemption, it tends to beget in a certain class of minds a pious selfishness, preoccupying the mind with the question of the personal salvation in a degree disproportioned to the yet vaster interests included in redemption. It is a great principle, admitted by all Christians, that where there is an election, it is always that those chosen may in their turn become the means of blessing to others; in the premillennialist system, this principle takes a place essential and fundamental.

This consideration very naturally leads us to consider the actual *practical* bearings of the premillennialist eschatology. It should be very plain, one would think, that the system, whether true or not, if believed, ought to intensify in a high degree the interest of the believer in the redemption of the world. The system is indeed differentiated from others in nothing more than in this, that it places the redemption of the whole world, the restoration of all things, in the very forefront of the divine purpose regarding fallen man. The work of Christ has not only made this issue possible, but certain; and everything has been arranged and preordained by God to this end. The practical bearing of such a view as this is evident. Certainly the man who believes something like this to be a true exhibit of the revealed plan of God, the key to history, and the ultimate object of his individual salvation, just in proportion to the strength of this conviction, must be a man who forgets self in the work of redemption. Believing that he has been called, not

merely to be saved, but that hereafter, in resurrection life, he may cooperate with Christ in carrying on the redemption of the world to its full completion, it were natural that he should almost instinctively seek to qualify himself for the high position to which he is called, by using himself to the practice of such part of the work of saving men as the Lord has assigned to his church in the present dispensation. This being so, it is truly strange to hear the charge from time to time repeated that a belief in the premillennial eschatology "cuts the nerve of missionary effort," and to hear it even compared in this respect with future probation theories in its pernicious effect upon the evangelistic spirit! It might rather be termed, by way of eminence, a *missionary* eschatology. And yet it is argued, that if a man believes that the preaching of the gospel in the present age is not designed to effect the conversion of the world, he must then lose heart and interest in the missionary work. But the objection has its basis, if we mistake not, in an almost total misunderstanding of the premillennialist position. This is exemplified in an article by Professor Curtis, of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, in *The Old Testament Student* for November, 1887,<sup>40</sup> where, referring to those who fail to see in the New Testament the promise of a world-conversion antecedent to the event, he describes what he imagines to be the view of such, as "the blessing of having the gospel preached, witnessed, to save the few and harden the many, making their damnation the greater"!

If this be meant as a statement of the whole scope of the purpose of God, as understood by premillennialists, it can only be called a caricature of their view, such as could only arise from a radical misunderstanding. Yet such representations are often made, no doubt in perfect good faith, by most excellent and true men. A striking instance of the same kind was given a few years ago in a sermon preached before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, North, by Moderator Jessup. We may truly say that if there

<sup>40</sup>Pp. 88, 89.

were to be found anywhere a man who would recognize the above as a correct representation of his belief regarding the object of the preaching of the gospel and result of Christ's redemption, he would probably be a man whose activities were thereby paralyzed for Christian work. But such a man we have never met. It ought to be understood, once for all, that there is no difference between those on the two sides of this controversy, as regards the meaning of the numerous promises in the Old and New Testaments of the universal subjection of the world to Christ; no difference of belief as to the Scripture teaching that God has appointed the preaching of the gospel among all nations in this dispensation as at least *a necessary antecedent condition* of this issue. The only question is whether according to the Scriptures the issue shall be attained in the present dispensation, or in another to succeed this, which shall be introduced, at least, by a personal appearing of the Son of man in judicial power. In either case alike, the number of the saved, at the last, will, according to the belief of all reputable premillennarians, immeasurably outnumber that of the lost. Not only a few elect in the present age, but a host no man can number, will be the fruit of Christ's redemption, and so the world, the whole world, shall be redeemed, and *to that end* it is ordained that the gospel must first be preached among all nations. This matter needs to be better understood; it would preclude this very common objection. The writings of representative premillennialists like Dean Alford, Bishop Ellicott, Canon Birks, Professors Van Oosterzee, Godet, Delitzsch, Auberlen, the Bonars, Bickersteths, and many others of like standing, will abundantly show how far from the real beliefs of premillennarians are representations such as those of which the above citation is a single example. Whether they are right or not, we do not argue; but it may at least justly be said that the beliefs and anticipations of such men are naturally adapted, in a high degree, to quicken hope and enthusiasm in the evangelization of the world. All the most glowing pictures which post-millennialists have drawn of the future kingdom

of God triumphant on the earth among men in the flesh, the premillennialist expects to see realized, and more! He believes that not only shall the kingdom come, and humanity on earth for happy ages rejoice in God's salvation; but that with the coming of that kingdom "the blessed hope" of the believer shall be fulfilled in the coming of the Lord and the resurrection into glory of those who till then shall have believed. But all this he believes is explicitly conditioned by the previous preaching of the gospel among all nations, and the gathering out by this means of "a multitude no man can number" to be "a first-fruits unto God and the Lamb," and to reign with Christ in his kingdom. It is not easy to see how any man could from the heart believe all this, and be less than an enthusiast in missions.

It should be further observed, as bearing on the practical influence of the premillennialist doctrine, that for the man who holds it, it is a complete answer to the common objection to missions from the smallness of result.

Objections are made, for instance, and discouragement is occasioned to some by the fact brought out recently by the Rev. James Johnston, of China,<sup>41</sup> that the natural increase of the heathen and Mohammedan world is much greater than the total annual increase of converts. But the premillennialist is, of all others, the one man whose faith and hope cannot be touched by these or any facts of the kind. He answers objections based upon such representations by simply pointing out that this only accords with the teaching of Scripture that the work of the church in the present age is simply the gathering out of an election; and that the gathering of the nations into Christ's kingdom, in any true sense of that phrase, belongs to another age and order, for which the present is preparing.

For these and other reasons the truth is this, that, instead of premillennialism discouraging missionary activity, it would be impossible to find a class of Christians who, as a whole, are more active and enthusiastic in evangelistic work, than

<sup>41</sup> In his stirring pamphlet, *A Century of Missions.*

those who are looking for the personal advent of the Lord as premillennial. The facts which justify this affirmation are so numerous and so conspicuous that it is difficult to understand how any one can be found longer to insist that premillennialism is fatal to the missionary spirit.

The feeling of premillennialists generally on this subject had an impressive visible illustration in the premillennial conference held in the church of the Holy Trinity, New York, in 1878, when the great assembly at its closing meeting, rising to their feet, passed with great enthusiasm the following resolution: "That the doctrine of our Lord's premillennial advent, instead of paralyzing evangelistic and missionary effort, is one of the mightiest incentives to earnestness in preaching the gospel to every creature till he comes." Nor is this a matter with them of mere words, but of happy and fruitful experience. If the writer may speak from his own observation, the doctrine stands in this respect in striking contrast with the doctrine of a future probation, with which in this regard it has been sought to compare it. Advocates of Hadean preaching for the heathen are not uncommon in the church at home; but they are exceedingly scarce in our missionary force. Personally in our eleven years in India, in an extensive acquaintance with missionaries of every name, we never met with an advocate of a *post-mortem* preaching of the gospel. On the other hand, while, as every one knows, premillennialists are comparatively very few in the ministry at home, at least in the United States and Canada, they are greatly more numerous in the foreign field; in several missions, to the knowledge of this writer, they form a large majority of the workers. We know of no theological training school in America, comparable for its missionary spirit with the Missionary Training Institute under the care of Mr. H. Grattan Guinness, in London, England. It has sent one hundred missionaries to Africa alone within the last year, and within the last fourteen years no less than five hundred missionaries! At the present time one hundred of the students in training there expect to go

as foreign missionaries, and, on the average, a missionary is sent out every week in the year. But the instruction in the institute is exclusively premillennial. Another institution of a similar character, and under similar doctrinal teaching, is the St. Crischona Theological Institute, near Basle, Switzerland, under the Rev. M. Rappart, a son-in-law of the late Bishop Gobat, of Jerusalem. The results, as regards the sending forth of workers to the mission field, are similar to those in the London Institute. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews under the superintendence of Rev. Mr. Wilkinson, whose enthusiastic activity is familiar to all who have looked into the missionary work centring in London, is, again, premillennial throughout.

It is, or should be, well known that the China Inland Mission, which is now about the largest and most rapidly increasing missionary agency in the Chinese empire, owes its existence, under God, to Mr. Hudson Taylor, the present superintendent of the mission, an earnest advocate of the premillennial doctrine; while those who have charge of its work at home and nearly all its representatives in China—as we are told on the best authority—share the views of the founder on this subject. The princely gifts to missions by Mr. Robert Arthington, of Leeds, England, are everywhere known; it may not be as widely known that he is an enthusiastic believer in the premillennial advent.

The emphatic chiliasm of Professor Delitzsch, of Leipzig, is well known to all who read his commentaries; it deserves to be as well known that, like Professor Christlieb, of Bonn, also a premillennialist, he is profoundly and actively interested in evangelistic work. Of the Missionary Instituta Judaica, formed in nine or ten of the German universities, for the preaching of the gospel to the Jews, he is said to be the inspiring spirit.

If we will look at those engaged in the work of home evangelization, we meet similar facts. Not only, as is well known, Mr. Moody, but nearly all of those devoted to similar evangelistic work on both sides of the Atlantic, are emphatic

premillennialists. The names of such as Pentecost, Whittle, Hammond, Munhall, Lord Radstock, Varley, George Müller of Bristol, Haslam, Aitken, Guinness, Von Schluembach, and many others will at once occur as illustrations to any one familiar with the facts.

But we need not further amplify. The facts of this kind are so numerous and so well known, that the common platform representation of premillennialists as a body of enthusiasts waiting for the Lord in ascension robes, hopeless pessimists with neither faith nor interest in the redemption of the nations or in that practical part of the work which the Lord has committed to his church in the present time, ought to be abandoned forever.<sup>42</sup>

Many would add to what has been said as to the practical influence of this belief, that they have found it peculiarly blessed and helpful in the daily spiritual life. We would not for a moment seem to intimate a disparaging thought as to the spirituality and saintly life of many who are not able to see that premillennialism is according to the word of God. Many such there are whom we might all well seek to imitate. They love their Lord's appearing, and though they see not with their brethren in some things that pertain to it, they shall in no wise lose the promised reward. So also it is true, on the other hand, that a man may be a very earnest premillennialist, and yet in many things show a spirit little like his Master. And yet we think that the most will admit that, on the

<sup>42</sup>In place here are the words of the post-millennarian, Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson, of Philadelphia, words as true as they are creditable to his impartiality and candor in controversy. He says of premillennialism: "One charge which is made against it is unjust—that it must cut the nerve of preaching and of missionary effort. Calvinists certainly cannot endorse that unless they dignify an Arminian slander; for premillennarians hold that an elect people are to be gathered out from the nations through the preaching of the truth. Remember the peroration of Dr. Griffin's sermon on 'The Kingdom of Christ,' about '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."—*The Princeton Review*, March, 1879, p. 434.



whole, whatever be the reason, premillennialism tends to draw upon the most earnest classes and most unworldly element in our churches. The modern easy living, card-playing, theatre-going, dancing type of Christian, is very rarely found to be one who has learned to look for his Lord's premillennial advent. We leave our readers to reflect as to the causes of this. Perhaps the words of Professor Harnack may point in the right direction: "A genuine and living revival of chiliastic hopes is always a sign that the church at large has become secularized to such a degree that tender consciences can no longer feel sure of their faith within her."

But premillennialism is not popular, nor do we think it is immediately likely to become so. For no type of Christian belief is so intensely opposed to certain of the most pronounced tendencies of our time. The age, for example, inclines to rationalize, spiritualize, and as far as possible explain away the supernatural element in human history, whether in the past, present, or future. To this tendency premillennialism squarely refuses to yield one iota, and in its counter-affirmations goes so far as even to displease many who could hardly be called rationalists. So again, the age tends greatly to exalt man. The astonishing advance in every department [of human knowledge and activity predisposes men to form the most exalted conceptions of the possibilities of the race, even in its present fallen condition. In particular, it is one of the ruling ideas of the century that man is fully capable of self-government, and that he is sure yet to work out—at least with the beneficent aid of Christianity—the great problem of government by the people for the people's good. To this confident anticipation of our democratic age premillennialism everywhere opposes the distasteful declaration that, according to the Scripture, all these hopes are doomed to disappointment; and that already, in the counsels of God, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, is written concerning modern democracies no less than concerning

Babylon of old. It is only natural that the most of men should dislike this prophecy of evil exceedingly, and even feel a degree of irritation that such views should be soberly held forth as divine truth. We thus think it nothing strange that in this age of triumphing and exulting democracy, and most of all in a land like the United States, where people are the most sanguine of being able to work out a satisfactory solution of the problem of self-government, premillennialism should be unpopular.

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ARTICLE III.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
AT HERMANNSBURG, NORTH GERMANY.

WRITTEN FOR THE BIBLIOTHECA SACRA BY PASTOR G. HACCIUS, DORFMARK,  
NEAR HERMANNSBURG, GERMANY.

*Translated by Professor Charles Harris, Ph. D., Carbondale, Illinois.*

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 162.]

WE now enter upon the second period, the administration of Theodore Harms. Of this period it may be said that success brings cares. The blossom unfolds more and more, but there comes a serious crisis. The Hermannsburg Missionary Society had to meet the question: "Has the blossom unfolded too fast? Can the work be carried on as its quick growth and extension demand?"

Theodore Harms was the natural successor of his brother. He had helped to begin the work; he knew all the missionaries personally and was acquainted with all the necessary details. With a just estimation of this state of affairs, the Consistory appointed him pastor of Hermannsburg. It did so, however, with the condition that he permit the appointment of a collaborator, in order that neither his work as pastor nor his work as director of missions might suffer. Harms