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## THE IDEA OF REVELATION.

BY REV. HUGH ROSS MACKINTOSH, D. Phil., D. D.,  
*Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh, Scotland.*

(The following article was one of eight lectures delivered by Dr. Mackintosh in March, 1928, on the James Sprunt Foundation, at Union Seminary, Richmond, Va. Of this particular lecture Dr. Edward Mack remarked that it was one of the ablest and most satisfactory treatments of the subject of revelation he had ever heard or read. The eight lectures will appear in book form under the title, "The Christian Apprehension of God", and will prove a notable addition to the volumes which have already been published on the Sprunt Lectureship.—Editor.)

In my last lecture I endeavored to set forth what seem to me sound positions regarding the nature of religious knowledge, the way in which we come to be possessed of it, and the methods of proof or verification which are appropriate to the case. To-day I wish to speak of the correlative subject—not, this time, our knowing as believing men, but the reality which we know, or Revelation. And let us never forget, at any stage of our discussion, that Revelation, which in itself is only an abstract noun, really stands for the most concrete and personal object with which we can have to do: it stands for God, as He makes Himself known savingly to man. If this be overlooked, the debate over Revelation may become as cold and lifeless as a treatise on symbolic logic.

*Conclusion.*

But time, and especially space, would fail to tell of all of even all the important things which were said and done at the Atlanta Assembly. For the rest we will have to refer the gentle reader to the Minutes of the Assembly. Take a day off and read the Minutes from cover to cover. It will repay you richly.

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THE SUBJUGATION AND DOOM OF SATAN.

*An Interpretation of the Twentieth Chapter of the Book of Revelation.*

BY REV. S. L. MORRIS, D. D., LL. D.,  
*Executive Secretary of Home Missions, Presbyterian Church  
in the United States, Atlanta, Georgia.*

(The following article constitutes chapter nine of a new manuscript, entitled "The Drama of Christianity", from the prolific pen and fertile brain of our Secretary of Home Missions, who already has seven books to his credit. Being part of a larger whole, chapter nine cannot be felt in its full cogency until one has read the entire manuscript. Especially is this true of the opening paragraphs, where points barely stated have already been discussed at length in preceding chapters. Our readers are asked to bear this in mind.

The whole manuscript is divided into ten chapters, and if published would make a medium size book of about 150 pages. The Editor of the *Review*, for one, would be pleased to see Dr. Morris' interpretation in book form and to have it enjoy a wide circulation in our church; for it is an able exposition of a difficult book.

One purpose of the *Review* is to stimulate our ministers to write more and to publish more books. With this end in view, we request our readers who desire the publication in book form of Dr. Morris' entire manuscript to write the Editor to that effect.—Editor.)

The Christian Dispensation from the Incarnation to the Second Coming of Christ is presented for the seventh and

last time in the twentieth chapter of Revelation.\* The events therein narrated are not subsequent to the Second Coming as ordinarily assigned in the times-schedule of historic and various other interpreters, but coincide strictly with the period covered by the other panoramas.\* It presents an entirely new phase of the subject in the Drama of Christianity. Its specific purpose is to feature Satan's subjugation and more especially his final judgment.

The last Cycle related the fall of Babylon, the doom of the beast and of the false prophet. The judgment of Satan might well have been recorded as taking place in the same connection, as all of these events coincide in time; but instead one entire panorama—and appropriately the last—is devoted to the career and doom of Satan. It begins with his first conflict with Christ, covers his whole relation to the Christian Dispensation, his subjection to Christ during the entire period and ends with his complete overthrow and final doom. In accordance with the structural form and uniform method of presentation\*—which exhibits outstanding events, first as vague hints that are afterward elaborately described in future panoramas—the doom of Satan is seen faintly like a dim flash of lightning in one vision that breaks in the subsequent as a lurid and terrific storm.

### *The Question of Interpretation.*

This twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse is confessedly one of the most difficult and disputed in the entire Word of God. It consists of four scenes in the Drama: 1—The Binding of Satan. 2—The Reign of the Martyrs. 3—Armageddon, the final Conflict between Satanic Hosts and the Saints. 4—The Resurrection, General Judgment and Doom of Satan. The first two are synchronous. The last two are intimately connected, following each other in quick succession.

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\*Reasons for these statements are given in preceding chapters of Dr. Morris' manuscript. See editorial note.

The interpretation must be in strict accordance with the context, the structural plan and general purpose of the book<sup>4</sup>. If the events described were contained in the historic or discursive portions of Scripture, the literal interpretation might be plausible, with a reasonable plea in favor of its acceptance. The distinctive characteristic of Apocalyptic literature is its uniform presentation of truth in symbolic form rather than in ordinary narrative. The literal rendering of figures and forms in Apocalyptic literature violates all the canons of interpretation and introduces confusion of thought in the effort to understand the mind of the Spirit. The truth can be best ascertained by approaching the subject unprejudiced and with no preconceived theory to sustain, but studied in the light of the Apocalyptic character of the book and the concurrent teaching of the whole tenor of Scripture.

#### 1—*The Binding of Satan.*

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed for a little season.”

Is this language to be interpreted literally? If so, it is the one exception in the whole symbolic book. In his famous address Patrick Henry asks at the beginning of the American Revolution, “Shall we lie supinely on our backs till our enemies have bound us hand and foot?” Does any one understand that “binding” except in a figurative sense? Did “the mighty angel” have a literal “chain”? Could a spirit be bound with such? Can this language, fairly interpreted, and in the light

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<sup>4</sup>Reasons for these statements are given in preceding chapters of Dr. Morris' manuscript. See editorial note.

of other Scripture, mean anything else than the limitation of his power and the suspension of his malicious activity?

In its essential features are not the "casting out" of Satan in Chapter Twelve and this "binding" in Chapter Twenty practically identical, the difference being a change of the figure of speech and the latter account a fuller development of the previous statement of the same event? The parallel undoubtedly is remarkably striking.

If "Scripture is the interpreter of Scripture", confirmation of this contention may confidently be sought in the appeal to other portions of the revealed Word. Is there any one better able to interpret the binding of Satan than Christ himself? Is not his parable of "the binding of the strong man", Matt. 12:29, a disguised allusion to his future subjugation of the common adversary of God and the saints? Other hints of the same event abound in his instruction of the Disciples. "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven," can have no other significance than his overthrow as more fully related in the Apocalypse. In his prophetic allusion to his approaching cross, he distinctly connects the judgment of Satan with that event in his own life: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." In his last discourse he proclaims as if it were already an accomplished fact: "The prince of this world *hath been judged.*" Paul, with keener insight and fuller comprehension of the significance of the cross than the combined apostolic college, alludes to it as the means by which Christ had "spoiled principalities and powers", and "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it"—the subjugation of Satan and his spiritual forces. Do not these statements corroborate the truth of this interpretation, not only confirming the identity and the casting out and binding of Satan, but distinctly indicating the cross as the means of Satan's conquest?

With all of his satanic shrewdness it can scarcely be supposed that he had foreknowledge of the future and thorough acquaintance with the plans and purposes of God. In the initial progress of his rebellion he probably did not know of the certainty and consequences of his utter defeat, nor of the

method by which it would be ultimately accomplished. Still struggling for supremacy and planning to thwart the divine purpose, he overreached himself in bringing about the crucifixion. Not until the actual event took place did he realize that the cross was the means of the complete triumph of Christ in the work of redemption and the absolute conquest of himself, resulting in the utter failure of all his hopes and malicious planning. It was the signal for his casting out of heaven, and the limitation of his authority and activity by his ignominious binding. With what bitter chagrin and gnashing of teeth must he have heard the celebration of the event in heaven as it was heralded by "a loud voice, saying: Now is come Salvation, and Strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Is not this a sufficient explanation of his impotent rage—"having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Does not this illuminate the statement of Christ: "The prince of this world hath been judged." Sentence being pronounced upon the arch criminal of the universe, he learns doubtless for the first time that his career is practically ended. The execution of the sentence begins with his binding; and the "short time" of respite coincides with the Christian Dispensation, likely to terminate at any moment by the imminent return of the Lord of heaven and earth for the utter annihilation of the satanic allies at Armageddon and the casting of himself "into the lake of fire and brimstone", to be "tormented day and night forever and ever".

#### *The Extent and Limitation of His Binding.*

It may be objected by some that this interpretation is inconsistent with statements warning believers against the machinations and activity of Satan. "Resist the devil," said James; and amplified by Peter is the warning: "Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

Prof. Milligan interprets the binding and loosing as synchronous, each covering the entire Christian Dispensation, explaining that while Satan was completely conquered and bound by Christ, he was immediately "loosed for a little season", signifying partial liberty in fulfillment of the purpose of God—just as others explain his loosing near the end of the Dispensation. It is, however, an interpretation purely personal and private, which can neither be substantiated nor disproved.

Utterly regardless of the various and varying interpretations of the binding of Satan, it is universally agreed that he is most effectually bound and impotent to injure one of God's children, each being as safe as if Satan were literally as well as absolutely "bound with a great chain". Warnings to "resist the devil" fall into the same category as exhortations to perseverance notwithstanding the repeated assurances of the absolute safety of believers in such promises as are given by Christ and reiterated by Paul: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No matter what power or influence he may exert over others, the children of God are absolutely safe. They have been redeemed with the blood of Christ. They are one with him. His life is their life. They are safe as if they were already on the throne with him and their adversary already "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone".

No matter what interpretation may be placed upon the binding of Satan, his emissaries and agents are not bound, and in resisting them believers are resisting the devil himself, being assured that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places", and need "the whole armor of God" in this militant age of the Church.

It may be still further objected that he was no longer to

“deceive the nations”, while as a matter of fact the nations are still characterized by ungodly ambitions and cursed by the ravages of war and other devices of the devil. To this a twofold answer might appropriately be given:

(1)—Nowhere in the account of the binding of Satan is there promised an era of universal righteousness. This is a gratuitous assumption read into the narrative. The object of this twentieth chapter is to prophesy the complete subjugation of Satan and not to promise a long period of prosperity and blessedness—a golden age of uninterrupted peace. The popular conception of the Millennium as an era of universal righteousness has led the Church far afield, being utterly contrary to the teaching of Christ who seriously questioned whether upon his return he would even “find faith on the earth”. It is equally inconsistent with the whole tenor and teaching of the Apocalypse, whose consistent purpose in every part and panorama is to forewarn of the martyr spirit which is to characterize the life of the church to the very end of the Dispensation.

(2) It may be also very pertinently and forcefully urged that nowhere is it said, or even implied, that the beast and the false prophet are bound; and ungodly human nature is not changed. Otherwise there would have been no need of the Great Commission to evangelize the world. “The New Testament in Modern Speech,” the joint product of Richard Francis Weymouth and his scholarly editor, commenting on this text, suggests the binding of Satan at the beginning of the Christian Era, and that “the devil’s work of tempting and injuring mankind has had to be done for him with inferior power and skill and diminished success by subordinate evil spirits”. If their presence and pernicious activity be recognized in addition to the beast and the false prophet and depraved human nature, surely this would be sufficient force and agency to account for the present ungodly state of the world without any need of Satan’s personal presence and activity.

This interpretation of the binding of Satan is consistent with the teaching of Christ, the general tenor of Scripture and all the facts in the case, equivalent in this symbolic book to the



limitation of Satan's power and activity—the first victory of Christ and his cross.

*The Significance of the Thousand Years.*

If this number is to be taken literally, it is the solitary instance in this unique book abounding in mystic characters and symbolic numbers. Does anyone interpret its numerous "sevens" literally, or the "six hundred and sixty and six", the "one hundred and forty and four thousand", the "forty and two months" or "the three and a half years"? Just as "seven" is the symbol of perfection, so "the thousand years" is the symbol of a long, indefinite period of time, so used elsewhere in Scripture and in ordinary speech. "For a thousand years in thy sight is but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night." Psalm 90:4. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." II Peter 3:8. Does anyone interpret either one of these literally, as signifying an exact period of time? How can there be the slightest possibility, therefore, of misunderstanding the significance of the phrase "a thousand years" in this case?

Six times in this twentieth chapter occurs the same expression "a thousand years". Is there any reason for not interpreting it in accordance with its usage elsewhere in Scripture as suggestive of a long, indefinite period? In that case it would appropriately represent the entire period of the Christian Dispensation, indefinite in the number of the years but very definite, as to the exact period covered. The Post- and Pre-millennialists are unquestionably alike wrong in their literal interpretation. The thousand years is the symbol of a long, indefinite period commensurate with the Christian Dispensation, necessarily uncertain by reason of the imminence of the Second Coming, which will *ipso facto* terminate the period.

The phrase is commonly used in the same sense in ordinary speech. During the writing of this treatise its author heard one say, "I have made this statement a thousand times". Did he understand the speaker literally; or as a common expression conveying the idea of a large indefinite number of times? The

Scriptures themselves employ language in the common usage and speak of the sun rising and setting. The "thousand years" is, therefore, the adaptation of language in its common usage to convey the thought of a period of years, coinciding with the militant age of the Church rather than an era of universal righteousness—gratuitously supplied, but conspicuously lacking in the narrative.

*The Reign of the Saints.*

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

In his vision John saw (1)—"the souls" of the martyrs—disembodied spirits. (2)—"Thrones and they sat upon them." The crucial test of the interpretation is the question, Where were these thrones located? Dr. Eugene C. Caldwell, Professor of New Testament Interpretation in Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., in his scholarly pamphlet entitled, "The Millennium", directs attention to the fact that this expression "throne" occurs forty-five times in the Apocalypse, and with the exception of the two references to Satan's seat and the throne of the beast, Rev. 2:13-16:10, the "thrones" are always located in heaven—unless this is a solitary exception. Of the forty-three "throne" texts, unquestionably forty-two refer to a throne in heaven. If the thrones of the martyrs are upon earth rather than in heaven, the burden of proof must be furnished by the advocates of that supposition. Is this one disputed text sufficient to teach an earthly reign of saints?

Appealing again to the parallelism of the structural form of the Apocalypse, by which the same events and scenes reappear in the various panoramas<sup>5</sup>, attention is directed to the close

<sup>5</sup>Discussed in preceding chapters of Dr. Morris' manuscript.—Editor.

parallel between Rev. 7:14-17 and this reign of the saints in Rev. 20:4. In the first case they "came out of great tribulation"; in the second, they "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus". Are they the same parties? The first reference unquestionably locates them in heaven. If they are not the same, is there any reason to infer that the first are in heaven, and the second class are on earth?

The difficulties of an earthly reign are insuperable. 1—Is this reign to be a mixture of living peoples and "souls" of the sainted dead? 2—Will they reign as disembodied spirits over souls in mortal bodies? 3—Will they be in glorified bodies mingling with souls in corruptible bodies? 4—Why should Satan be turned loose upon such an ideal state of affairs, converting a heaven on earth into a veritable hell? Unless there can be given some satisfactory explanation, or at least plausible, these questions must raise a doubt in the minds of thoughtful students of God's Word as to the reasonableness of this supposed earthly reign of martyred saints. The text itself contains not the slightest suggestion of such; and we have no warrant for asking acceptance of any theory which is not strongly supported by scriptural authority. The conclusion is overwhelmingly against any earthly reign of the Saints.

### *The Two Resurrections.*

Once again necessity compels the inquiry, Is this language in a highly symbolical book intended to be understood in a strictly literal sense? Great fundamental principles and far-reaching programs, affecting the future interests of the kingdom and the glorified estate of the saints, are not elsewhere based upon a single obscure passage of Scripture. The theory of two resurrections inferred from this text is doubtfully sustained by its advocates in an appeal to certain passages of Scripture containing the Greek preposition "ek", which may be rendered "out from among", such as Paul's expressed hope in Phil. 3:11, of being able to "attain unto the resurrection of the dead". By so translating the preposition "ek" in such texts, we have the rendering "resurrection out from among

the dead", by which it is argued that Paul's implied desire was to be accounted worthy of being found in a privileged class, honored by being raised from the dead in advance of the general resurrection.

It must be admitted that in all such interpretations involving the unknown future, dogmatism is out of place. Sincerity of purpose and loyalty to theories of supposed scriptural basis are not in themselves sufficient proofs of the infallibility of exegesis and correctness of interpretation. Arguments are hereby submitted in favor of a more reasonable interpretation, based chiefly on corroborative scriptural statements.

### 1. *The Argument from Analogy.*

The mind of the Church, overwhelmingly prevalent throughout the ages, understands the two resurrections as: 1—Spiritual, equivalent to Regeneration. 2—The General Resurrection of the body, both of the righteous and the wicked simultaneously. The Scripture confessedly teaches that as the result of sin the penalty is death of two kinds: 1—Spiritual, the penalty inflicted on Adam immediately in fulfilment of the threat, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", and inherited by all his posterity, involving later the death of the body. 2—"The Second Death," visited upon the impenitent wicked, involving the literal death of both soul and body.

Reasoning from analogy the first death being spiritual would correspond to a "first resurrection" which is also spiritual. The "second death" being literal would correspond to a second and literal resurrection of the body in order that it may literally participate either in the reward of the glorified in eternal life, or share the penalty of the wicked in "a second death". Does not this shed a flood of light on the statement of the context, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power".

### 2. *The Scriptural Argument.*

Regeneration undoubtedly is sometimes described as a spiritual resurrection, as for example in such texts as Eph.

2:1: "And you hath he *quicken*ed—supplied from the context—who were dead in trespasses and sins"; Col. 2:13: "And you being *dead* in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he *quicken*ed, together with him;" and Rom. 6:4: "As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"—as the result of a spiritual resurrection.

Christ, the supreme authority, in his prophetic office as teacher, seems to contrast the spiritual and bodily resurrection, recorded by the author of the Apocalypse, in his Gospel, John 5:25-29: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." This was used by Christ *in the present tense*—unquestionably a spiritual resurrection. Notice the striking contrast in the same connection: "Marvel not at this; for *the hour is coming* in the which all that are *in the graves* shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This latter statement involves three things: 1—The event is future—"The hour is coming." 2—The parties are "*in the grave*". 3—The resurrection of those "that have done good" and those "that have done evil" impliedly is simultaneous. The two resurrections recorded by John in his Gospel and the two resurrections recorded by John in his Apocalypse are evidently identical.

On one other occasion Christ makes a distinction between the spiritually dead and the literally dead, saying, "Let the dead bury their dead", Luke 9:60. If further confirmation is needed to determine the time of the resurrection of the righetous, appeal may be made still further to the authority of Christ who twice asserts that believers will be "raised up at the last day". See John 6:39-40.

### *The Loosing of Satan.*

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and

Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

The expiration of "the thousand years" and the loosing of Satan for "a little season", may serve as the appropriate place and occasion to consider the merits of opposing interpretations, leading to the conviction as to the truth of the Millennial theory. The mistake of the Postmillennialist is in looking for a Millennium rather than for the Second Coming of Christ. He reads into the binding of Satan for "a thousand years" a golden age through the preaching of the Gospel, which must precede the Second Coming. This is utterly inconsistent with the imminence of his coming, taught by Christ and the Apostles. Its pending is always a fact. Its possibility is always "at hand". The fact that it has been delayed for nearly two thousand years does not in the slightest alter its imminence. Death is an event always imminent, notwithstanding the fact that health and physical constitution may postpone the event in some cases a hundred years; but these do not militate against its immediate possibility at any time. A world of accidents and the contingency of disease may cause death any moment—always imminent no matter how long delayed.

The Second Coming of Christ may be known to the Father as a delayed event, but that does not affect the contingency of its possibility and pendency. If, however, "a thousand years" must necessarily intervene beforehand, that would unquestionably effect its contingent imminence. Looking backward in this twentieth century we can place an interpretation on "the thousand years", which would not have been justified beforehand. At no age of the church's history has it authority to teach that much time must necessarily elapse before the Coming can take place.

Clear distinction must be made between his "Coming in his kingdom", and his Coming in person. They are in no sense the same thing. In the Yellowstone Park the geyser known as "Old Faithful", is gathering its steam and filling its basin every moment for the approaching eruption, which takes place suddenly as the inevitable result. "Coming in his kingdom" is a progressive event always taking place and promised to

certain parties as something to be witnessed before they should "taste of death". Matt. 16:28. The prayer, "Thy kingdom come", has reference primarily to the first contingency but preparing the way—as in the eruption of Old Faithful—for the lightning-like flash of the Second Coming in person. The latter is sure, inevitable, imminent, but may by certain influences and causes, be indefinitely delayed. The Coming of Christ employed in Scripture in a double sense may be viewed as one event, the "coming in his Kingdom" issuing eventually in his Coming in person.

The theory of the Premillennialist, on the other hand, is at fault in adopting a man-made "program" for Christ, based upon an interpretation of Scripture which fits a certain idea of the kingdom. The schedule of this program is substantially as follows: 1—The appearance of Christ in the air. 2—The Rapture of the Church. 3—The Tribulation of the World. 4—The Second Coming—in reality a third Coming. 5—The Millennial Reign. 6—The Loosing of Satan and Armageddon. 7—The Resurrection of the Wicked and General Judgment.

Premillennialists follow each other in this program as if it were inspired, and some are so dogmatic that if any are so presumptuous as to differ from their view it is equivalent to rejecting the Word of God. It must be admitted that it cannot be dogmatically disproved. It may be true; but it is based upon a mixture of literal and fanciful interpretations, regarded by many as a well-nigh infallible revelation of the mind of the Spirit. It has been adopted by many of the most earnest and consecrated children of God, who long for a return of their dear Lord with a passion worthy of the highest commendation; but it does not commend itself, nor carry conviction, to the vast multitude of Christian people as saintly, as scholarly, as loyal to the Word of God, and who pray as fervently "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly". It has influenced some of the more extreme to fix the time by "calculations" and by "the signs of the times"—although Christ himself discouraged such, by asserting the impossibility of such forecasting, saying: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32.

*The Church Age vs. The Kingdom.*

The distinction between the *present* Church age and the *future* Kingdom age is not scriptural; neither is the distinction between "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of Heaven". On the contrary the latter are used interchangeably by Christ and the Apostles. One inspired Evangelist quotes Jesus as saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven", Matt. 13:33; and another records him as saying, "The kingdom of God is like leaven", Luke 13:21. The labored effort to void the conclusion that the two are interchangeable has failed to satisfy thoughtful students of the Word of God.

The kingdom does not coincide strictly with "the visible church", for Christ says it "cometh not with observation", but the visible church does come "with observation". The kingdom does not correspond strictly with "the invisible church", for it is partly in heaven and partly on earth, and does not contain both "good" and "bad", as does the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 13:47-49.

The best definition perhaps which can be given is: The kingdom of God is Christ's spiritual rule in the hearts of men. Its nearest synonym is Christianity. Apply it to Christ's parables of the kingdom and see how nearly they correspond. Christianity "is like unto a grain of mustard seed \* \* \* which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs"—illustrating its insignificant beginning and its marvelous outward development. Christianity "is like unto leaven"—in its internal transforming power. The objection is often raised that it cannot be true because of the subsequent statement, "till the whole was leavened"; and Christianity does not and is not supposed to convert the whole world. Yet the statement of its leavening influence is true nevertheless, Christianity has not converted the whole United States, but it can be truly stated that it has leavened the whole. Multitudes who have not been converted have nevertheless felt the leaven of its influence in accordance with the statement of Christ.

Christianity "is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed



tares among the wheat". Whether the tares were false teaching or evil practices, there is no possibility of separating them till "the harvest, the end of the world". Some of these parables can apply only to true Christianity as "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness": "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation": and "Thy kingdom come". According to the apostle Paul, "The kingdom of God" is not an age or dispensation, "but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost". Rom. 14:17.

From these considerations we are entitled to differ from our worthy Premillennial brethren in our maintenance that the kingdom of God is present and not wholly future. According to Christ, the kingdom is "within you"—or "among you", if that rendering is preferred. It is spiritual, progressive, visible, invisible and everlasting—not terminated by the loosing of Satan "for a little season".

John Calvin rejected the Millennial reign of Christ. See *Institutes*, Vol. II, Book III, Chap. 25. Augustine identified the Millennium with the militant age of the Church, just as this study does. The Westminster Confession of Faith enthrones Christ as "executing the office of king, in subduing us unto himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining all his and our enemies".

Dr. R. C. Reed, late professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Polity in Columbia Theological Seminary, in his last Treatise, "What is the Kingdom of God", argues forcefully for the present reign and spiritual lordship of Christ:

"Christ is now a King, executing royal functions, not merely an heir apparent. His sway is not confined to the church, but extends to all His enemies, whether men or devils. Some persons think that the devil is exercising supreme and independent control over this world during the present dispensation. But that at the second advent, Christ will bind him in the bottomless pit. The more rational and scriptural view is that he is now under the restraint symbolized by the binding with a chain. We recall how that the demons could not enter the herd of swine, could not even hurt a hog without permission of Jesus. Christ is 'head over all things to the Church,

which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all things'. 'All power in heaven and earth is given into his hands.' If this does not constitute Kingship, what does? Must we see the King with the crown and sceptre and body guard and army? Are we so wedded to material and sensuous things that we can see no glory, no regal splendor in spiritual lordship?"

*Misconception of Prophecy.*

The prophetic writings of the Old Testament, forecasting the glorious kingdom of righteousness under the peaceful reign of Christ, have been singularly misapprehended and misapplied. It has been said that oftentimes "prophecies must be read backward", before we can be absolutely sure of the correct apprehension of their true significance. History has compelled many reversals of judgment in the interpretations of prophetic writings.

1—The Jews interpreted the prophecies of the Messiah and his glorious reign literally and as synchronous with the first coming of Christ. They anticipated an earthly kingdom of power and splendor, which would annihilate the Roman Empire and establish a Jewish kingdom in its stead at Jerusalem, rivaling the glory and pomp of Solomon's reign, extending its sway over all the nations of earth. Their false conception of the mission of their expected Messiah caused his rejection by the nation. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," because he did not conform unto their type, but instead proposed a spiritual kingdom of personal righteousness.

2—The Postmillennialists have interpreted the prophecies as forecasting a Millennium, ushering in a golden age of the triumph of Christianity, notwithstanding the fact that the Scriptures forewarn "a falling away"—the Dispensation ending in disaster, and Christ himself raising the inquiry whether at his coming he shall even "find faith on the earth".

3—The Premillennialists interpret these prophecies as literally as did the Jews, except that they apply them to the Second Coming, but setting up just such a temporal kingdom as was anticipated by the Jews. Even the very Jewish sacrifices are to be restored in the Millennium. It is to be a kingdom ruled

by the sword—a type repudiated by Christ. It is to be a mixture of supernatural beings—“souls”—ruling men in the flesh, a mixture of good and evil, interrupted by a terrific revolt against Christ and the enthroned saints, led by Satan, turned loose on this peaceful world while enjoying the blessedness of the personal reign of Christ.

Are not all the parties equally at fault in applying the prophecies? May not these prophecies have a dual significance, having first a spiritual fulfilment in the present Messianic reign of Christ on his mediatorial throne, and in the hearts of men, and their final and full realization in the future glorious kingdom—“everlasting”—uninterrupted by any revolt, Satan and his evil forces being forever eliminated? Does not Messianic prophecy find its final fulfilment in “the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven”—creating “a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”? Is not this the significance of the magnificent closing prophecy of Isaiah—almost the identical language of Peter and of the Apocalypse—thereby confirming this interpretation: “For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain, and \* \* \* all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” Isa. 66:22-23.

#### *Reconciliation of Views.*

1—May not Post- and Pre-millennialists who have so much in common agree upon the following irreducible minimum as the expression of the blessed hope of both, and of the church itself? 1—The Second Coming of Christ is both personal and imminent. “Behold he cometh with the clouds and every eye shall see him.” Rev. 1:7. “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11. “Behold, I come quickly.” Rev. 3:11; 22:12; 22:20.

2—The Second Coming ends the Christian Dispensation. “And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather

together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven unto the other." Matt. 24:30-31. "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." Matt. 13:39.

3—The Second Coming introduces the visible reign of Christ and the saints, whether millennial or eternal. Why not leave that as an open question? The blessed hope is the return of our Lord, and not the Millennium. There is no fundamental difference as to the faith of all parties in the ultimate triumph of Christ and the church and their joint reign, whether Millennial or eternal. Instead of controversy and recriminations, why not agree to join together in the common prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly".

### *Armageddon and the Doom of Satan.*

Each time the Dispensation ends it features a new phase of the Drama. In this case, Armageddon previously mentioned, and by name for the first time, in the fifth cycle, Rev. 16:16, described somewhat at length in the sixth, Rev. 19:17-20, is now at length given its deserved prominence as marking the complete subjugation of Satan, and as sharing the fate of the beast and false prophet—the reward of his blasphemous iniquity as the author of sin and suffering in the universe of God.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works."

At the close of the Dispensation in each panorama the Second Coming is prominently featured, but in this last cycle it seems conspicuously lacking in the judgment of some. Such, however, is not the case, as may be judged from the following striking presentation of evidence by Dr. Eugene C. Caldwell in his pamphlet on the Millennium:

"The coming down of fire out of heaven and devouring Satan and his hosts may be an apocalyptic symbol for the Second Coming of Christ to rescue and reward his people and destroy his and their enemies.

"'And they compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city; and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them.' Fire in Scripture is often the symbol of God, and here it evidently denotes some signal divine intervention just before the general resurrection and final judgment, when the saints are represented as in desperate need of superhuman aid. Paul in 2 Thess. 1:4-10, 1 Cor. 3:10-15, and Peter in 2 Pet. 3:10, picture the Second Coming under the symbol of fire. 'We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and afflictions; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation (apocalypse) of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in *flaming fire*, rendering vengeance to them that know not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, who shall suffer eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and the glory of his power when he shall come to be glorified in his saints \* \* \* in that day.'" (2 Thess. 1:4-10.)

"Hence to interpret the descent of fire in Revelation 20:9 as an apocalyptic symbol of the Second Advent is in perfect accord with the uniform teaching of the New Testament and also in beautiful harmony with the organic structure of the book of Revelation as a whole. In immediate connection with the descent of fire (20:9), we have a description of the Second Coming in vs. 11: 'And I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven

fled away.' Christ comes on a great white throne before which heaven and earth and all things flee away. In 14:14 Christ is pictured as coming on a white cloud, in 19:11 as coming on a white horse, and here the Second Advent is depicted as the appearance of Messiah seated on a white throne.

"Each one of the five panoramas—the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven symbolic figures, the seven bowls, and the sevenfold judgment—carries us to the Second Coming. And if chapter 20 with the thousand year period is, as we claim, a complete panorama in itself parallel with the others, then we would expect that it too would close with the Second Coming. And so it does, as symbolized in the descent of fire from heaven overwhelming the wicked and ushering in the Second Advent, the general resurrection and final judgment.

"It is of vital importance to note that Christ will return only at the close and culmination of the period of the church militant. Because of the presence and power of her Lord in her in the person of the Holy Spirit, the church advances through the deeps of time conquering and to conquer, ever gaining increasing victory; and on the eve of the final battle against sin her Lord will appear in person and himself lead her into the last charge and share with her the fruits of the victory."

#### *The Resurrection and General Judgment.*

The great rebellion is crushed forever with the subjugation and doom of Satan. Nothing remains but the final scene of the Drama, the judgment of the dead. In a previous panorama this awful scene is reached at its close. It is specifically mentioned "and thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants, etc." Rev. 11:18.

This brief hint is now expanded in this, the last panorama, giving a realistic and graphic account of the scene, exhibiting the great white throne, the opening of the books and the judgment of the dead. The final separation between good and evil is staged; and "death and hell cast into the lake of fire".

The Drama of Christianity is enacted for the seventh and last time. The curtain drops. Beyond is Eternity!