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Notes on Chiliasm

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Notes on Chiliasm.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. A review of the teaching of Scripture concerning the return of Christ. By *Henry W. Frost, D. D.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1934. 251 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. Price, \$1.50.

CHILIASM, OR THE DOCTRINE OF PREMILLENNIALISM. By *Abraham Kuyper, D. D., LL. D.* Translated by *Rev. G. M. Van Pernis.* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1934. 35 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8$. Price, 35 cts.¹⁾

Our pastors, who need to study chiliasm because of the wide and baleful influence this popular delusion is exerting within the Church, will find the larger volume to be a fair sample of the theology of millennialism. They will be struck, first, by the great confusion obtaining in this realm of thought.²⁾ The premillennialists cannot agree with the postmillennialists,³⁾ and the premillennialists cannot

1) These lines, in their original form, were written for the review section of this magazine and as such do not aim to give an exhaustive treatment of the doctrine discussed. The review editor, however, suggested that in view of the importance of the subject-matter they appear in this section. So be it. — While they have been greatly extended, they still present only a fragmentary examination of the subject.

2) "Chiliasm has almost as many forms as it has advocates." Kahnis; quoted in *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, H. E. Jacobs, p. 516.

3) "The postmillennial school holds that there will be a millennium, though not necessarily a thousand years in duration, that it will be a reign of Christ, not on earth, but, through the Holy Spirit, from heaven to earth, and that it will be brought to pass gradually through the preaching of the Gospel, earth's inhabitants finally becoming subject to divine love and law. These interpreters also hold that after a period of peace and prosperity, God will summon all men before His throne of Judgment. . . . The postmillennialists agree with the premillennialists in believing that there will be a millennium; otherwise they radically differ from them. The premillennial school holds that, through a world-wide preaching of the Gospel,

agree among themselves. There are antetribulationists and posttribulationists. The antetribulationists contend that the Second Coming, the resurrection of the saints, and the Rapture will occur before the Great Tribulation, the Church thus escaping the tribulation. "These teachers usually hold that it is impossible to conceive that God will allow His chosen and beloved saints to stand before such a monster of iniquity as the Antichrist and suffer such persecutions as this fiend incarnate will instigate and fulfil." (P. 171.) Frost himself is a posttribulationist. The Great Tribulation sets in before the Second Coming. He devotes two chapters to this matter: the Coming Impending (not imminent) and the Coming Posttribulationist. "It is an indisputable fact that the doctrine of a pretribulationist resurrection and rapture is a modern interpretation—I am tempted to say, a modern invention." (P. 203.) *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1934, p. 373, reviewing Frost's book, enters the lists for the antetribulationists. "The reviewer does not think that the author has proved that the Church will go through the tribulation. The author fails to recognize the fact that since the sixty-nine weeks of Dan. 9 ended at the cross, which he rightly regards as covering the future tribulation period, will also not concern the Church, etc., etc." The same issue has a review of *The Great Tribulation*, by J. J. Scruby, from which we quote: "In this book the author uses the cheap methods of the demagog in denouncing the doctrine that the Church will be raptured before the Tribulation as a 'form of dementia,' a 'damnable heresy,' and a 'part of' Modernism. He claims that the teaching he is opposing originated with a 'Satan-deluded' woman in one of those Irvingite meetings, about a hundred years ago, that it has been spread by J. N. Darby of Ireland and his followers" (Plymouth Brethren), etc., etc.

The antetribulationists are not agreed among themselves. Some of them hold the first-fruits theory. Dr. Frost tells us: "It is interesting to note that the Rev. J. Hudson Taylor held, in part, the posttribulationist view; that is, he held the first-fruits theory, which teaches that the sanctified and watching saints will be caught up by Christ before the tribulation and that the remainder—the larger

there will be gathered from the Jews and Gentiles a people for the name of God, that is, the Church; that, when this purpose has been fulfilled, the Lord will gather His people to Himself and then personally, bodily, literally, and visibly return to earth, and that, following this, He will set up a kingdom upon earth with its center at Jerusalem, which will be particularly related to the Jews, but world-wide in its influence and beneficence; that this kingdom will endure exactly one thousand years and that after this time the new heavens and earth will be brought into view, and then, that eternity, with its rewardings for the saved and punishment for the lost, will follow." (Frost, p. 151 f.) Postmillennialism corresponds roughly with *chiliasmus subtilis* and premillennialism with *chiliasmus crassus*.

number — will pass through the tribulation, be purified by it, and be gathered to the Lord at the end of it." (P. 172.) W. E. Blackstone puts it thus: "Christ — the First-fruits. Next — they who are Christ's at His coming: a) the Church and the Old Testament saints, who are raised at the Rapture, when Christ comes in the air; b) the Tribulation saints, who are raised at the Revelation when Christ comes to the earth." And so "the Church is kept out of this tribulation." (*Jesus is Coming*, pp. 54, 79.) Note, by the way, that the Second Coming is split up into two comings: Christ coming in the air and Christ coming to the earth.

Another point in controversy among the premillennialists is this: "I am aware," says Dr. Frost, "that many premillennialists would take exception to the use I am making of the verse under consideration, Matt. 24, 14. They would say that the Church will have been caught up to heaven when this verse has come into effect, and hence, that the preaching mentioned will be fulfilled by Jewish saints, who will be converted after the Rapture." (P. 207.)

There are other points of difference. To Dr. Frost's school "there appear to be seven separate judgments, five connected with the advent of our Lord and two subsequent to this advent: the judgment of spiritual Babylon, of physical Babylon, of the saints, of the Antichrist, of the nations, of Satan and his angels, and of the wicked dead." (Pp. 79, 117.) The *Bibliotheca Sacra* premillennialism operates with five judgments: "the judgment of the nation Israel preceding her entrance into her kingdom glory; the judgment of the believer's works before the judgment-seat of Christ; the judgment of the nations; the judgment of the fallen angels; and the Great White Throne judgment." (Jan., 1934, p. 22.) W. E. Blackstone insists on "four judgments." "We often hear postmillennialists use the expression 'General Judgment,' thereby conveying the idea of some future day in which all mankind will simultaneously appear before God to be judged. Premillennialists believe that Judgment is general *only* in the sense that all are judged, *but not all at the same time*. There will be four visible judgments, in the following order: 1. the judgment of the saints for their works; . . . 2. the judgment of the living nations, who are upon the earth at the Revelation; . . . 3. the judgment of the dead at the Great White Throne; 4. the judgment of angels. . . . Such events, requiring intervals of time, preclude the idea expressed in the term 'General Judgment.'" (*Jesus is Coming*, p. 101 ff.)

The premillennialists are not agreed on the exact sequence of the coming events, nor does each single one of these alleged events find a place in all the schemes of the future history constructed by the various subschools of chiliasm. We herewith offer two samples, which both agree with Dr. Frost's ideas *in general*, but not in each particular. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1934, p. 279 f.: "A brief survey of

the many features of unfulfilled prophecy is here given: the last days for the Church, the first resurrection, the Rapture, the Church in heaven, her rewards, the marriage of the Lamb, the Great Tribulation on the earth, the Man of Sin, Israel's last sufferings, the beginning of the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ, the battle of Armageddon, the destruction of ecclesiastical Babylon, the destruction of political Babylon, the binding of Satan, the regathering and judgment of sorrowing Israel, the judgment of the nations, the seating of Christ upon His throne, the resurrection of Tribulation saints, the millennial kingdom, the loosing of Satan and the last revolt, the doom of Satan, the Great White Throne, the destiny of the wicked, the destiny of the saved, the new heaven and the new earth." *History of Christian Doctrine*, H. C. Sheldon, II, p. 389 f.: "As a specimen of the premillennial scheme we quote the following list of specifications from Joseph A. Seiss: '1) That Christ Jesus, our adorable Redeemer, is to return to this world in great power and glory, as really and literally as He ascended up from it; 2) that this advent of the Messiah will occur before the general conversion of the world, while the man of sin still continues his abominations, while the earth is yet full of tyranny, war, infidelity and blasphemy, and consequently before what is called the millennium; 3) that this coming of the Lord will not be to depopulate and annihilate the earth, but to judge, renew, and bless it; 4) that in the period of this coming He will raise the holy from among the dead, transform the living that are waiting for Him, judge them according to their works, receive them up to Himself in the clouds, and establish them in a glorious heavenly kingdom; 5) that Christ will then also break down and destroy all present systems of government in Church and State, burn up the great centers and powers of wickedness and usurpation, shake the whole earth with terrific visitations for its sins, and subdue it to His own personal and eternal rule; 6) that during these great and destructive commotions the Jewish race shall be marvelously restored to the land of their fathers, brought to embrace Jesus as their Messiah and King, delivered from their enemies, placed at the head of the nations, and made the agents of unspeakable blessings to the world; 7) that Christ will then reestablish the throne of His father David, exalt it in heavenly glory, make Mount Zion the seat of His divine empire, and, with the glorified saints associated with Him in His dominion, reign over the house of Jacob and over the world in a visible, sublime, and heavenly Christocracy for the period of "the thousand years"; 8) that during this millennial reign, in which mankind is brought under a new dispensation, Satan is to be bound and the world to enjoy its long-expected Sabbatic rest; 9) that at the end of this millennial Sabbath the last rebellion shall be quashed, the wicked dead, who shall all continue in Hades until that time, shall be raised and judged,

and Satan, death, Hades, and all antagonism to good delivered over to eternal destruction; 10) that under these wonderful administrations the earth is to be entirely recovered from the effects of the Fall, the excellence of God's righteous providence vindicated, the whole curse repealed, death swallowed up, and all the inhabitants of the world thenceforward forever restored to more than the full happiness, purity, and glory which Adam forfeited in Eden.' (*The Last Times*, 7th ed., 1878)." Why has Seiss no place, for instance, for the "destruction of political Babylon," nor for "the resurrection of the Tribulation saints"? 4)

Moreover, the system of chiliasm in itself, aside from the variations introduced by the multitude of its warring schools, involves the

4) The maze of conflicting opinions through which chiliasm leads its disciples is described by C. Hodge thus: "According to one view Christ and His risen and glorified saints are to dwell visibly on the earth and reign for a thousand years; according to another, the risen saints are to be in heaven and not on earth any more than the angels now are; nevertheless the subjects of the first resurrection, although dwelling in heaven, are to govern the earth; according to another it is the converted Jewish nation restored to their own land who are to be the governors of the world; according to another the Bible divides men into three classes: the Gentiles, the Jews, and the Church of God. The prophecies relating to the millennium are understood to refer to the relative condition of the Jews and Gentiles in this world and not to the risen and glorified believers. Another view seems to be that this earth, changed no more by the fires of the Last Day than it was by the waters of the Deluge, is to be the only heaven of the redeemed. Dr. Cummings and Dr. Seiss say they wish no better heaven than this earth free from the curse and from sin. The latter says (*The Last Times*, p. 72): 'My faith is that these very hills and valleys shall yet be made glad with the songs of a finished redemption and this earth yet become the bright, blessed, and everlasting homestead of men made glorious and immortal in body and soul.' Still another view is that there are two heavens, one here and one above; two Jerusalems, both to continue forever, the one on earth and the other in heaven; . . . men will continue forever, on earth, living and dying; happy, but not perfect, needing regeneration and sanctification; and when they die, they will be translated to the kingdom which is above. It seems therefore that the torch of the literalist is an *ignis fatuus*, leading those who follow it they know not whither." (*Systematic Theology*, III, 865 f.) Naturally, since the days of Hodge the maze has been rendered still more baffling. One of the delusive paths (we have not the time to investigate more) is the matter of the Rapture. The premillennialist who writes for the *Lutheran Companion* says: "As to the time of the Rapture, or translation of the godly, there are various opinions, but the most common is that it will take place before the Great Tribulation. . . . The visible coming of the Lord will take place at the end of the seven-year reign of Antichrist, the Beast recorded in Rev. 13 and 17. The resurrected and translated saints will accompany Him at that time (Rev. 19), which proves that they must have been taken up to heaven previously. Now they accompany the Rider on the white horse, also they riding on white horses. Some interpreters hold that the Rapture takes place during the Great Tribulation and others after that event. . . . It would appear that there will be more than one translation and that the first of these will take place after the Laodicean, the present period of the Church, has run its course" (Oct. 7, 1933).

Christian thought in hopeless confusion. It throws the Christian thought, centered on Scripture as it is and should be, out of gear. It reads a new meaning into the Scripture terms. When one reads the first chapters of our book: the Coming Personal, Literal, Visible, Glorious, Satisfying, Transforming, Judicial, one hears, in the main, Scripture language. But when one takes up the following chapters: the Coming Dispensational, Millennial, Premillennial, Impending, Posttribulational, one will find that one has misread the preceding chapters. One must reread them and try to make what Scripture says in Matt. 25, 31—46 and the related passages of the coming of Christ on the Last Day, the day of the judgment of all, refer to the alleged millennial coming of Christ.

Chiliasm is in a state of chaos. In order to think chiliasmically, one must be able to apply the most violent exegesis and be willing to subject Scripture to the most arbitrary interpretation. The iron-clad rule that one must never depart from the *sensus literalis* is put aside when the particular theory of a particular school demands it. And the distinction between the *sensus literae* and the *sensus literalis* seems to be unknown. We depart from the *sensus literae* when Scripture tells us to do so. The premillennialist clings to the *sensus literae* or departs from it as his fancy dictates.⁵⁾

He insists on clinging to the *sensus literae*, on taking figurative statements literally, in the face of Scripture's own repudiation of

5) C. Hodge: "The premillennialists profess to adopt the principle of literal interpretation. They interpret literally the prophecies relating to the return of the Jews to their own land, which promise to them as a nation dominion over all the nations of the earth, the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of the Temple-service, the greatest worldly prosperity, and even the everlasting perpetuity of their nation in the highest state of blessedness here on earth and 'in the flesh.' Yet they are forced to abandon their literalism when they come to the interpretation of the prophecies which predict that all the nations of the earth are to go up to Jerusalem every month and even on every Sabbath" (*Syst. Theol.*, III, 865.) F. Pieper: "The Chiliasmists abandon their own principle when they, as Philippi (*Glaubenslehre*, VI, 223) points out, take certain phrases in the passages of the Old Testament figuratively, such as the exaltation of Mount Zion above the hills, Is. 2, and the mountains dropping down new wine and the hills flowing with milk, Joel 3." (*Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 587.) The Temple will be rebuilt. Does not Ezekiel, chaps. 40—48, say so? But they refuse to abide by the specifications there given. Says Luther: "The altar will be eleven cubits high and, at the top, fourteen cubits broad, so that the priest, even if he ascends the steps, must have an arm seven cubits long in order to reach the center of the altar and prepare the sacrifice. That would have to be *ein eben Priesterlein*, fifteen or sixteen good, big cubits high." (XIV, p. 53.) Rev. Patriek Fairbairn: "To hold by the form" (the figurative language employed by the prophets) "in one part and let it go in another is to introduce absolute confusion and surrender the prophetic field to the caprice of individual feeling or the shifting currents of popular opinion." Striking illustrations of this situation are supplied by the writer. (*The Prophetic Prospects of the Jews*, p. 154.)

such interpretation. Chiliasmic theology consists in great part of such literalistic perversion of Scripture. Our book abundantly illustrates this disregard of sound hermeneutics. It insists on taking Acts 15, 13—17 literally, insists on "the setting up of David's tabernacle, which implies the restoration and reestablishment of the Jews" (pp. 133, 143). But just this passage shows that Amos 9, 11 foretold the building, not of the earthly tabernacle of David, but of the spiritual tabernacle, the building of the Church begun at Pentecost. On the other hand, the "end of this world," Matt. 13, 39, 40, 49, must not be taken to refer "to the end of the world, but to the end of the present age or dispensation" (p. 158). Arbitrarily the King's "brethren," Matt. 25, 40, is made to mean, not the Christians in general, but "godly Jews" (p. 116), and "all nations," Matt. 25, 32, means "representatives" of all nations (p. 114), and it does not mean representatives of all nations; for the text is speaking "of the fifth judgment, that of the apostate Jews and the godless Gentile nations," not of that alleged final Judgment of all of which Christian theology is wont to speak; for the term "nations" cannot "point to a time after death," as "'nations' in the Scriptures are only related to the present life and the existing, earthly, social orders" (p. 115).

Will Christ leave His heavenly throne at His second coming and occupy, for a time, an inferior throne? "Be it noted, in passing, that the Matthew passage says that the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of 'His glory,' Matt. 25, 31, which is not in heaven; for the throne there is not His, but the Father's, Heb. 8, 1; 12, 2; Rev. 3, 21, and hence is on earth, it being the throne of David, of which Christ is the rightful Heir." (P. 114.) "Christ will leave the heavenly throne — Christ will leave the glory — and come back to earth." (P. 234.) And they make much of this distinction between these two thrones. "The far-reaching distinction between Christ's own throne — the throne of David, which is the throne of His glory, which throne He will occupy here on the earth — and the throne of His Father, on which He is now seated, is not generally observed by these authors." (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1934, p. 281.) Scripture cannot possibly be stretched to cover this interpretation. Scripture seats Christ upon God's throne. Speaking of Christ, it says: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," Heb. 1, 8. If Christ is God, His throne is the Father's throne. And He will not leave it at His second coming. "He shall sit upon the throne of His glory," Matt. 25, 31; but His glory is the glory of the Father; for "the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels," Matt. 16, 27; Luke 9, 26. Besides, Christ's occupation of the throne of His father David is not a matter of the future, but set in with His exaltation, Acts 2, 29 ff. By the way, the usual discord among the chiliasts appears here also. — We cannot keep pace with the chiliasmic thinking. The revela-

tion of Christ's glory and power in the millennium, which is to achieve such great things, is, after all, not the revelation of His full glory and power. Again, how can Christ, true God, abdicate His divine reign? Will they say that Christ can do so according to His human nature—entering thus upon a second state of exinanition? No, they will not say it; for this point is foreign to Reformed thinking. And it would not fit into the theory of the glorious millennium. We cannot straighten this out; let them do it.

Chiliasm is laboring hard to foist the scheme of Dispensationalism on Scripture. This is the scheme according to Frost (p. 129 f.): "Time, according to the Scriptures, is divided into seven dispensations, a dispensation being a divinely chosen period of time wherein God deals judicially with men according to their obedience or disobedience. . . . Reviewing the seven dispensations, they appear to be as follows: first, the Dispensation of Innocence; this began with the light of creation and the Adamic covenant made in Eden and ended with the darkness of man's sin and God's judgment in the expulsion from Eden; second, the Dispensation of Conscience; this began with the light of the flaming sword and the Adamic covenant made outside of Eden and ended with the darkness of man's moral corruption and the judgment of the Flood; third, the Dispensation of Human Government; this began with the light in the bow in the cloud and the Noachic covenant and ended with the darkness of man's blasphemous pretensions and the judgment of Babel, Gen. 11, 5—9; fourth, the Dispensation of Promise; this began with the light of the smoking furnace and burning lamp, Gen. 15, 4—21, and the Abrahamic covenant and ended with the darkness of man's evil practises and the judgment of Sodom, Gomorrah, and other cities; fifth, the Dispensation of Law; this began with the light of the burning bush and the Mosaic covenant and ended with the darkness of man's rejection of Christ and the judgment of man upon the cross in the person of Christ; sixth, the Dispensation of Grace; this began with the light of the tongues of fire and the covenant of grace, and it will end, as to the wicked, with the darkness of man's apostasy and the judgment of divine rejection; and seventh, the Dispensation of the Kingdom; this will begin with the light of the coming and glory of Christ and the Messianic covenant, and it will end with the darkness of man's revolt against God and the judgment of his final and everlasting perdition." This calls for a number of remarks. We have time and space only for setting down a few. 1) The notion that each dispensation must be ushered in by a "divine revelation of light" is rather fanciful, and the Scripture-proof offered for this notion is extremely far-fetched. 2) According to Scripture the "darkness of man's moral corruption" set in at the end of the "First Dispensation," not at the end of the Second. 3) If the Sixth Dispensation ended,

"as to the wicked, with the darkness of man's apostasy and the judgment of divine rejection," are there any wicked left to provide the end of the Seventh, "the darkness of man's revolt against God"? Or does the divine judgment of rejection executed against the wicked of the Sixth Dispensation permit them to still carry on during the Seventh? 4) It is impossible to find Scripture-proof for the thesis that under the various dispensations, say the Second, Third, and Fourth, God employed new, essentially different methods of dealing with man.—There are but two "dispensations," the Law and the Gospel. "The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1, 17. Whatever dealings God had and has with man as set forth by Frost in describing his "dispensations" (exclusive of the seventh!), fall under one of these two heads.⁶⁾ 5) The statements that in these seven "dispensations" God deals with men according to their obedience or disobedience and that the covenant of grace differs from the Messianic covenant will be discussed later. 6) The keystone of Dispensationalism is the Seventh Dispensation; here lies the chief interest of this group of premillennialists; the other "dispensations" lead up to the millennium as the consummation; the scheme stands and falls with the crowning events of this period. And at this point, together with the matter mentioned under 5), the whole edifice tumbles. There is no Seventh Dispensation. While the events which Dispensationalism uses to construct the first six "dispensations" actually occurred, the events needed for the seventh will never occur,—some of them not at all, the others not as events of a Seventh Dispensation. There is no Seventh Dispensation. The second coming of Christ ushers in, is attended by, the *final* consummation, the bliss of heaven for the believers, eternal damnation for the wicked. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, then"—not after a period of a thousand years, but *then*—shall these [on Christ's left hand] go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. 25, 31. 46. Again, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophet, hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by His Son," Heb. 1, 1 f. "They are written for our admonition, upon whom *the ends of the world* are come," 1 Cor. 10, 11. You cannot divide the last period into a last one and a later than the last one. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the last word of God to the world. But, say the Dispensationalists, we admit that; only the word of Jesus Christ will rule in our Last Dispensation; our teaching is not at variance with Heb. 1, 2. Then why, we ask, two different dispensations? Or does Jesus not preach the full Gospel at the present time?—

6) Cp. Ph. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, chap. III: "The Law and the Gospel."

No, the scheme of the seven dispensations will not square with Scripture; it will not square unless Scripture is distorted. "There are no 'such dispensations distinguished in the Scripture.' The method, by which the seven dispensations have been arrived at is purely arbitrary, fanciful, and destitute of Scriptural support." (Philip Mauro, *op. cit.*, p. 28.) And the disciples of Dispensationalism, attempting to harmonize the teachings of their masters with Scripture, become involved in hopeless confusion.⁷⁾

A few more samples of chiliastic exegetics are herewith submitted. "The one shall be taken and the other left,' Matt. 24, 41. This phrase, beyond dispute, describes the rapture of the Church." (Frost, p. 210.) This phrase describes the judicial separation which will take place on the day of the final, the general, Judgment. Vv. 30, 31, and 51 leave no doubt as to that. But the chiliastic "rapture" takes place long before the end. See Point 4 in Seiss's scheme. We will have to read new meanings into the language of Matt. 24 before we can accept Frost's interpretation.

The proof offered for the article of faith that Christ at His second

7) The disciples of W. E. Blackstone have additional problems to solve. He also lists seven aions and then goes on: "Beyond this is the New Heavens and New Earth, probably the beginning of another series of aions, corresponding to the expression *aions of aions*. . . . Possibly the fiftieth aion may be like the jubilee of Lev. 25, and then again *aions of aions*. See lower section of diagram." (*Jesus is Coming*, p. 223.) — Other Dispensationalists give the various periods additional distinctive marks. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1934, p. 143 ff.: "The dispensational study of the Bible consists in the identification of certain well-defined time periods which are divinely indicated, together with the revealed purpose of God relative to each. . . . The time from Adam until now is generally conceded to be about six millenniums, these being divided into three time periods of about two millenniums. In the period from Adam to Abraham there was one stock, or kind, of humanity on the earth — Gentile; in the period from Abraham to Christ there were two — Jew and Gentile; and in the period from Pentecost to the present hour there have been and are three — Jew, Gentile, and the Church." And now mark: "In the coming and final millennium there will be, according to much prediction, but two stocks, or kinds, of people on the earth — the Jew and the Gentile; and as has been observed, these, having been marvelously transformed, continue as inhabitants of the New Earth, wherein righteousness dwells. Thus it is seen that the present dispensation only is characterized by the presence on earth of a third grouping of humanity — the Church." "Israelites, as a nation, have their citizenship now and their future destiny centered only in the earth, reaching on to the New Earth, which is yet to be, while Christians have their citizenship and future destiny centered only in heaven, extending on into the New Heavens that are yet to be." In all soberness this man asks us to receive as Bible truth the bad dream that in the final millennium the Christians live apart from the marvelously transformed Jews (and Gentiles), the latter having their dwelling-place on the earth and in the course of time on the New Earth, while the Christians are no longer on the earth; and (here the dream becomes altogether confused) it seems this will continue in all eternity — the Jews on the New Earth, the Christians in the New Heavens.

coming will appear on the Mount of Olives rather takes one's breath. Acts 1, 11 and Zech. 14, 4 prove it. "According to each and both, Christ will literally descend from heaven, and His feet will literally stand upon the Mount of Olives." Acts 1, 11 certainly proves that Christ will return to Judgment. He will literally descend from heaven. But will the Mount of Olives be the scene of whatever takes place then? Certainly, for that is "the place from which He ascended." Besides, read Zech. 14, 4: "The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof." Now: "Granting that the words 'His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives' are intended to be literally understood, then it is manifest that the remainder of the verse is to be literally understood. But no earthquake occurred at the first coming of Christ, nor did the Mount of Olives cleave open, nor was there a very great valley formed. We must understand therefore that the prophecy refers, not to the first coming, but to the second, when all of these details will be fulfilled. Hence we reach the conclusion that Christ will descend from heaven to earth and that literally He will come back to the place from which He ascended, namely, the Mount of Olives." (P. 30 ff.)

One is left completely bewildered when studying the article of the rebuilding of "literal or physical Babylon." It must be rebuilt because the second judgment connected with the second coming of Christ deals with a physical Babylon. "It is clear that these predictions (Is. 13, 19—22) concerning the destruction of Babylon had a first fulfilment in the historic events of 548 B. C. . . . But the context of the quoted passages shows that their full accomplishment is not to be found in the past, but in the future, inasmuch as the event which brings the final destruction to pass is the 'Day of the Lord,' which day is placed by the Scripture at the end of the present dispensation, Is. 13, 9; 2 Thess. 2, 1—4 (R. V.). . . . This last fact necessitates Babylon's rebuilding." (P. 91.) And did not Kaiser Wilhelm purpose to rebuild Babylon? (P. 91.) And it will be accomplished under the power of the Antichrist. (P. 92.)

Just one more sample of chiliastic ingenuity. How can you prove from Scripture that the Jewish nation is destined to bring millennial blessings upon all men? "The Jew is the miracle of the ages and has been on the verge of annihilation many times; but it is God's purpose that the Jew is to become a blessing to all generations after the restitution of all things. Among the trees of the Bible the fig-tree is the national symbol for Israel. Jesus says: 'When his branch is tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh. So likewise when ye see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. This generation (Greek, race) shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.'" (*Lutheran Companion*, Feb. 10, 1934.)

The chiliastic interpreter, wandering around in this maze of con-

fusion, cannot be blamed much if he involves himself in self-contradictions. Dr. Frost believes in "the restoration and reestablishment of the Jews" (p. 133). That means "the establishment of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine" (p. 143), "the future Jewish period, which is the kingdom, that is, the millennium" (p. 169). But we are told on page 147 that "the promised millennium will be for a redeemed people, namely, Christians in a heavenly state and Jews in an earthly one." Will the Jews, in the *Jewish* period of the Church, in the days of their kingdom, be so far beneath the Christians? If so, it ought to be called the *Christian* period.

Dr. Frost has a chapter on "The Coming Glorious" (p. 44 ff.). There he quotes the passages: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father," Matt. 16, 27; "when He shall come in His own glory and in His Father's and of the holy angels," Luke 9, 26. But on page 234 he declares that "Christ will leave the heavenly throne and come back to earth . . . ; will leave the glory." Dr. Frost may be able to satisfy himself on this matter; the non-chiliasmic mind finds a contradiction here.

The "restitution" (Acts 3, 20, 21) means that "the reign of Christ over Israel will bring to pass a transformation of the whole world, both spiritually and physically." "We may conclude that 'the restoration of all things' is the blessing which Christ, through judgments, will bring to the earth at His return, first to Israel, and then, through Israel, to the whole world." (P. 235 f.) That means, to our mind, the conversion of all: the whole world will be transformed spiritually. But on page 130 we had been told that the millennium ends "with man's revolt against God and the judgment of his final and everlasting perdition." There is a contradiction here. Or else the millennium and its spiritual transformation of the whole world are no improvement on present conditions. — In like manner Auberlen, as quoted by R. F. Weidner in his *Annotations on Revelation*, p. 358 (*Lutheran Commentary*), describes "the blessed state of general salvation" in the millennium thus: "Jews and Gentiles are united, and all humanity, the whole organism united under the first-born Brother, walks in the light of God, and thus the true and full life of humanity is at last realized, Rom. 11, 30—32." But Fausset, whose remarks are quoted on p. 289 as "very suggestive," speaks of "the wicked who had died during and after the millennium." And Auberlen adds: "Even during the millennium there is a separation between heaven and earth, between humanity transfigured and humanity still living in the flesh. Hence it is possible that an apostasy should take place at the end of the millennium." No attempt is made in Weidner's *Annotations* (which are strictly chiliasmic) to harmonize this dissonance. To a non-chiliasmic mind a general salvation, a universal salvation ("all humanity") which leaves room for a number of wicked men involves a con-

tradiction. And the statement "It is possible that an apostasy should take place at the end of the millennium" cannot be made to fit the statement "Thus the true and full life of humanity is at last realized" in the millennium.

Chiliasm is a mass of confusion. And it is something worse.

(To be continued.)

TH. ENGELDER.

Das Testimonium Spiritus Sancti.

Es ist schriftgemäß, von einem Zeugnis des Heiligen Geistes zu reden; denn wir haben, sonderlich im Neuen Testament, eine ganze Reihe von Stellen, die ausdrücklich von einem solchen Zeugnis reden, und zwar von verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten aus. Wir finden darum, daß unsere lutherischen Bekenntnisse und die lutherischen Dogmatiker sich über diesen Gegenstand verbreiten, obgleich er nur von wenigen *nar' εφορη* behandelt wird. Letzterem Umstande ist es vielleicht zuzuschreiben, daß man zuweilen nicht genau genug unterscheidet und redet, wenn man auf dieses Thema kommt und daß sich deswegen viel unzureichendes Material auf diesem Gebiete findet. Untersuchen wir darum die Frage von dem Zeugnis des Heiligen Geistes auf Grund des Wortes Gottes.

Joh. 15, 26: Wenn aber kommen wird der Paraklet, welchen ich euch senden werde vom Vater, der Geist der Wahrheit, der vom Vater ausgeht, jener wird zeugen von mir.

Der Paraklet oder Tröster, Comforter, der Beistand, Advokat oder Vertreter, ist der Geist der Wahrheit, nicht nur weil er selber der wahrhaftige Gott ist, sondern weil er in seiner Befugnis als Tröster Zeuge der Wahrheit ist. Weil er Verkündiger und Lehrer der Wahrheit des Wortes Gottes ist, spezifisch der Wahrheit von der Veröhnung der Menschen durch die stellvertretende Genugtuung Christi, darum ist seine Betätigung die eines Parakleten, der den Menschen eben durch die Versicherung von der Erlösung, so durch Christum Jesum geschehen ist, die Gewißheit der Seligkeit mitteilen will. Der Heiland weist somit an dieser Stelle hin auf die objektive Verkündigung und Mitteilung der Wahrheit von Christo, auf das äußere Zeugnis, wie es an den Menschen im Evangelium herantritt. Vgl. aber auch die nächste Stelle.

Joh. 16, 7—11. 13. 14: Denn wenn ich nicht weggehe, kommt der Paraklet nicht zu euch; aber wenn ich gehe, werde ich ihn zu euch senden. Und wenn er kommt, wird jener die Welt strafen wegen Sünde und wegen Gerechtigkeit und wegen Gerichts. Wegen Sünde, daß sie nicht glauben an mich; wegen Gerechtigkeit aber, weil ich zum Vater gehe und ihr mich nicht mehr sehet; wegen Gerichts aber, weil der Fürst dieser Welt gerichtet ist. . . . Wenn aber kommen