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Notes on Chiliasm

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Notes on Chiliasm.

(Continued.)

The doctrine that the saints will be raised from the grave at the beginning of the millennium and the wicked at the end of that period is not found in 1 Thess. 4, 16 and 1 Cor. 15, 23 f., but only in the chiliastic glossaries of these texts. Nor can it be found in Rev. 20. 1—6. The chiliasts indeed insist that this text distinctly teaches it. Most of them consider it their strongest proof-text. "Oh, then let us earnestly entreat you to heed this *one passage*, even though it may pierce through your established opinions! Only one text, one place indeed! But is not that enough?" (*Jesus Is Coming*, p. 57 f.) But even though we look at the text very closely, we are unable to see the chiliastic first and second resurrection. We indeed see the words "first resurrection." But what does the text tell us about it? 1) Rev. 20 is very clear on one point — this chapter nowhere indicates that the alleged events of the millennium are ushered in by the millennial second coming of Jesus. Whatever the "first resurrection" may be, the holy writer does not say that it comes to pass as the result of Christ's second coming.

2) Rev. 20 is very clear on another point — it does not speak of a *bodily* resurrection. "This is the first resurrection" — "this" refers to "They lived and reigned with Christ." "They" — who? "I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Christ. . . . They lived." St. John is not speaking of bodies, but of souls.

3) Since St. John speaks of a *first* resurrection, what second resurrection could he have in mind? Two possibilities here present themselves. The words, *in themselves*, might mean that the resurrection of the bodies of the just comes first and the resurrection of the wicked at a later time. But here the words cannot bear that meaning; for the *souls* are the subject of this resurrection. The second possibility is that the first resurrection concerns the souls of the believers and the second their bodies, these to be raised at the

Last Day. This second meaning fits the words absolutely, conforms to the uniform teaching of Scripture, and, as far as the souls are concerned, is absolutely demanded by the context ("I saw the souls . . . they lived and reigned")¹⁾ and, as far as the bodies are concerned, absolutely demanded by the context, vv. 12. 13. The "second resurrection" (the resurrection of the body) is not treated v. 5 a ("the rest of the dead"); see Point 5), but vv. 12. 13; see Point 4).

4) Rev. 20 is very clear on another point: vv. 13. 14 speak of a bodily resurrection, of the bodily resurrection of the wicked, which takes place at the time of the final Judgment, and of the bodily resurrection of the believers, which takes place at the time of the final Judgment. "The dead" is a term indicating universality, of the same force as the term used John 5, 28. It is a perversion of Scripture to make this term mean "the wicked dead," as the chiliastic commentators do. And the term "the Book of Life" enjoins the chiliasts from restricting this Judgment to the wicked. "The Book of Life" contains the names of the believers. The bodily resurrection of the believers and the final Judgment concerning them (which is a gracious Judgment) does not take place one thousand years before the end, but is contemporaneous with that of the wicked.²⁾

1) Some take the first resurrection—which in any case can refer only to the souls—to mean conversion, the raising of the spiritually dead soul to life; others as follows: "*So wird die erste Auferstehung nichts anderes sein als die Versetzung der Seelen der Frommen in das himmlische Wesen und Leben.*" (G. Stoeckhardt, 33d Report of Cent. District., p. 88.) "*Der tote Christ ist nicht tot. Er lebt und regiert und hat seinen Scharfrichter ueberwunden. Und viele fuehlen sich durch sein standhaftes Zeugnis gestarckt, ja wir heutigestags, die wir uns an den Maertyrergeschichten der alten Zeit erbauen, verspuren ihren lebendigen Geist. Das mag wohl eine Auferstehung heissen: tot und doch nicht tot, tot und doch immerfort kraeftige Wirkungen hervorbringend.*" (J. P. Meyer, 34th Report of Syn. Conf., p. 61.) "In Rev. 20, 6 'the first resurrection' uses 'resurrection' symbolically of 'soul,' v. 4. The transfer of these 'souls' into heaven is called 'the first resurrection.' Nothing is said about 'the second resurrection,' but the implication is that the final transfer of the bodies of these blessed 'souls' into heaven constitutes in the same symbolism 'the second resurrection.'" (R. Lenski, on John 5, 28.) It will do no harm to quote also *A New Commentary* (Gore, etc.), p. 702: "*This is the first resurrection: the spiritual resurrection of Christians, of which the present position of the martyrs is the most striking example. Thus the teaching of the seer is not to be contrasted with that of John 5, 24—29, but identical with it. . . . The first resurrection must not be pressed as a bodily resurrection to precede that of the rest of the dead. It was their souls and not their bodies that were seen, v. 4, suggesting a spiritual line of interpretation.*"

2) The only recourse left to the chiliast is to substitute his glossary for the text. Weidner's *Annotations*: "John sees 'the rest of the dead' of v. 5, who rose as described in v. 13, standing before the throne." But John says "*the dead.*" Then Weidner quotes Milligan: "The dead are here the wicked dead alone; and *the books* contain a record of no deeds but theirs." Granted, for the sake of the argument only. Then what of "the Book of Life"? "There is not the slightest indication that the *Book of Life* was

5) The premillennialists are not clear on the meaning of "until," v. 5: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." According to the premillennialists this can mean only that the rest, the unbelievers, the wicked, will rise from the dead after the thousand years. Even Zahn takes this view. "*Ueber den Zeitpunkt, in welchem sie [die zweite Auferstehung] eintreten wird, sagen die Worte: οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησαν, ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη, dass am Schluss des Millenniums alle Menschen, deren Leiber bis dahin noch in ihren Grabstaetten liegen, werden auferweckt werden.*" That cannot be proved from the "until." This word or phrase simply indicates the *terminus ad quem*. See Acts 7, 17 f. The people grew and multiplied *till* another king arose. And then no longer? That other king did not find it so. See Rev. 2, 25. Shall they cease holding fast what they have when "I come"? See also 2 Sam. 6, 23 and 1 Sam. 15, 35; also Ps. 110, 1. "*In manchen Faellen deutet das dem ἄχρις οὐ synonyme ἕως οὐ oder ἕως ἰάν, das hebraeische ἕως oder 𐤅𐤇 auf einen Wendepunkt, an welchem die betreffende Handlung oder Begebenheit nicht aufhoert, wohl aber in ein neues Stadium eintritt.*" (G. Stoeckhardt, on Rom. 11, 25.) "This clause (Matt. 1, 25: 'Knew her not till'), like all similar clauses in the New Testament, itself neither states nor implies what occurred afterwards." (R. Lenski, *Interpr. of Matt.*) And on John 9, 18: "'Until' never itself implies that afterwards the reverse follows." The *Expositor's Greek Testament* remarks on Matt. 1, 25: "It is easy to cite instances of its (*ἕως*) use as fixing a limit up to which a specified event did not occur, when as a matter of fact it did not occur at all, *e. g.*, Gen. 8, 7." (Cp. F. Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, III, 595.) Applying this well-known rule to Matt. 5, 18, we get: The Word of God shall abide not only "till heaven and earth pass," but forever after, and applying it to our present passage, we get: The souls of the departed saints enjoy the bliss of the heavenly life during these thousand years (the time of the New Testament) and forever afterwards, while the rest of the dead, who remain in spiritual death, in unbelief, during the period of grace, remain in the condition of death, (which has changed into eternal death) forever afterwards.

Finally, it is clear that, if the premillennialists are right in their interpretation of Rev. 20 (Luthardt-Weidner: "The words 'they lived' can only be understood of a bodily resurrection"), Holy Scripture is the most unclear, contradictory, unreliable book that ever was written. What is asserted in John 5, 28, 29; Matt. 25, 31—46; John 6, 40;

opened for Judgment. The only purpose for which it is used is that mentioned in v. 15." Ruling out the just from the final Judgment on the basis of v. 15 is an act of pure desperation. The Book of Life, in which the names of the just are written, was opened at the Judgment and certainly had a bearing on the Judgment as to the just.

1 Cor. 15, 52, etc., is absolutely denied in Rev. 20. When Paul wrote, 1 Cor. 15, 23, 24: "Then the end," he did not mean the end. He expressed his thoughts in the loosest, vaguest, most misleading language possible.

Most two-resurrection men rely chiefly on Rev. 20. Curiously enough Dr. Weidner thinks he has found a stronger passage in Phil. 3, 11. "The most definite reference, however, to the first resurrection of believers is found in Phil. 3, 11: 'if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.' If St. Paul was referring simply to the general resurrection, he need not have been so anxious or made any sacrifice to attain to that, for to it all men must come. . . . This peculiar expression suggests very plainly the *first* resurrection, which includes only true believers." (*Op. cit.*, p. 361 f.)³) Certainly Paul is speaking of the resurrection to life. But where does he say that that is the *first* resurrection? So the case stands thus: If Paul here speaks of the resurrection of the believers as the first resurrection, this is a very strong text for the chiliasts! And that illustrates their exegetical method—they find their doctrines in those texts into which they have first read their notions. And on the strength of these processed texts they apply the process of plain perversion of terms to John 5, 28, 29 and the related passages.

A second example of the ease with which the chiliastic spirit brushes aside clear teachings of Scripture is its denial that the day of the final Judgment is at hand. We choose to discuss just this error here because it plays a prominent part in Dr. Frost's book. He devotes two chapters to it: chapter XI, "The Coming Impending"; and chapter XII, "The Coming Posttribulation." The whole body of the premillennialists denies the imminence of the Last Day. They all teach the imminence of the second coming, but place a period of a thousand years between that event and the last Judgment. All of them thus foster the thought in the heart of the evil servant: My lord delayeth his coming; the final Judgment cannot set in till the millennium has been established by Jesus and has run its course of one thousand years. Dr. Frost's school accepts this feature of the premillennialist teaching, but raises the error to a higher degree by teaching that the chiliastic Great Tribulation must set in before the second coming. Hence the clash between the antetribulationists and the posttribulationists. Hence the two chapters. It would serve no good purpose to examine the various arguments and counterarguments the two schools exchange. Both are wrong. Our sole purpose at present is to exemplify the attitude towards Scripture of one who is dominated by the chiliastic spirit.

3) Even Wohlenberg (in Zahn's *Kommentar*, on 1 Thess. 4, 14) refers to Phil. 3, 11 as teaching the twofold resurrection. He even refers to Luke 14, 14. Others, again, quote Matt. 24, 31. We have not the time to discuss all these passages.

Scripture clearly teaches that the Last Day is imminent. We are to look for the coming of Christ for the final Judgment and our deliverance day by day. That day may come any moment. "Behold, I come quickly," Rev. 3, 11. "Surely I come quickly," Rev. 22, 20. "It is near, even at the doors," Matt. 24, 33. "The Lord is at hand," Phil. 4, 5. "The Judge standeth before the door," Jas. 5, 9. "The end of all things is at hand," 1 Pet. 4, 7. "Little children, it is the last time," 1 John 2, 18. "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," Mark 13, 35 ff. From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," Phil. 3, 20, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 1, 7.⁴⁾

The posttribulationist premillennialists deny this teaching most emphatically. "I was brought up upon the usual premillennial teaching concerning the second coming of Christ to the effect that He might come at any moment of time and hence that Christians were to watch for His coming moment by moment. But a prolonged study of the New Testament has led me to change my view. . . . The coming is not imminent, but is impending. . . . The second Advent, according to the Scriptures, may not momentarily be expected, as it will not take place until God has fulfilled certain large purposes of His and has brought to pass the last great testing and purifying of His people in the midst of furnace fires. . . . How can we suppose that Christians were expected to look for Christ's return moment by moment or even in their generation? . . . The Church has never been able to look momentarily for the return." The closing words are: "So far as I can judge, the theory of Christ's immediate return and a momentary expectation of Him held by many persons in the past have not been in accordance with these requirements. And also, so far as I can judge, it is not this at the present time, the Scriptures seeming to make it plain that a further tarrying will continue until various predicted events have been fulfilled." (P. 227.) So, then, Rev. 3, 11 should read: Behold, I come after a long time. And Phil. 4, 5: The Lord's coming will not soon take place. And Mark 13, 35 ff.: Watch, that is, do not look for the coming of the master at any moment of time.

Yes, Dr. Frost explicitly asks the Christians to read that meaning into Mark 13, 35 ff. "The passages quoted containing the word

4) "Auf die Frage: 'Bekennst du mit der ganzen Christenheit, dass der Herr Jesus Christus jeden Augenblick zum endlichen Weltgericht kommen koenne?' (Ber. d. 9. Allg. Synode, S. 341), forderten die Vaeter unserer Synode eine bejahende Antwort." (Syn. Rep., West. Dist., 1903, p. 18.)

'watch' do not teach a watching for an event which may occur at any moment of time." (P. 173.) He denies a clear teaching of Scripture, and the arguments supporting such denial are of the same general character as those employed by the advocates of the two resurrections. He employs violent and piecemeal exegesis in order to give the words of Scripture the required meaning.

—"Watch" does not mean that "Christians are to watch for His coming moment by moment." It would seem indeed that Jesus is asking His disciples to be ready for His coming "at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning," Mark 13, 35—37, that is, at all times, at any moment of time. But the Lord did not mean to express that thought. What He meant, was: "Keep watchful unto each prophetic event, place it in its rightful sequence, note specially when the last of the last days have come." (P. 175.) The meaning of Dr. Frost is that the exhortation to look for the coming as an event which might occur at any moment of time applies only *after* the occurrence of the Great Tribulation (whatever the Great Tribulation may be).

But Jesus addressed this exhortation to His disciples, including the apostles. True enough, says our posttribulationist premillennialist, but He did not exactly mean the apostles. "He was speaking of them conditionally, that is, He was making the fulfilling of the prophesied events dependent upon the Jews' accepting Him as their King and His thus being able at once to set up the Kingdom. The Jews rejected Him, and the Kingdom receded." (This is the postponement theory, set up by the Dispensationalists.) "We must conclude therefore that Christ looked upon the apostles as representing other disciples who are to live in the last days. . . . The apostles represented other disciples of another and later time; for in spite of the fact that Christ said that they would see the events detailed, they did not do so, which means that others like them were to experience what they did not." According to this view the exhortation of Mark 13, 35—37 was not meant for those men who heard it. And the words of Jesus: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," mean: I do not say it unto all. I do not say it unto you apostles. Nor do I say it to *all* Christians of *all* succeeding generations. Dr. Frost assures us: "Momentary watching for Christ as expressed in the gospels is a doctrine which now pertains to the particular time which lies immediately before the millennium and *not one which has to do with the present church period.*" (P. 179.)

"Momentary watching for Christ as expressed in the gospels," etc. Did we, then, after all, understand Mark 13 and the parallel passages correctly? Yes; but we were ignorant of another chiliastic principle of Bible interpretation, and so we misapplied the passage. Our chiliast tells us that, if we would interpret the Bible correctly, we must, on the

basis of the truth of the "postponement"-doctrine, pay attention to whether the passage occurs in the gospels or in the epistles. That makes a world of difference. The principle is thus applied: "One of the first things which one notices in reading through the New Testament is the fact that the exhortations to be prepared for a sudden and unexpected coming of Christ are found in the gospels and never in the epistles." To the non-chiliasmic Christian it is immaterial whether an exhortation is found in the gospels or in the epistles. The fact that it is found only in the gospels does not compel or authorize us to change its meaning. Under the spell of the postponement theory, however, these chiliasts thus interpret: "That is, Christ gave these exhortations when He was on earth and was offering the promised kingdom to the Jewish nation, but did not repeat the same after He had gone to heaven and was sending His messages to the Church. This implies that the exhortations mentioned had special application to the conditions which prevailed when the Kingdom was first in offering and which will prevail when it is again in offering, just prior to its establishment." And so the exhortation of Mark 13, 35—37 does not apply to all Christians of all generations. "In other words, momentary watching for Christ, as expressed in the gospels, is a doctrine which now pertains to the particular time which lies immediately before the millennium." (P. 179.) And all this monstrous juggling of Scripture is due to the monstrous conception that Christ first offered the kingdom (the earthly kingdom expected by the Jews) to the Jewish nation, postponed, on their refusal of His message, its establishment to the last dispensation, and uttered His directions to the intervening generations particularly in the epistles, so that a great part of the four gospels does not concern us.⁵⁾

Besides, even if Dr. Frost's canon of hermeneutics were Scriptural, it would not apply here. It is not true that the exhortations to be prepared for a sudden coming of Christ are found only in the gospels and never in the epistles. What about Rev. 3, 3? "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." And Phil. 4, 5?

5) For instance, is the Sermon on the Mount meant for us, the present generation? No, says the postponement-theory section of the premillennialists. "We have seen that the Sermon on the Mount is primarily for the future. . . . It does not fit into any phase of our civilization. . . . When will it become effective? The answer is not hard to find. It will take the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, coming not as the meek and lowly Savior, but as the Lord of power and glory, to enforce righteous principles upon this earth. . . . The detailed rule of the life of the believer is to be found in the epistles, which were addressed to the churches. . . . There is one principle in the Sermon on the Mount which is reversed for us in the epistles, the prayer: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' Matt. 6, 12," etc., etc. (D. G. Barnhouse, *His Own Received Him Not, But* —, p. 45 ff.)

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." And Jas. 5, 9? "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." And what about 1 Thess. 5, 1—6? It takes up the exhortation of Mark 13, 35 ff. and Matt. 24, 42 ff.⁶⁾

The doctrine "that Christians are to look for the return of Christ as an event which may occur at any moment" is found, we are told, only in the gospels. And now we are told, in addition, that it is found practically only once. Dr. Frost does not put his main reliance on this fact. He is willing to "pass by this thought." But he considers it important enough to mention it. It might help his case. He writes: "As the Mark 13 verses are a duplicate of those in Matt. 24, 42 and Matt. 25, 13, it would be correct to say that the conception mentioned is based upon one set of Scripture. On the face of it this is a slight foundation upon which to build the interpretation of so large and weighty a doctrine." (P. 173.) There is, as is well known, another duplicate—Luke 21. True, all these passages form "one set of Scripture." But it is a large set. The inspired writers made much of this exhortation of Jesus. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost to give it to us in triplicate. Men are cautioned not to pass it by heedlessly. And the maxim that a doctrine cannot well be derived from only "one set of Scripture" has no place in Christian theology, in Bible theology. Why, one single passage of Scripture is all-sufficient for the establishment of a doctrine. If we had only the Mark 13 passage, our attitude would have to be one of watchfulness, constant preparedness, and expectancy. God needs to say a thing but once, and the matter is settled for all eternity. The Christian must not speak of "one set of Scripture," of one passage, as "a slight foundation" for believing a doctrine. The Christian says: "*Ein klarer Spruch aus der Schrift sollte sie so viel bewegen, als waere die Welt voll Schrift. . . . Denn mir ist also, dass mir ein jeglicher Spruch die Welt zu enge macht.*" (Luther, XX, 788.)⁷⁾

6) "Paul here corrects both impatient expectancy and drowsy security, choosing such words as may convey the idea of length and repeated alternation of periods as well as of crises which might be expected very soon. . . . They should never forget the words of the Lord which they had been taught, Matt. 24, 44; 25, 13." (P. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*.)

7) Mark 13, 35 ff. is a clear passage. The unbiased interpreter finds it so. It needs no interpretation. The "interpreter" cannot but say: "What Jesus tells the Twelve about watching and being constantly ready is not for them alone, but for all His followers. 'Be watching!' is for every one of us." (R. Lenski, *Interpr. of Mark*.) "To all generations of His disciples our Savior says: 'When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors,' Matt. 24, 33. . . . Hence from that day to this God's people have been ready for the coming of their King, 'waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Cor. 1, 7." (A. Graebner, *Theol. Quart.*, V, 74 f.) "Scripture warns men not to commit another folly, namely, to argue from the delay of Christ's coming that He will not come at all, 2 Pet. 3, 3 ff., or not soon, Matt. 24, 43 ff. For Christ's return

There is another set of Scripture which precludes the posttribulationist view. But our book makes short work of it. "The conception that Christians are to look momentarily for the return of Christ is derived, in the second place, from the use of the word 'quickly' as it occurs in Rev. 2, 16; 3, 11; 22, 7. 12. 20. . . . The Greek adverb translated in the passages mentioned by the English word 'quickly' is *tachu*. It occurs in the New Testament eleven times (Matt. 5, 25; 28, 7. 8; Mark 16, 8; John 11, 29; Rev. 2, 16; 3, 11; 11, 14; 22, 7. 12. 20). . . . The fact is plain that the significance of the adverb is speedily or swiftly. Thus it is to be noted that its implication is not that of immediacy, but rather of rapidity. In other words, *tachu*, as used in the New Testament, does not imply that the action with which it is connected will occur at once or soon, but rather, when once begun, it will be brought to an immediate conclusion." (P. 175 ff.) (Italics our own.) Surely the concept expressed by the adverb *ταχύ* is that of rapidity. However, this rapidity pertains not only (and not necessarily) to the progress and accomplishment of the action expressed by the verb, but also (and sometimes exclusively) to the inauguration of said action. The latter is absolutely denied by our author. His contention is that, when the Savior says: "Behold, I come *ταχύ*," He cannot mean to say that He is coming soon, shortly; the word *ταχύ* has not, and never had, that meaning.

We are reluctant to waste good printing-paper in proving what everybody — nearly everybody — admits. But in the interest of the scope of the present section of our paper (which is to show that the words of Scripture, their natural, native meaning, mean nothing to the chiliast if they conflict with his preconceived opinions) it shall be done; the paper will not be wasted, after all. So what does *ταχύ* mean? What say the Greek authorities?

Luther knew his Greek, and he translates: "*Siehe, ich komme bald,*" Rev. 3, 11. "*Ja, ich komme bald,*" Rev. 22, 20. Th. Zahn, another Greek scholar, cannot improve on Luther. "*Es spricht der dies Bezeugende [Jesus]: 'Ich komme bald.' Die Gemeinde antwortet: 'Amen, komme bald, Herr Jesus!'*" Rev. 22, 20. And on page 307 of

may be expected at any moment, and Scripture exhorts men to 'watch,' Matt. 24, 42; Luke 21, 36, to be wide awake, alert, like a sentinel on duty, who is constantly on the *qui vive* against approaching danger (*γρηγορεῖτε*), to be sleepless (*ἀγρυπνεῖτε*). Both verbs enjoin Christians not to give themselves over to security lest they be taken unawares, but to practise sober-mindedness and to cultivate prayerful intercourse with God. Luke adds: *ἐν παντί κεισθε*, at every season, and Matthew affixes the reason: for ye know not what time your Lord cometh.' This indicates that the second advent is close at hand. Accordingly Luke urges men in another place (so there is, after all, more than "one set of Scripture" that contains this exhortation) "to be 'ready,' Luke 12, 40, like travelers who may receive the word to march at any moment, and he adds this reason: 'The Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'" (W. Dau, *Lectures*, II, p. 170.)

his commentary he writes unhesitatingly: "*Christus spricht oftmals: ἔρχομαι ταχύ* (2, 16; 3, 11; 22, 7); *aber den Christen wird die Zeit lang. . . Die Naehc der Parusie Christi (im Gegensatz zu dem Irrtum, dass es damit noch gute Weile habe) macht die Mahnung [3, 10. 11] um so dringlicher.*" James Moffatt (*Expositor's Greek Testament*) can qualify as an expert. "I come quickly" — you have not long to wait and suffer now," Rev. 3, 11. "The second characteristic motif dominating the entire passage [Rev. 22, 6—21] is the nearness of the end. . . It is voiced thrice in a personal (7. 12. 20: 'I come quickly') and twice in an impersonal (6, 10) form. It is as a crucial revelation of the near future . . . that this apocalypse claims to be read and honored in the churches." Let Thayer take the stand (*Lexicon of the N. T.*): "*ταχύ*: quickly, speedily, (without delay)." (Thayer adds three passages to Dr. Frost's list, one of them being Mark 9, 39: "Forthwith, *i. e.*, while in the use of My name he is performing mighty works.") And Suhle and Schneidewin (*Handwoerterbuch fuer die ganze griechische Lileratur*): "*ταχύ*: schnell; bald, alsbald, sogleich." The authorities agree.

And they agree with the Bible, the chief authority. The use of the word in the New Testament does not follow the rule laid down by Dr. Frost. "Agree with thine adversary quickly," Matt. 5, 25, does not mean merely that the action (reconciliation), "when once begun, should be brought to an immediate conclusion," but also that this action should be begun, instituted, without delay, promptly, soon, at once. The sense of Rev. 11, 14 is missed if *ταχύ* carries the posttribulational meaning. And according to Rev. 22, 20 the Church is not praying that, when the coming of Jesus once sets in, it should be brought to an immediate conclusion (which indeed will be the case), but that it might set in shortly.⁸)

Let us study the cognates of *ταχύ*. It will not be a waste of good printing-paper, but will establish our thesis that a thoroughgoing chiliast makes little of the precise meaning of Scripture words. Thayer: "*τάχα*: hastily, quickly, soon; *ταχέως*: quickly, shortly; *τάχως*: swift, quick; of events soon to come to pass or just impending, 2 Pet. 1, 14; 2, 1; *τάχτων*: more swiftly, more quickly. Heb. 13, 19: sooner, *sc.*, than would be the case without your prayers for me; v. 23; John 13, 27; 1 Tim. 3, 14; *ὡς τάχιστα*, as quickly as possible, Acts 17, 15; *ἐν τάχει*: quickly, shortly, Acts 12, 7; 22, 18; Rom. 16, 20; speedily, soon (Germ., *in Baelde*); Luke 18, 8; 1 Tim. 3, 14 ('hoping to come unto thee shortly'); Rev. 1, 1 ('which must shortly come to pass'); 22. 6." The chiliast might reply that he is concerned only with *ταχύ*, not with its cognates. However, Scripture

8) Why does not the English Bible translate *ταχύ* with a word equivalent to Luther's *bald*? It does just that. *Quickly*, according to Webster, means "in a quick manner; promptly; rapidly; speedily; without delay."

uses these words as synonyms. What *ἐν τάχει* means *ταχύ* means. Rev. 22, 7: "Behold, I come *quickly*" takes up the statements of Rev. 22, 6: "the things which must *shortly* (*ἐν τάχει*) be done." So also in Luke 18, 8 the coming of the Son of Man is described as taking place *ἐν τάχει* = *ταχύ*. But what comfort would the harassed children of God find in the thought that, when the Son of Man comes, that action will be begun and finished in a moment? The comfort lies in the thought that their deliverance is at hand.

Will it try the reader's patience too severely if we invite him to study the meaning of the common word *ἐγγύς*? Thayer: "2. of time; concerning things imminent and soon to come to pass: Matt. 24, 32 ('summer is nigh'); etc., etc.; of the near advent of persons: of Christ's return from heaven, Phil. 4, 5, etc., etc." It will not do to say that this is a foreign matter, *ταχύ* being the only subject of our study. No, the context brings these two words into very close relation. The passage which describes the coming of Jesus with *ταχύ* also states that this "time is *ἐγγύς*," at hand, Rev. 22, 10. "The nearness of the end is voiced thrice in a personal (7. 12. 20) and twice in an impersonal form (6. 10)."

According to Scripture *ταχύ* means "quickly," and it means "soon," "shortly"; and it has that meaning in Rev. 22, 20 and the related passages. Dr. Frost reads this meaning into the word: When the Savior declared that He would come "quickly," He was not saying that His return was to be looked for momentarily. "What He was declaring, according to the etymological and Scriptural use of the adverb, was this, that the advent, whenever it would occur, would take place with a rush, or in a flash, that is, its beginning would almost be its ending; for its beginning and ending would be practically at the same moment of time." And what is the Scriptural use of the adverb according to Frost? "We find it illustrated by Christ's statement in Matt. 24, 27: 'For as the lightning cometh out of the east,' etc., and by Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15, 52: 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.' In these utterances the time when the advent will take place is not in mind, but only the rapidity or haste of its procedure." That and nothing more is offered as proof. We must waste some more printing-paper. These two passages prove absolutely nothing as to the question whether *ταχύ* can mean *shortly*. They certainly prove the rapidity of the process of the Last Day. On that there is no difference of opinion between him and us. We also agree with him absolutely that *in these two utterances* "the time when the advent will take place is not in mind." But other passages speak of the time, its nearness, its imminence. And these other passages are simply ignored. The basis, then, for this chiliasm's assertion that *ταχύ* cannot mean *shortly* is 1) his bare assertion to that effect and 2) two irrelevant passages from Scripture.

Having eviscerated the terms "watch" and "quickly," Dr. Frost is ready to offer positive Scripture statements establishing his teaching. The passage which he offers is, however, irrelevant. "He did not promise to come back soon. On the contrary, He said that He would be gone a 'long time,' Luke 20, 9." (P. 178.) Nothing further is said in elaboration of this proof. — It is not a proof. Jesus never said that *He* would be gone a long time. What He said was that *the owner of the vineyard* went into a far country for a long time, just as He said, in another parable, that "*the lord of these servants*" returned "after a long time," Matt. 25, 14—30. (We are surprised that this last passage is not quoted; for this parable at least speaks of the return of Christ to Judgment.) What is wrong with Dr. Frost's argument? In the first place, you cannot offer a parable as a primary proof for a doctrine. Parables and examples can only illustrate. Doctrines are always revealed and set forth in so many direct statements of Scripture.⁹⁾ That leads us to our second point. Where Scripture itself makes the application of the parable, a teaching is established. Not otherwise. Now, Scripture nowhere says that this feature of the parables, the return of the master after a long time, is meant to teach that the return of Jesus for Judgment will take place after a long time. So, while Scripture contains many unequivocal statements to the effect that Jesus is coming quickly, shortly, there is here no statement to the effect that He will not come shortly. In other words, the scope of our parables, is not the time of the Judgment, its proximity or distance, but the certainty and severity of the Judgment that will overtake the unfaithful and wicked. It may be that the Savior had a purpose in specifying the "long time" in these two parables. Or it may be that this specification belongs to the parabolic drapery and ornament. I do not know. If the former is the case, we need plain and direct Scripture to tell us what part the "long time" plays in the thoughts of men. And that Scripture tells us. There are wicked servants who rejoice that the master is a long time returning, feel safe and secure, and begin to smite their fellow-servants, Matt. 24, 48 f., and scoffers, who, on the basis of the long delay, deny that the Lord will come at all. And there are the Christians, who are prone to grow impatient at the

9) "The parables may not be made primary sources of doctrine and seats of it. Doctrines otherwise and already established may be illustrated or indeed further confirmed by them; but it is not allowable to constitute doctrine first by their aid. This rule finds its expression in the recognized axiom 'In theology parables do not count as arguments,' and again: 'Only from the literal meaning can arguments of weight be sought.' (See Gerhard, *Loc. Theol.*, II, 13, 202.) This rule, however, has been often forgotten, and controversialists looking round for arguments with which to sustain some weak position, for which they can find no other support in Scripture, often invent for themselves support in these." (R. C. French, *Notes on the Parables*, p. 40.)

"long time." It seems to them the Lord is tarrying too long. Scripture takes account of this mistaken attitude of the Christians, warns them against sharing the view of the scoffers, 2 Pet. 3, 9, and revives their patience with the assurance that the Lord is not slack, is not delaying, but that He is coming quickly. Just in view of the complaint of the Christian that the time is too long Heb. 10, 37 assures them: "For yet a little—a very little—while" (*Exp. Gr. Test.*—Riggenbach: "*Denn noch eine kleine, ganz kleine Weile*"), and He that shall come will come and will not tarry"; in the words of Hab. 2, 3: "*Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*" Scripture tells us very plainly what to make of the "long time." But never are the good servants exhorted to put the coming of the Master into the far future. And nowhere does Scripture make the statement that the *Lord Jesus* will not return "for a long time."—Dr. Frost's use of Luke 20, 9 is a typical example of what has been called the "atomistic interpretation of Scripture," the piecemeal exegesis, in favor with the chiliasts. They will operate with any disjointed statement that serves their purpose and ignore all else that Scripture says on that very point. The tabernacle of David shall be raised up, Amos 9, 11. So the Temple will be rebuilt in the millennium—in spite of Acts 15, 14—16. "A certain man went into a far country for a long time,"—therefore the words of Rev. 22, 20 and Rev. 22, 10 and Rev. 22, 6, etc., etc., cannot mean what they say.¹⁰⁾

10) What Dr. Frost considers his strongest argument, devoting the greater part of his two chapters to it, does not strictly belong in the realm of chiliasm, but is derived from rationalistic considerations; hence we discuss it in this footnote. Dr. Frost rejects the common, constant teaching of the Church regarding the imminence of Christ's promised return because of the fact (which is absolutely a fact) that nearly two thousand years have elapsed since that promise was given, and because of the truth (which is an absolute truth) that the Last Day will not set in before all the signs that herald its coming are fulfilled. We here face a real difficulty. How shall we harmonize the fact that the inspired writers urged constant watchfulness and expectancy on the Christians with the fact that—let us put it this way—the Holy Ghost, who inspired them, knew that Christ would not return at least for 1900 years? Carnal reason employs one of two ways to solve the difficulty. One way is to say that the apostles—and Christ Himself—erred in this matter. They thought the day was close, but were mistaken. It is put this way—to quote one statement out of a thousand—: "The apostle therefore exclaims with fatherly affection: 'Little children, it is the last hour,' 1 John 2, 18. . . . It is supposed to derogate from the divine mission of the apostles if we admit that they *might be mistaken* as to the chronology of the closing hour of time." (Wm. Alexander, *The Epistles of St. John.*) We cannot accept this explanation. We believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Nor will Dr. Frost accept this explanation. He believes in the inspiration of the Bible. But he solves the difficulty in the second way. He simply denies that Christ and the apostles taught the imminence of the Second Coming, and we have seen how he treats the inspired Word in order to get his meaning into it—all for the purpose of solving the difficulty. He puts

it thus: "The glorified Christ knew exactly the hour, minute, and second of His return. This being the case, he was aware of the fact that He would not return for over 1900 years; for this time, since His departure, has already passed away. What, then, shall we say in reference to His use of the word 'quickly'? . . . Still others have said that Christ knew the time of His coming and hence that He would be long absent, but that He designedly used a word which would keep His waiting saints, spiritually speaking, on the *qui vive*, that is, momentarily expecting His return, in order that they might have the benefit of being constantly in a heavenly frame of mind. . . . Let me frankly say that I deem their conception perilously near to blasphemy; for it is not far from charging Christ with moral turpitude. . . . This means that we must seek for the meaning of the word 'quickly' in some other direction." (P. 176 f.) We cannot accept this second solution. Scripture refuses to have its words thus altered, emasculated, murdered. Then how shall we solve the seeming contradiction? Let it remain unsolved! It is not our business to harmonize the teachings of Scripture. For example: Is the grace of God universal? Yes. Is the election of grace particular? Yes. Then God's grace is not universal! "Thou liest," we say to carnal reason. Answers then carnal reason: "Solve me the difficulty!" "That is not our business," say we.—Does the Christian take heed lest he fall, knowing that he might fall? Yes. 1 Cor. 10, 12. Is he persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate him from the love of God? Yes. Rom. 8, 38 f. That is nonsense, says carnal reason. Nay, say we, that is the psychology of the Christian, which thou, O reason, canst not understand. There is in the same heart fear and trembling and, concerning the same thing, glad assurance. Just so here. The apostles knew that Christ would not return before all signs were fulfilled, and yet they, like all other Christians, lived in momentary expectation of that return. We shall not delete either one of these Scriptural truths on the plea that both cannot be true. The Christian grasps both truths even if he cannot make the workings of the Christian psychology plain to carnal reason and to himself. Nor will he say with Dr. Frost and the great exegete Meyer that it is "not far from charging Christ with moral turpitude" to teach that, while He the omniscient God knew the end was 1900 years in the future, He yet asked His disciples to watch day by day for it. "*Meyer ist hier sittlich entrustet. Er sagt (Kom. zum Matthaeusev. 6, S. 504) gegen Olshausen: 'Wollte der Herr, wie Olshausen meint, dass seine Parusie bestaendig fuer moeglich, ja wahrscheinlich gehalten wuerde, und sprach er deshalb so, wie er nach Matthaeus gesprochen, so hat er fuer einen sittlichen Zweck ein unwahres Mittel angewendet.'*" (F. Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, III, 584.) No, God knows how to deal with the Christian mind. He created it and endowed it with the faculty to believe what He says, and where two truths seem contradictory to let both of them exercise their full power. As Dr. Pieper points out: The nature of the signs predicted and of their fulfilment serves the watchfulness, readiness, and preparedness needful in view of the certainty of the Second Coming and the uncertainty of the exact time of it, Matt. 24, 42. We are at no moment able to say that all the signs have been fulfilled and that that is the moment of the Second Coming. Nor may we declare at any moment that, since the signs have not been fulfilled, the Lord is delaying His coming, Matt. 24, 48. By a wise economy the Lord has arranged for such a state of affairs as leads the Christians of all times, faithfully observing the signs appointed, to await His coming always and momentarily. (*Chr. Dog.*, l. c.) This, of course, does not remove the difficulty. We are still puzzled: How could the first Christians, through the working of the Holy Ghost, look daily for the Second Coming, since all the signs, as we now know, were not fulfilled? How could the inspired writers, while predicting these signs, at the same time believe in, and ask the first Christians to believe in, the imminence of the Last Day? We cannot harmonize these things, and we are not called upon to do so. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* puts it thus: "Christians are on the alert, open-eyed; they do not know when it

[the Last Day] is to come, but they are alive to any signs of its coming. Thus there is no incompatibility between this emphasis on the instantaneous character of the advent and the emphasis in 2 Thess. 2, 3 f. on the preliminary conditions." (First Ep. to the Thess., p. 39.) And better still, admitting the seeming incompatibility, but refusing to construct doctrines on the strength of it, is this statement: "The close and sudden aspect of the end loomed out . . . before the Christian Church at this period, but it was held together with calculations which anticipated a certain process and progress of history." And now: "The juxtaposition of this ardent hope and an apocalyptic program, here as in Mark 13, 5—37 and 4 Esd. 14, 11, 12, is one of the antinomies of the religious consciousness, which is illogical only on paper." (Italics our own.—*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 493.)—"Wir sagen: Weder die Propheten des Alten Testaments noch die Apostel des Neuen Testaments haben sich geirrt in bezug auf die Nahe der Wiederkunft Christi, sondern die Stellen, die so klingen, sind, abgesehen von der perspektivischen Ausdrucksweise, so zu verstehen, dass eben beiderlei Schreiber sich so ausdrücken, wie diejenigen sich ausdrücken, die in dem Glauben und in der Hoffnung leben, dass der Juengste Tag jeden Tag kommen koenne." (L. Fuerbringer, *Conc. Theol. Mthly.*, V, 573.)

To sum up, in the words of Ph. Mauro: Dispensationalism, and chiliasm in general, "is a humanly contrived system that has been imposed upon the Bible and not a scheme of doctrine derived from it." (*The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 21.) The deleterious effect of this chiliastic treatment of Scripture will be pointed out in our next article.

(To be continued.)

TH. ENGELDER.

Der Zeitgeist und die zeitgemäße Predigt.

Zeitgemäß soll die Predigt sein. Nicht nur soll die Predigt im Einklang stehen mit dem Kirchenjahr, was bei uns selbstverständlich ist, sondern die Predigt soll stets den jeweiligen Bedürfnissen der Zuhörer entsprechen.

Die Menschen haben sich im Lauf der Zeit nicht wesentlich verändert, auch die Christen aller Zeiten haben dieselben geistlichen Bedürfnisse; so muß ihnen stets dasselbe Wort Gottes verkündigt werden. Doch kann und muß man von der zeitgemäßen Predigt reden, insofern nämlich als zu einer gewissen Zeit diese oder jene falsche Lehre ganz besonders die Aufmerksamkeit der Leute beansprucht oder gewisse Sünden besonders herrschend sind oder großes Unglück Land und Leute betroffen hat oder Gott ein Volk besonders mit leiblichen oder geistlichen Gütern gesegnet hat, so daß es dem Prediger zur Pflicht wird, im Anschluß daran ganz besonders zu warnen, zu strafen, zu belehren, zu trösten oder zum Loben und Danken zu ermuntern.

Daraus geht schon hervor, daß dieselbe Predigt in der Regel nicht wieder gehalten werden sollte, wenigstens nicht ohne die nötigen Veränderungen. Das gilt auch von der Lehrpredigt. Die Schriftlehre ist ja keiner Veränderung unterworfen; sie bleibt stets dieselbe. Sie ist eben Wahrheit, göttliche Wahrheit; und was wahr ist, bleibt immer