

ARTICLE IV.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRIUMPH OF
CHRIST'S KINGDOM DISTINGUISHED FROM MILLE-
NARIANISM.

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THE kingdom of Christ is destined to triumph. It will be universal in extent: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." A higher type of Christian life will be common: "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold." Civilization will be Christian, and society transfigured into a kingdom of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," under the spiritual reign of Christ: "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." The entire conception of the kingdom is nugatory, if it does not include its triumph.

I propose to consider the Scriptural Doctrine of the Triumph of Christ's Kingdom, in Contrast with Millenarianism.

There is no disagreement on the following points: The final triumph of the kingdom; Christ's second advent; the completion of redemption and the delivery of the kingdom to the Father; the resurrection and general judgment; the eternal, heavenly blessedness of the redeemed going on in ways and methods not revealed to human comprehension.

The millenarian error is essentially this: The dispensation of the Spirit under which we live is not intended to secure the gradual extension and ultimate triumph of the kingdom; the preaching of the gospel to every creature is not intended to convert the world, but to be a witness to all nations; the dispensation of the Spirit, therefore, will fail to effect the triumph of the kingdom, but is intended only as a

preparation for it; the kingdom is to come hereafter and suddenly, at Christ's second advent. When the gospel shall have been preached as a witness to all nations, and the failure of the dispensation of the Spirit shall have become apparent, Christ will come in the clouds, will destroy by natural and supernatural judgments the anti-Christian powers, "except a residue certain, but indefinite"; "will raise from the dead the elect of past ages," "take to a place of security all the elect then living," and change or transfigure them in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; will miraculously subvert and transform the present state of things, purify the earth by the fires of his judgments, deliver it from the curse of sin, and restore it to a paradisiacal state — new heavens and a new earth. "On the restored and purified earth a new social, civil, and ecclesiastical organization shall be set up among the generations of men then ensuing, who will be all converted by the continual presence and power of the Holy Ghost, so as was unknown in the preceding ages." Over this renovated society Christ will reign in person, and "sit as king upon his holy hill of Zion," assisted by the risen saints, who shall preside with him over "the successive generations and inhabitants of the re-peopled earth." "After this millennial age — the great theme of prophecy — the seventh decade — the Sabbath of time" — Satan will be loosed for a season to deceive the nations; will gather the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth to battle; God will then send fire out of heaven to devour the hostile forces that shall compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city; will raise the rest of the dead, and award the sentence of the final judgment.¹

In opposition to this, the scriptural doctrine is: Christ sets up his kingdom at his first coming. After his ascension, he reigns in heaven over his kingdom on earth, and administers its government, and advances it to its triumph through the Holy Spirit; the dispensation of the Spirit is the last; in it, by the efforts of Christ's redeemed going into all the world

¹ President Nathan Lord's *Essay on the Millennium*, p. 35-39.

and preaching the gospel to every creature, the kingdom of heaven — being spiritual and coming not with observation — will gradually grow like a seed, and extend like leaven, till at last it will pervade the world with its life, and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” This happy condition will be of long continuance. Whether this period will be followed or not by an apostasy, in the fulness of time Christ will come in the clouds; the dead will be raised, and the living changed; the earthly work of redemption will be completed, and the kingdom presented to the Father; the final judgment will be pronounced, and the righteous shall go away into everlasting life. In connection with this will be a grand epoch in the physical world, represented by the earth being burned up and the elements melting in fervent heat, preparatory to a new cycle of the divine manifestations, which the glorified in heaven will see, but which it is not permitted us to understand.

Among millenarians there are many differences as to details, and not a few extravagances.¹ But the more judicious millenarians are not to be held responsible for peculiarities and extravagances of opinion which they do not accept.

L. The Literalism insisted on by Millenarians is a False and Impossible System of Interpretation.

The argument is, that prophecies so explicit as that of the first resurrection (Rev. xx.), the establishment and exaltation of the mountain of the house of the Lord (Micah iv. 1, 2), the standing of the Lord's feet on the Mount of Olives, and the cleavage of the mount, and its removal, half to the north and half to the south (Zech. xiv. 4), must be literal; and that, if they are interpreted as figurative, or as symbolical of events in the progress of Christ's kingdom under the dispensation of the Spirit, every prophecy and promise of the

¹ “The king is a perfect human being, the Son of man and the Son of God; now possessed of flesh and bones, but not of blood, because that he shed for the race of Adam.” — *Prophetic Expositions*, by Josiah Litch, Vol. i. pp. 17, 18. Mr. Litch was a follower of Wm. Miller, whose millenarianism differed in several particulars from that which is described above.

Bible may be explained away and divested of its literal and obvious meaning.

This is a plausible way of putting it, and probably is more effective with the popular mind than any other argument; especially when accompanied by an appeal to the importance of adhering to the literal historical sense of the Bible, in opposition to rationalistic interpretations. My limits forbid a complete answer to this argument, which would require an extended exposition of the principles regulating the interpretation of figurative language and of symbols, and of their application to the figures and symbols of the Bible. I will confine myself to two remarks.

In the first place, this reasoning leads to conclusions so extravagant as to prove that there is a fallacy in it. David N. Lord, lately editor of the "Theological and Literary Journal," and a most able advocate of millenarianism, insists that the eighteenth Psalm describes a literal deliverance of David, not elsewhere historically recorded, and wrought with all the sublime visible and miraculous manifestations there set forth. The argument would be, if these are not literal, how can we prove from any words of scripture that God ever made any visible manifestation of himself to men?¹ The same reasoning would require us to interpret as literal history the familiar hymn beginning:

"Once on the raging seas I rode;
The storm was loud, the night was dark."

By similar reasoning Mr. Lord is driven to the conclusion that the carnivorous animals mentioned in Isaiah (xi. 6-9) will be transformed into graminivorous animals and continue to exist in the millennial period.² Some millenarians are led by similar reasoning to maintain that the prophecies teach not only the literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine, but also the revival of circumcision, sacrifices, and the temple-worship.³ The same principles of interpretation must carry

¹ Treatise on Figurative Language, by D. N. Lord, pp. 191, 192.

² Theological and Literary Journal, Vol. i. pp. 386-390, and Vol. iii. p. 601.

³ Theological and Literary Journal, Vol. ii. pp. 262, 266, 457, 472.

us still further. Ezekiel prophecies that in the future triumph of Israel, David shall be their king forever.¹ Literalism requires that it shall be David in his own person who is to reign over the renovated earth forever. In truth this method of interpretation is precisely that of the Jews in interpreting the prophecies of the Messiah's first coming. If it is the right method, the Jews were right in expecting Elijah to come in his own person, and not merely one coming in Elijah's spirit and power; and in expecting the Messiah to set up a temporal kingdom and be a mighty conqueror, according to the predictions in Psalms ii. and cx. Since events have proved that this is a wrong method of interpreting the prophecies of Christ's first coming, it must be equally wrong in interpreting the prophecies of his second advent.

President Lord insists that the millenarian doctrine is necessary from the historical character of redemption; that to deny it is to abandon this simple historical character and to substitute for it speculation and rationalism.² But this position is not well taken. The doctrine that Christ's second advent will follow the millennial triumph of the church emphasizes the historical character of Christianity and distinguishes it from rationalism as really as does the doctrine of his pre-millennial advent. The difference pertains to the question: What are the future events predicted and the order of their occurrence; not at all to the question whether Christianity is a philosophy or an historical redemption. President Lord here uses an argument *ad invidiam* which his character and standing would not have led us to expect.

My second remark, respecting the principles of interpretation which we are considering, is, that their incorrectness is exposed by reducing them to a precise and definite statement. This Mr. D. N. Lord has attempted to do. The third principle of figurative language which he lays down is: "The figurative terms are always predicates, or are employed in affirming something of some other agent or object."³ It is

¹ Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, and xxxvii. 23, 24.

² Essay, p. 42.

³ Theological and Literary Journal, Vol. i. p. 354.

not easy to apply this principle to such expressions as these: "When the cat is away the mice play"; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Mr. Lord calls a figure of this kind a *Hypocatastasis*; although he insists that "in that figure, as well as in the metaphor, the trope lies wholly in the predicate, not in the subject to which it is applied."¹ But though he does call this figure a *Hypocatastasis*, and insist that the trope is in the predicate, yet it is true that such a figure may run through an entire sentence or series of sentences, and, so far as the sentence or sentences are concerned, with all the appearance of literalness. And the admission that such figures abound in the Bible is the admission of all that is demanded to justify the interpretation of figurative language in the Bible in harmony with the doctrine, that Christ's kingdom is to be extended through the world under the dispensation of the Spirit and before the second coming of our Lord.

Mr. Lord enumerates four hundred and fifteen symbols, which, he says, is the whole number in the scriptures. From an examination of these and their interpretations, he educes "the laws of symbolic representation." The first is, "that the symbol and that which it symbolizes are of different species or orders, and that the relation of the representative to that which it represents is the relation of analogy." Yet he is obliged to admit this sweeping exception: "When the symbol is of such a nature, or is used in such a condition or relation that there is no analogical agent or object which can represent it, it is then used as its own representative, or the representative of one or more of its own kind." Among the many symbols belonging under this exception, he includes the souls of the martyrs, in Rev. xx., and acknowledges that this vision itself is symbolical.²

It is evident, then, that the argument which we have been considering is a popular appeal, rather than an argument. It legitimately leads to conclusions that are extravagant;

¹ Theological and Literary Journal, Vol. iii. p. 601.

² *Ibid.* Vol. i. pp. 182, 214, 237, and Vol. iii. pp. 669, 670.

and when we attempt to give it definite statement, and to educe the law or principle of interpretation which it involves, it breaks down entirely. Therefore, the doctrine that Christ reigns in heaven over his kingdom on earth, that he administers and advances it through the Holy Spirit, that its triumph will be completed under the dispensation of the Spirit and antecedent to Christ's second advent, is a doctrine which violates no valid law of interpretation. In advocating it, we cannot be stopped at the outset by the objection that we are forsaking the literal, historical meaning of the Bible for abstractions and fancies. The Bible abounds in imagery and symbols. We approach it recognizing this fact. We determine whether any passage is literal, figurative, or symbolical from the passage itself and its connection, and in like manner we interpret the figures and symbols which we find.

II. Millenarianism is Inconsistent with the Doctrine of the Bible as to the Time, Object, and Concomitants of Christ's Second Coming.

1. Christ's second advent is at the completion of his kingdom on earth, and not at its beginning or establishment.

The dispensation of the Spirit is habitually spoken of as the last, the last time, the completion of the ages (*συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων*, Heb. ix. 26). These texts cannot be explained as denoting the end of a dispensation; for they were applied to the dispensation of the Spirit at its beginning in Christ's first coming. Joel, in the passage quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, was comparing one dispensation with another; and so Peter applies it.

The kingdom is to be complete at Christ's second coming, and as such to be delivered to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24). Whatever difficulties attend this text, it certainly means that the mediatorial work on earth is finished, the number of the redeemed completed and presented to the Father. And it is certain, from the context, that this delivery of the completed kingdom to the Father is connected with Christ's second advent and the resurrection of the righteous.

Christ's second coming is habitually called the end, and presented as the terminus of all gospel invitation and all Christian endeavor to save men from sin (1 Cor. xv. 24; Matt. xiii. 37-49; xxiv. 31; xxv. 1-13; Luke xix. 13).

2. Christ's second coming is declared to be to judgment, in marked contrast with his first coming, which is declared to be to salvation (John iii. 16, 17; xii. 47, contrasted with Matt. xxv. 31; 2 Thess. i. 6-10).

3. Millenarianism is irreconcilable with the assertions of the Bible as to the events which will accompany Christ's second coming.

Christ's second coming is to be attended with the resurrection of all the saints who have previously died, and the change of the living saints from corruptible to incorruptible and from mortal to immortality.

It is accompanied, also, by the resurrection of the wicked. The prediction of Daniel (xii. 2) is interpreted by millenarians as a prediction of Christ's second advent; yet it expressly foretells the resurrection both of the righteous and the wicked. Our Saviour predicts the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (John v. 28, 29). Their resurrection is evidently simultaneous, hearing together the voice of the Son of Man; and the dead hearing the voice of the son of Man and raised thereby is a form of expression which elsewhere indicates the second coming of Christ.

The second advent is accompanied by the conflagration of the earth, and the saints are caught up away from the earth to meet the Lord in the air. This is entirely incompatible with the continued occupation of the earth by the human race, and the personal reign of Christ at Jerusalem (2 Pet. iii. 7-13; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). Millenarians resort to various expedients of interpretation to evade this insuperable difficulty, in which they depart very far from the literalism on which they insist in other cases.

Another concomitant of Christ's second coming is the general judgment and the separation of the righteous and the wicked to their final and eternal state (Matt. xvi. 27;

xiii. 37-43 ; xxv. 31-45 ; 2 Thess. i. 6-10 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1). The assertion is explicit that the judgment here mentioned is to be at the second coming of the Lord. Millenarians are obliged to interpret these and similar passages as referring to the destruction of the wicked who will be alive on the earth at Christ's second coming. These sublime predictions of the judgment of the wicked mean, therefore, only that a part of the ungodly in the generation living when Christ shall come will be put to a violent death. Universalists do not more violently wrest passages of this sort from their obvious meaning. While thus interpreting passages inconsistent with their own theory, millenarians cannot consistently enforce their literalism on their opponents.

Millenarians assert the continued existence and propagation of the human race under Christ's millennial reign. The Theological and Literary Review asserts that there will be three classes of men — the risen and glorified saints, who will reign with Christ ; the saints living at Christ's coming, who by their change will be made immortal, but will not receive the spiritual and glorified body ; and the remnant of the wicked who escape destruction at the second coming, and who, being converted, will continue the human race in its natural life from generation to generation. This class President Lord calls " a residue certain but indefinite," who will repeople the earth. All of the foregoing biblical representations are utterly incompatible with the continued existence and propagation of the human race in its natural life after the second advent.

It remains to glance at Rev. xx., which is claimed as teaching a first resurrection and a pre-millennial coming of Christ.

The vision here described is a vision of the *souls* of certain martyrs, who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Observe what this vision is not. It is not of a resurrection, but distinctively of the *souls* of martyrs. This is subsequently called the first resurrection. It is not of all the saints, but only of those martyrs who had been beheaded,

or, if the several verbs each has a different subject, only of those who had been beheaded and those who had been faithful to Christ under the persecutions and deceitful arts of the beast — whatever particular period that may denote. It is not a vision of Christ's second advent, which is not mentioned, and which necessarily connects itself with the events subsequent to the thousand years, and represented at the close of this chapter and in the next. It is not a vision of Christ's personal reign on earth. It is not said that the thrones seen and the martyrs reigning were on earth; but consistency with the antecedent and subsequent representations of the book requires that the scene of the vision be in heaven. It is not a vision of the destruction of the wicked living on earth; but it is preceded by a vision of the binding of Satan, and the consequent deliverance of the nations from his temptations and deceits, which indicates their conversion rather than their destruction. In view of the use made of this vision as putting millenarianism beyond all question, it is remarkable to notice what is *not* in it. It is extraordinary reasoning that, because John saw the souls of some of the martyrs living and reigning with Christ in heaven, therefore Christ's advent will be pre-millennial, he will at his coming put the majority of the wicked to a violent death, raise the dead saints and transfigure the living, and reign in person in Jerusalem for a thousand years.

If, therefore, you are constrained to admit that the vision implies a literal resurrection of some of the martyrs in connection with the coming triumph of Christ's kingdom, that carries with it no necessity of admitting millenarianism. Such a resurrection would be analogous to the resurrection of some of the saints when Christ rose, and would be consistent with the triumph of Christ's kingdom before his coming and under the dispensation of the Spirit. This admission, however, the right interpretation of the vision does not require.

The vision presents a symbol of the final triumph of Christ's kingdom and the long continuance of its universal sway.

This interpretation is necessary to harmonize this with the whole Apocalypse. To suppose this vision to be of literal historical events would be to give it an entirely exceptional interpretation. Especially this interpretation harmonizes with the vision of the souls of the martyrs in chap. vi. 9-11. There they are seen under the altar, crying: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth"? And they are comforted, and bidden to wait a season. There are presented to us the depression and conflict of Christ's church. In chap. xx. the souls of the martyrs are seen again, not beneath the altar, but reigning with Christ. As the former vision symbolized the church under oppression and persecution, this necessarily symbolizes the church in its prosperity and triumph; and there is nothing whatever in it which intimates that its triumph is to be realized any otherwise than under the dispensation of the Spirit, through the faithful efforts of Christians carrying the gospel to all mankind, and applying its principles to the conduct, usages, laws, and institutions of human life.

III. Millenarianism is Inconsistent with the Scriptural Doctrine of the Nature and Growth of Christ's Kingdom.

1. Christ, at his first coming, came as a King, set up his kingdom, and began his mediatorial reign.

The Jewish prophets predicted the Messiah as a King, coming to establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace, and to extend his reign throughout the world. These are uniformly prophecies of his first coming, the prophecies which created the Jewish expectation of the Messiah, and which Christians believe to have been fulfilled in Jesus. If the Messiah was foretold at all, he was foretold as a King who was to set up a kingdom to endure as long as the sun and moon endure.

Jesus began his preaching by declaring: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He announced himself as Messianic King; his kingdom was the constant subject of his preaching. He expressly teaches that his kingdom is not of this world,

but is spiritual; that at his ascension all power is to be given him in heaven and on earth; that he is to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and reign there as Messianic King, continuing his agency on earth through the Spirit whom he should send. He avowed himself a King to Pilate, and as claiming to be such he was crucified. He is acknowledged as King in the Acts and the Epistles. His common appellation is *κύριος*, or "Lord," a name applied at the time to the Roman emperor. Peter says explicitly: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ. . . . Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have this explicit declaration: "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool." This certainly intimates that there is to be no other mediatorial reign, and that under his reign in heaven he expects the triumph of his kingdom.

Both the Old Testament and the New teach that the mediatorial reign begins in connection with Christ's first coming, and particularly his ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit, and not with his second. So Jesus says: "There be some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

2. The New Testament, in treating of the growth of Christ's kingdom, emphasizes his humiliation and death, his ascension and intercession, and his sending the Spirit: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"; "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Jesus also bids his disciples rejoice that he goes away, because it is the appointed condition of the descent of the Holy Spirit; thus implying that his administering his kingdom by the Holy Spirit is better than his personal presence on earth.

3. The kingdom is not of this world, is within the soul, is

spiritual and invisible; its progress is gradual, and its coming is without observation. It is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is the leaven working unseen within the flour. It is the mustard-seed growing into a tree. Even Daniel's prophecy of the stone smiting the image on the feet, though cited by millenarians to prove that the coming of the kingdom is sudden, miraculous, and public, proves the contrary. It is explicitly said: "*In the days of these kings* shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." An event yet future cannot be said to happen *in the days of these kings*. And the stone, which represents Christ's kingdom, was at first so small that it could smite the image *on the feet*, and after the image had fallen the stone grew into a mountain and filled the whole earth.

It should be added that in the very discourse in which Jesus declares that his kingdom cometh not with observation, but is invisible and internal, he distinguishes it from his second coming, which, he declares, shall be sudden, public, and startling as the lightning.

4. The triumph of the kingdom is dependent on human agency.

The whole scriptural representation is that redemption goes on in human history, and the advance of Christ's kingdom is by human agency. Millenarianism makes the human element and agency to be only docetic, not a reality. The kingdom is not established by man working together with God, but miraculously, by the Son of God himself. After thousands of years seemingly working in and through and by humanity, he at last breaks free from all human relations and from all the continuity of history, and establishes the kingdom by a miraculous stroke of Almightiness.

5. The kingdom depends for its advancement, under God's Spirit, on truth and love, and not on force.

The genius and spirit of Christianity take men off from the reign of force, and establish the reign of ideas, of truth, and love. But millenarianism strips Christianity of this

its essential glory, confesses that the world cannot be saved by truth and love under the dispensation of the Spirit, and falls back on force as that by which alone the kingdom of God can triumph, and on which it ultimately rests. When millenarians are charged with teaching that Christianity is a failure, they reply that, while they do not expect the conversion of the world under the dispensation of the Spirit, they do expect the triumph of Christ's kingdom at his second coming. But I charge them with teaching the failure of Christianity in a sense far more profound. They acknowledge the failure of truth and love by the power of the Spirit to save the world from sin. They acknowledge that the triumph of Christ's kingdom must depend at last on force. Faith in the triumph of ideas and the reign of truth and love by the convincing of men's intellects and the renovation of their wills through the Holy Spirit passes away. The world will be subdued by Almighty power, never converted by redeeming love.

6. The kingdom, as supposed to be realized under Christ's personal reign, would not be a realization of the highest ideal of Christianity.

On the one hand, it presents a semi-sensuous paradise. It does not concentrate the Christian's efforts on attaining an overcoming faith, a divine love and purity, as constituting blessedness or true well-being under whatever circumstances; it rather leads to waiting and longing for an adjustment of outward circumstances to make life blessed. It does not set the Christian's heart on toiling and, if necessary, suffering to deliver men from error and sin, as constituting their misery; it rather leads them to wait supinely for the coming of the Saviour to rid them of their enemies by his destroying sword. It tends, therefore, to ascetic disgust with life, and separation from the world, instead of a compassionate and Christlike interest in the world to save men from misery and sin. Thus it unconsciously runs into that false philosophy which places blessedness in indulgence and gratification, to the abandonment of the Christian and only true philosophy

that man's blessedness consists in his character and action, rather than in his circumstances and possessions; in what he is, rather than in what he has; in working and serving—and achieving, rather than in receiving and being indulged. “All that is in the world passeth away; but he that *doeth* the will of God abideth forever.”

On the other hand, the conception of the personal reign supposes the introduction into the natural life of men of the elements of the heavenly state, and a consequent state of things in which the interests and affairs of man's natural life seem insignificant and out of place.

Thus the personal reign, anticipated as the issue of all Christian endeavor, vitiates the Christian character and life in the present dispensation.

IV. Millenarianism gives no satisfactory Theodicy, or Vindication of the Ways of God with Man.

It affords no tolerable explanation of the delay in the coming and triumph of Christ's kingdom, nor of all the processes and agencies during the long ages preceding it. The true doctrine is, that redemption must of necessity enter into humanity, act through human agencies, and realize its results through the courses and the continuity of human history. It follows that God's redeeming love may fail of bringing man at once to him; that the growth of his kingdom must be modified by the human element connected with it; and thus that only in the fulness of time and through innumerable trials and difficulties can the kingdom possess the earth.

But if, after all, the kingdom is not to be established in this way, if all God's working in and by humanity and in the courses of history is to be a failure, and the Messiah is at last to throw himself clear from all the human elements and historical courses through which he has worked so long, and to set up his kingdom by sheer Almightyness, no reason can be given why that might not have been accomplished four thousand years ago as well as now. Redemption ceases to be a true and satisfactory philosophy of human history;

it becomes something outside of it and above it, and is consummated at last in a violent disruption of all the continuity of that history. And every explanation of the slow progress of Christ's kingdom founded on the fact that it is advanced in humanity and by human agency ceases to be available.

V. The Practical Influence of Millenarianism is Evil.

It takes away the most powerful motives to Christian endeavor, and tends to an incomplete type of Christian life.

It is the glory of Christianity that it first and alone has spoken the word of promise and of hope to man, and predicted for mankind in the progress of Christ's kingdom a future on the earth ever better than the past. Under the stimulus of this promise civilization has become progressive and progressive in justice and love to man. Under this stimulus Christians have learned to have faith in truth and right and love, and in God's present and redeeming grace. In this faith and hope they are valiant for the truth; believing that, however opposed, it will through the influence of God's Spirit establish itself, and find expression in the lives of individuals and in the customs, laws, and institutions of society.

Millenarianism "keeps the word of promise to our ear, and breaks it to our hope." It dissociates the triumph of Christ's kingdom in the future from its antecedent progress and from the endeavors of Christians to advance it. The triumph comes at last miraculously, magically, by the stroke of almightiness, with no dependence on previous fidelity to truth and right and God; by occasion, indeed, of the persistence and prevalence of sin, not of the persistence and prevailing power of Christ's saints.

Modern progress is humanitarian. Christian civilization is characterized by regard for man, by the recognition of his individual personality, which can never be absorbed and lost either in race or organization; of his greatness and the sacredness of his rights; of the principle that institutions exist for man, not man for his institutions; of the brotherhood of all nations; of the obligation to turn human en-

deavor in every line of thought and action to the promotion of human welfare. It will be characterized by the recognition of the Christian law of service restraining the self-assertion and rapacious self-seeking of individualism, and leading men to live not for themselves, but for others. In our modern apologetics we insist that the world owes these ideas to Christ. But the millenarian system has no place for these ideas. Christianity, as that system presents it, does not aim to renovate society by truth and love. It aims in the present dispensation only to save a few elected ones from the pains of eternal death, while it looks to the total overthrow of the existing state of society and the re-creation of the earth itself preparatory to the miraculous establishment of a preternatural kingdom, having no dependence whatever on the present progress of Christian civilization or the Christian culture of men. It therefore repudiates the promise and hope of human progress, and declares them delusions of philosophy and rationalism, and no part or incident of Christianity. It therefore must regard Christianity, in its very conception, alien from all efforts to put an end to slavery and tyranny and to reform social abuses, and thus it gives its support to an argument which is at this day prolific of scepticism, that Christianity is not in sympathy with human progress. It must insist that the one business of Christianity is to convert souls — to save a few, if possible; from eternal death amid the hopeless errors, sins, and sufferings of the present state. President Lord, for example, declares that one of "the appalling practical consequences" of the current belief is that "Christian men and ministers of the gospel are wasting much of their energies upon delusive schemes of educating, reforming and reorganizing society, with a view to its supposed development into a perfect state."¹

The Christian, it is indeed admitted, is required to work for Christ; for the command is: "Occupy till I come." But he is to work with the deadening consciousness that his efforts will fail to make the world better. President Lord

¹ Essay, pp. 46, 47.

says : " It is historically and certainly evident that hitherto every tribe, nation and race of men on the earth — a few righteous men alone excepted, — have successively declined into greater wickedness, and that at this present time Christianity is spreading in the world in no proportion to the increase of the wicked population of the globe and the spread of atheistic, pantheistic, or polytheistic belief. The rapid development of our present worldly civilization is more and more alienating society from God, and making it more difficult for his servants to preserve themselves in the simplicity of their faith." ¹ So it is to be until Christ shall come. Under the dead weight of this certainty Christians are to fulfil the command : " Occupy till I come." They are to toil and suffer, knowing that all their efforts avail nothing to establish the kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth.

In the light of the Christian promise rightly understood, we accept Christian work as a privilege, because in it we are workers together with God to save sinners from their sins, to multiply the number of Christian workers, to hasten the deliverance of the world from its sin and misery, and to advance the Christianizing of civilization and the progress and universal prevalence of Christ's kingdom. Work thus becomes a part of the Christian's education. It trains him to love all men as Christ did, to be valiant for the truth, and to be strong in faith and hope ; it develops a broad and intense interest in humanity and in all that affects human welfare, and creates a large-hearted, genial, and healthful Christian manhood. Millenarianism, teaching the inevitable failure of all efforts to reform and renovate society, deadens the interest in human affairs, trains the Christian to disgust with life and a desire to flee from the world in order to save himself from its dangers, and to nurse his own spiritual emotions in retirement rather than to interest in toil for the world's renovation. It trains him to a longing to die in order to escape from the toil and conflicts of the Christian — a saintliness which is ungenial, ghastly, and remote from all the interests of human life.

¹ Essay, p. 27.