

The Calvinistic Character of Pre-millennialism

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The construction of the main events connected with the Second Advent yields three characteristic views: Pre-millennialism (also called Chiliasm); that of Standard Reformed Theology¹; and Post-millennialism. The following diagram will serve to indicate the general character of each view, and exhibit agreements and differences.

Historically, these three views have arisen in the order here given. Church historians are practically agreed that Chiliasm dates from Apostolic times. It was held by the earnest-minded, as, e.g., the Montanists, and by such as held to the Word as authentic and authoritative. It was opposed by the Allogians (who denied the Logos doctrine, and rejected the Gospel of John); by Caius of Rome, the opponent of Montanism and who ascribed the Revelation of John to the heretic Cerinthus. The *Didache*, the oldest book after the New Testament, reads: "And the third [sign], the resurrection of the dead. Not, however, of all, but as was said, The Lord shall come and all the saints with him." On this Dr. Schaff

2. remarks: "The resurrection here spoken of is restricted to the saints. This may be understood in a Chiliastic sense of the 'first resurrection' (Rev. 20:5); but the author of the *Didache* says nothing about a Millennium, and of a general resurrection after it. We have therefore no right to commit him either to the Chiliastic or the anti-chiliastic school, but the greater probability is that he was a Chiliast like Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and the majority of the Ante-Nicene Fathers before the great revolution under Constantine, when the Church from the condition of a persecuted sect was raised to power and dominion in this world, and the opinion came to prevail (thro' the influence chiefly of Augustine) that the Millennium was already established" (Teach. of the Tw. App., 77). As an anti-chiliast, Schaff makes a great admission, and we would say that in the presence of so much direct evidence the silence, if it is that at all, counts for very little. The Pre-millennial idea, crude and undeveloped as might naturally be expected, was prevalent in pious circles, and dates from the days of the Apostles. Since that time it has been in poor favor. As there has always been a little flock of the elect, so there has ever been a circle of those who always more or less clearly upheld the original Pre-millennial view. It is encouraging that today this company is increasing in number under the influence of godly men, who study the Scriptures with cordial acceptance of its absolute authority, who, however,

3. somewhat lack the more definite and comprehensive theological principles which will give strong guidance in the labyrinth of related truths, and will articulate all doctrines with greater precision.

It is noteworthy that the three views of the Second Advent point to progressive degeneration. This runs in the line of *too much regard for human nature and too great expectations of human ability to accomplish things*. With the prevalence of Christianity accomplished with self-confidence and self-importance, the Church gave up the Pre-millennial view to find consolation in this world, quite in conformity with the spirit of the times, which found its exponent in Pelagianism and in Semi-Pelagianism and under this influence the Roman Catholic Church is held to the present day, and its Eschatology is determined thereby. The Reformation returned to the ancient doctrines of grace, believing that the present age is an evil one, that human nature is depraved, and that the Gospel must be preached as a witness without expecting the conquest of the world. But it neglected to work the matter out, and with haziness of detail it largely identified the Millennium with the Eternal State. However, after this partial

¹ Recently this view has been given the name A-millennialism, because it makes little of a millennium as such

reformation of the ancient doctrine of the Advent, degeneration also affected the Protestant Churches in this regard on the same lines as in the Catholic Church, viz. too much regard for human nature and too great expectations of human ability to accomplish things. Hence, it is noteworthy that Whitby, who ran thro' the gamut from Arminianism,

4.

Socinianism, to Arianism, is the very man to incorporate the latent idea and tendency into a definite theory, new, and by himself invented, as he said, viz. Post-millennialism, the Protestant form of the degenerate view of the Last Things, and of kin to the Catholic form. So impartial a witness as Dr. C. A. Briggs testifies that Post-millennialism is foreign to Calvinism. "The current doctrine is one for which Daniel Whitby, the Arminian, is chiefly responsible." "But when recent Presbyterians go further and adopt the scheme of the Arminian, Whitby, they take a position which suits quite well with evangelical Methodism, but which is not in accord with Calvinism" ("Whither?" pp. 201, 206).

Since the Reformation as left the problem of the Second Advent on our hands unfinished, it is proper to discuss it in its dogmatico-historical aspect. It must then be related to the great system of truth to which the Reformation gave new life. Hence we desire to point out the relation of Calvinism to Pre-millennialism, and in doing this we must avoid all crassness and the vagaries of the irresponsible, and avail ourselves of the ripe fruit of scientific Biblical investigation.

The Reformation has restored to Scripture its unique authority, and proceeded to construct its conception of the truth of this basis. However, this has not been fully carried in Eschatology. But in these last decades this has again been done by a class of Bible students with particular attention to the doctrine of the Second Advent, and

5.

in such a manner as to run the historical line over the Reformation period and back to Apostolic days. This brings out such a unity of method and results that we do not hesitate to affirm that *Pre-millennialism is really the Reformed doctrine in Eschatology*. When we speak of the Calvinistic character of Pre-millennialism, we mean that it is not only not in conflict with Reformed doctrine, but also that its program brings out with particular emphasis certain views which characterize the system of doctrine, whose elucidation was advanced in such a marked manner by John Calvin.

Calvin occupies strong ground on the authority of Scripture and demands unconditional surrender to its teachings. In arriving at the meaning of Scripture Calvinism insists on the natural and obvious method. This sounds simple enough, but in practice this rule does not work out so easily, for Pre-millennarians also claim to occupy strong ground in their reverence for the Bible. Such men as Drs. Nathaniel West, W. G. Moorehead, A. T. Pierson, W. J. Erdman, Geo. S. Bishop, and many more glorify the precision and discrimination of the very words of Scripture to such a degree, that while Higher Criticism is very congenial to Post-millenarian soil, and may perchance gain a foothold on the soil of Standard Reformed Theology, it is well nigh impossible for it to thrive on Pre-millenarian soil. Certainly, true Calvinism must wrestle loose from every insidious attempt of resorting to **questionable**

6.

hermeneutical methods to bolster up preconceived opinions. Rev. XX 4-6 is a rich example. Even Kuyper and Bavinck criticize the otherwise so highly praised side-notes (kant-tee-enigen) in the Dutch Bible when they concern the book of Revelation. This dissent from that commentary and disagreement among themselves is not due to variations of construction within the limits of definite principles of hermeneutics, but is the result of forsaking such principles, whereby their regulative influence is lost, and exegesis necessarily runs wild according to every subjective impulse. In principle a scientific Calvinistic hermeneutics looks with distrust upon allegorizing and spiritualizing. Indeed this spiritualizing is a very slippery thing to handle: it is a measure of emergency that will help out of a corner. Even such a pronounced anti-chiliasm as Kuyper intimates this when he warns against a "soul-killing spiritualizing." And he avoids it to the extent that he pictures the glory of the new heaven and earth in such material

forms as will satisfy every Chiliast. Now it is true that rhetoric comes in for the claims of its figures of speech, but while these require careful discrimination we must keep the closest guard against the fundamental mistake of losing the essential even when it is expressed in figurative language. Maresius has remarked: "Let it be far from us to make God double-sensed ('diglotton'), or that we attach manifold meanings to His own Word, in which we should rather behold as in the very clearest

7.

mirror the simplicity of the Author Himself (Psa. 12:6; 19:8). Wherefore a single sense of Scripture, viz. the grammatical, is to be allowed, and then it may be expressed in any terms whether proper, or topical and figurative." Of course, the latter must be done under well conceived conditions and in accordance with the principles governing rhetorical figures.

In accordance with these general principles of interpretation the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism have been found. But by the very same method, and to the very same extent, the distinctive doctrines of Chiliasm have been found too. The accredited Premillenarian writers of the last decades are men of piety and unreserved fidelity to the Word. While their exegesis usually is not professedly determined by dogmatic considerations for fear these might militate against some Scripture, their findings can hardly be said to be repugnant hereto.

How correct we are in these assertions appears from the exegetical labors bestowed upon Rom. IX and XI. These chapters contain much material from which the doctrines of the Sovereignty of God, of the Decrees, etc. are construed. To prove these doctrines Calvinists are very fond of taking the declarations of Scripture as naturally as possible. On reaching Rom. IX: 15-24 the Arminian has the greatest difficulty to avoid the cogency of its straightforward declaration. But it is remarkable how the same method applies to Chiliasm, and how it reaches its complex of doctrines

8.

in the same manner and in the same proportion, with the same estimate of the rhetorical figures. And it is even more remarkable, as if the Holy Spirit would have it specially emphasized, the Rom. IX and XI brings its strong Calvinistic doctrine in direct connection with what we hold to be specific Chiliastic doctrine. These chapters declare as simply and as obviously for Chiliasm as for Calvinism, and it is just the Calvinist who blows hot and cold at the same time when he sublimates these plain declarations favoring Chiliasm into the dust clouds of a forced exegesis. [Dr. Wyngaarden's 1934 quote ended here.] A careful examination Hodge's excellent commentary on Romans will show, in these passages, how near he is compelled, on his own principles, to approach the Chiliastic position; and the step by which he avoids landing in their camp is so transparently evasive as to strike one dumb with amazement.

Two instructive examples of saving one's face affording wholesome food for thought, follow:

1. When Dr. David Brown in his famous 'The Second Advent' has to face the argument of the Man of Sin, which on a natural interpretation affords no escape from a pre-millennial Parousia, he cuts the Gordian knot by declaring that this 'Coming' is figurative, though the Greek terms it Parousia and Epiphany in one breath. Indeed; he admits that he is "constrained by all the laws of exact interpretation to apply the destruction here predicted to *that specific enemy* [italics his] so minutely described, and the coming of the Lord

p. 9.

here announced – whether personal or figurative – to a pre-millennial coning." But Brown interprets this to mean: "a *figurative advent* and not his second personal coming" (pp. 456, 459). This is a poor way of getting out of a very tight place, which another anti-chiliasm, Dr. Kuyper, condemns as unsound (Dogm. De C. S. 210ss).

2. It is curious that when a passage pinches a Standard Reformed theologian in the same way and just as tightly, an escape just as cheap and in contravention of an obvious interpretation of Scripture is resorted to by him. Thus the statements in the famous passage of Rev. 20: 4-6, which,

but for a strongly preconceived opinion, bears such unmistakable marks of being straightforward, plain historical fact, force him into an exegesis which is as remarkable a sample of misdirected ingenuity as can be found.

The Calvinistic character of Pre-millennialism appears from the peculiar emphasis upon the sovereignty of God as embraced in the doctrine of the Decrees and Predestination. On that very account the program of Chiliasm offers much that seems arbitrary. But this is the characteristic of absolute sovereignty, and in its construction we must be very careful not to explain the facts according to *our* ideas of propriety. After a sovereign manner God chose Abraham as the Father of Believers, and Israel as His own people in order to have them come forward as chief actors in His world-plan. As sovereign, Jehovah treats with Israel for these purposes: 1. To preserve

p. 10

God's Name on the earth; 2. To raise the Messiah from their midst; 3. To set them aside for a time on account of their unbelief; 4. To accord the Gentiles a temporary pre-eminence; 5. And, since Christendom will not prove itself better than Israel and come short of the glory of God, to show once more the Divine glory in a sovereign, all excelling evidence of grace as He goes on once more to deal in marvelous mercies with His ancient people. In all of which only the glory of God appears, and neither Israel nor the Gentiles get any honor on their own account. After describing the inveterate obstinacy of Israel, Jehovah gives this reason for dealing with them: "For mine own sake, for mine own sake will I do it; for how should my name be profaned? and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 48:11). There is no Arminianism about this.

Thro' a spirit of Arminian self-sufficiency theologians have figured Israel away with his specific calling, after Pentecost. The main impulse of this came from a suspicious direction – from Origen. His spiritualizing principles came into vogue when the Church began to get honor and ease, thro' which a feeling of self-importance was engendered which began to "boast against the branches." Thus the Roman Catholic Church has become the nurse of these principle which, detracting from the sovereignty of God and the authority of His Word and putting herself in the Divine place, has run to an extreme point in the Vatican Council of 1869; and this is but one remove

11.

short of the next step when the Man of Sin appears. As the Reformers, the one less, another some more, have retained something of the Romish leaven, so has this been the case with the doctrine of the Last Things. Excesses here by certain parties should not have caused inconsistency in the full application of principles.

Offense is often taken at Chiliasm because it gives the Jew such preeminence as if this trenches on the honor of believers. Granting this, who are we to say to God: What doest Thou? Least of any should the Calvinist take such offense. Who of us may complain of God because He did not bestow upon us the genius of a Kant? May some son of degraded parents accuse God because he was not born in a godly family? And why then should Gentiles imagine that there may not be a special function initiated by God with the Jews rather than with us? Let us fear to obtrude our sense of the fitness of things upon All-wise God. As the cross was an offense to the Jew, standing in the way of darling preconceptions, so Christians may seriously consider whether their aversion to the re-instatement of Israel does not arise from "high-mindedness." There is a deep reason for the "economy" (arrangement) of God by which Israel is first singled out, then rejected, and then again put forward. Consider the passage: "What advantage then hath the Jew? - - - Much every way; first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." This 'first of all' shows that the item here given is not only one.

12.

It includes a calling of an economic nature in the preparation of humanity for salvation, and furthermore to show the marvelous ways of God in dealing with the shortcoming of humanity, Jew or Gentile. And since God will judge all according to the fulfillment of our assigned place, only those Jews will shine who

were faithful in fulfilling their calling. Indeed, He has not spared Israel, and worse is still to follow this 'privileged' people. And what do we think of ourselves? There is an unmistakable tone of 'high-mindedness' current among Gentile Christianity. God will turn the tables upon it. The present preeminence of Gentile Christianity will not be lost on account of some blind decree o' Fate, but will come home directly within the sphere of human responsibility wherein God has placed us, and which, relatively speaking, operates according to its own principles apart from any consideration of prophecy. In Romans Paul is arguing that there is no excuse for any man, Jew or Gentile: all have come short of the glory of God. So we may not complain of God's arrangement, for without it we would be no more worthy of larger consideration than we are now. Through these 'economies' God is working His will with marvelous wisdom to the praise of the glory of His grace and justice. The full recognition of this is accorded by Calvinism: on its principles there should be no difficulty at all to accept the apparently arbitrary dealings of God with Israel.

The doctrine of Total Depravity further justifies

13.

the Calvinistic character of Pre-millennialism, which always took strong position here. It is historical fact, strangely and generally overlooked, that true Calvinism such as held by Standard Reformed Theology, is here in complete accord with Chiliasm, while Post-millennialism, which arose in 1714 and has been supposed to be its only alternative, is a late growth repudiated by well-posted Calvinists and is in principle thoroughly Arminian. Calvinism has prepared us to expect very little of the constancy of man, and ascribes all good things to the grace of God. Man has always been a disappointment, whence God has always been obliged to intervene. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation, and His righteousness, it upheld him" (Isa. 59: 16). In persons, in churches, in nations, in the outcome of the world, this has been and will be the only salvation. In ways and at times unexplainable on natural principles spiritual revivals brought life and health in evil times. The original Christianity of Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia and North Africa has disappeared many centuries ago. The later Christianity of the newly converted tribes of Northern Europe went into eclipse in the Middle Ages. The fresh awakening of the Reformation soon lapsed into dead orthodoxy. The Methodist type which has arisen in England and had blessed our country also, in fact dominating almost all the other denominations, seemed to have power to

14.

sweep everything before it. However, neither this type with all its initial momentum possesses the vitality to convert the world, and has been obliged to resort to special and determined efforts to restore lapses by methods which became trite and lose their efficiency. Post-millennialism, arising but a few years before Methodism, squares admirably with its principles, and must go under in the common weakness, of which unmistakable signs exist. For, in America the bolder show of powers of unrighteousness, the corruption of politics in large centers, decadence of authority in family, church and state, a stronger leaning towards Socialism with its inevitable fruit of Anarchism eventually, are ominous. With all the pretension which a civilized world has for peace such has been formally inaugurated in the Hague, the European war of 1914 – has been described as the collapse of civilization, and a cry almost of despair was uttered: "Christianity is a failure!" Truly, with all the opportunities and with all the advantages of education and good breeding. Post-millennialism with its belief in steady advancement, may well have been shown some better things for the correctness of its position. The Chiliasm, in true accord with Standard Reformed Theology, expects these very untoward things and sees in them a natural development of sin. It expects that the forces of evil will even become bolder, now being held back only by the restraints of Common Grace, and when "that which withholdeth shall be taken out of the way"

15.

we can expect the Man of Sin, and with him a perfectly logical course of terrible events. Chiliasm believes with Standard Reformed Theology that God in His inscrutable counsel is simply demonstrating the real nature of things, allowing matters to run their course to show just what sin is even under the best circumstances, so that it may eventually appear that all must be *of* and *through* Him, even the existence and well-being of the Church: and all the world will have its mouth stopped with no one having anything to boast of. Thus we may well expect that God will withdraw His common grace even more, in order that the process of sin may have a speedier development and may become manifest in its real character, then to be put out of the way, human means to do this having been proved to be utterly futile. That staunch Calvinist, Dr. A. Kuyper, speaks exactly according to Chiliastic belief as follows: "There is a false idea as if a general conversion of all nations must be expected. This favorite idea finds no support anywhere in Scripture. It is always said that there are groups *out of* all nations and peoples and tribes which stand before the Throne. Without exception it is always a little flock in the midst of the world. And it is so far from being true that in the end of the ages a Christianizing of all peoples en masse is to be expected that Holy Scripture rather prophesies the great apostasy and the Christ exclaims: 'Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'" (E Voto, I.333).

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The objection that according to Chiliasm the Gospel is a failure, is superficial, because it determines success by human standards and mistakes the Divine objective. It overlooks the fact that while man is directly held to the performance of duty in the sphere of his opportunity and that at his peril, nevertheless Scripture so far lifts the veil of the secret counsel of God that we are not to expect that this will be generally done. The objection, furthermore, is equivocal, because it also applies to God's creation which would be a failure by reason of the curse which spoiled it: it applies to God's covenant with Abraham because Israel rejected the Messiah and became 'no people'; etc. From a Calvinistic point of view this objection should least of all be made. Indeed, God carries out His counsel; and the heart is by nature so corrupt that even the sweetest gospel message must be a failure unless sovereign grace intervenes. And just that comes to its own in Chiliasm. Special visitations of the Spirit are as streams in the desert. Everything prepares itself for the final Divine intervention. And as man must die to receive his new body, so must this present dispensation pass away, and so will God create a new heaven and a new earth. We must not therefore be so narrowly mystic as if everything exists only for the Gospel: this is but part of the counsel of God. He will manifest His glory in other ways besides in the soteriological.

Premillennialism is so Calvinistic in that the true character of evil appears in very sharp detail

17.

in its program of events. Man loves the evolutionary process; he believes in the potency of continuing influences; education and persuasion will work wonders. But the question which now concerns us is one of such generic differences that the chasms cannot be bridged by ordinary means. That is to say, sin cannot be removed by means within the sinner, but must come from without: the manner of its removal is *catastrophic*: thro' a direct exercise of Divine power something new is established. This type of Divine operation already lies at hand in the individual, who being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, undergoes a radically new operation of grace, viz. the creative act of regeneration. Likewise the great spiritual changes of currents which the world has witnessed also exhibit unmistakable signs of a specific exercise of Divine intervention which cannot be explained in naturalistic principles. The awakening of the immense masses of the extremely conservative Chinese in this last decade, without prearrangement, so suddenly, without means to affect all simultaneously, and all to one great end, this a case in point. In a higher and in a stronger way the same will be necessary for the rehabilitation of the universe, which also will be a Divine, creative act, call the Regeneration by the Savior Himself. In connection with the glorification of the sons of God, it will remove the curse under which the material creation groans.

Now God does not perform the wonders of His power and His grace in one short mechanical act.
18.

Even in the creation of the world the Divine fiats took up 'days.' So too Sin is running a course, and God is dealing with it in a long period of 'visitations' to manifest the glory of His attributes as these operate upon the increasing virulence of sin. There is a Divine 'needs be' in the frightful ravages sin is causing: it is developing itself under all sorts of conditions and circumstances, being accorded every chance, that every excuse may be removed and the "mouth of all the world may be stopped" and God triumphantly justified.

Not to speak of its course in heathendom, special interest attaches to Sacred History as it unfolds the nature of sin and God's dealing with it under different dispensations. To be sure, this is allowed by the Post-millennarian. But the program of Chiliasm offers a much wider range of this and deeper reasons for the Divine dealings with the world. Its construction of the obstinacy of Israel and the new exhibition of grace to them in the latter days redound to the riches of God's mercy. Post-millennialism is a system which in an effectual way actually prepares for that Gentile-Christian 'high-mindedness' which will result in being 'cut off.' Now Chiliasm may not try to further bad conditions for it is not ours to "help forward the affliction"; we have our immediate duty, and if we would be clear of the guilt which will overwhelm the world, we must be faithful in our allotted tasks; nevertheless, knowing from the Word what human nature is, we can expect Gentile Christianity to be 'cut off',

19.

because it, as well as Israel before, will have failed to make use of its opportunities and so be ripe for a judgment. Then comes the Millennium in which the agency of the Devil is absent, and the influence of the righteousness abounding through the direct rule of the Christ, whereby the very best inducements and influences for righteousness will obtain. These Millennial days will seem to offer the Arminian conception of doctrine justification for its belief in the power of goodness to overcome evil, but the release of Satan at the end of the thousand years will give the lie to this in a very shocking manner. That more than anything before will show up evil as so deceitful, as so exceedingly corrupt, that with everything in man's favor working after the ordinary fashion, these halcyon millennial days will not avail to remove the root of sin, except where sovereign grace and power have operated. When Satan shall have been released, he will manage to collect an army of immense proportions to attack the saints and their King. It will readily be seen that this is the extreme to which the nature of sin, left to itself, will work its eventual destruction. A final catastrophe must forever safeguard the righteous by completely destroying every evil power. It must be all of grace, a being kept by Divine power absolutely, that no flesh may glory in the Lord. This will be the final justification for the absoluteness of Divine sovereignty in everything: only the Infinite is constant and dependable. In this way also, Chiliasm in the strongest possible

20.

manner honors the Calvinistic doctrine of the Preservation of the Saints.

The so-called Rapture, or Translation of the Saints to meet the Lord in the air, is a doctrine which must be held by all who respect Scripture. It looms large in Pre-millenarian belief, because it construes time, circumstances and object in a distinctive way. Outside of this circle it is mentioned so seldom as to be insidiously undermining its probability in any form whatever. Indeed, the idea of Rapture is not nearly so strange as another series of prophecies which once afforded far greater difficulty; namely, that which the Prince of Glory should be nailed to a cross and die as a criminal. Now, the short period introduced by the Rapture has great significance from a Calvinistic point of view. Only Calvinism has given clear definition to the doctrines of Common and Special Grace, and has illustrated it. Special grace, which now exists on earth alongside of common grace, offers considerable restraint to the free course of evil, and limits the god of this age in his baneful sway. But Jehovah will give the world a taste of what it means when special grace shall have been withheld, and we dare not say how much of common grace

besides. Then the powers of darkness will have a free hand, and what a time that will be! Unprecedented trial, sorrow and calamity; spiritual darkness, open wickedness and violence will abound worse than in the days of Noah, and except these days were shortened no flesh could endure. If ever it will

21

be necessary that divine grace is absolutely indispensable, that period will prove it. But in that darkest hour of earth's woe the glorious dawn will suddenly break and the Sun of Righteousness will burst forth with healing in His wings. What a meaning will attach to the cry with which He will be hailed:

"Hosannah! Lord, save now!" In the course of these events against such a dark background, the glory of God will blaze forth in overwhelming splendor, and the praise of Divine mercy will reach a high pitch.

In treating of the Calvinistic character of Pre-millennialism, we must notice a view of the Church which a Calvinist cannot allow and needs to be corrected in any system of doctrine which meets all the requirements of Scripture. In the excellent Scofield Reference Edition of the Holy Bible, the Editor admits in a note on Col. 2:2 "that 'the mystery of God' is Christ as incarnating the fullness of the Godhead, and all the divine wisdom and knowledge for the redemption and reconciliation of man."

Conformably to this, Hodge remarks on Eph. 3:6, "The mystery or secret is not the simple purpose to call the Gentiles into the Church, but the mystery of redemption."

The full plan of salvation with such an astounding item as, for instance, that the Son of God should die the death of a criminal unthinkable to the Jew, can indeed be included in the wide scope of Biblical 'mystery.' It would seem from Eph. 3:9 as if this mystery were restricted to the calling of the Gentiles to be fellow heirs

22.

and fellow members of the body, but is far better, and in line with Col. 2: 2, 3 to look upon this as a *derivative and subsidiary result*, because Paul speaks particularly to the Gentiles to impress upon them the high position they have reached thro' this wonderful Savior of the world. We therefore disagree with the note in the Reference Bible on Eph. 3: 6 when the Editor says (in conflict with his own note on Col. 2: 2 quoted above), that the "mystery 'hid in God' was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing – 'the church, which is his [Christ's] body'." Similarly, his note on Heb. 12: 23, "The true Church, composed of the whole number of regenerated persons from Pentecost to the first resurrection." This definitely expresses an idea held by most, if not by all Pre-millenarians, with which we strongly disagree, since we think the grounds for it untenable. We cannot conceive how the Church from Pentecost to the Rapture should be 'a wholly new thing,' a separate entity. If believers from Pentecost to the Rapture only are included in the holy body of Christ, we fail to understand why Abraham, the father of all believers, and other Old Testament saints, who also are raised at the first resurrection, should be excluded from the Body of Christ. Since in the Reference Bible under (4) in the note on 1 Cor. 15: 52 Old Testament saints are included in the first resurrection, we judge that his presentation of all the matter is defective and conflicting. If Old Testament saints are included in the number of

23.

the redeemed by Christ's blood, then such stress must not be laid upon the period between Pentecost and the Rapture. The most that may be made of that period is to call it a 'dispensation,' which may pass by the name of the 'church-age' but in whose spiritual benefit the Old Testament saints will share. That dispensation is the 'economy' or arrangement in which the plans of God are unfolded in further completeness. It may and does have its peculiar privileges and rewards, but these are other than 'belonging to the Body of Christ as a wholly new thing.' In perfect agreement with the demands of the facts, we then construe the idea of Church and Kingdom thus: The Church (the 'ecclesia' in Greek pointing to its members as the 'called out' ones), is, strictly speaking, an abnormal thing, become so on account of sin, which led to its election from the mass of the lost. Thus the Church existed from the

time of the Fall. In its deepest reality it is invisible and so constitutes what is termed a spiritual realm. When Scripture speaks of the Kingdom of God or of Heaven, we must understand it in outward form, in a political sense, we would almost say: the form of government interrupted by the Fall and which is again to come into full manifestation. In that day the spiritual and the 'political', faith and sight, will coalesce. When the Church shall have come into manifestation, or rather merged in the Kingdom, it cannot any more be said to be the 'called out' people, for the rest of humanity will be as negligible 24.

as the dead branches of a tree. All the saved, from whatever dispensation, will be one through the merit of Christ and in 'the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named' (Eph. 3:15). This construction is perfectly Scriptural and in accord with the Standards of the Reformed Churches. Any other view which Pre-millenarians may entertain, is a defect not to be squared with a full estimation of all the facts of scripture. This is an instance of the regulative and corrective power which Systematic Theology has, to prevent exegesis from becoming unbalanced. A Calvinistic Pre-millennialism, which can be the only reliable kind, is vindicated thereby.

Calvinism has such power to construe Scripture, form conduct, and ensure good government, that its glory would be greatly enhanced if in these latter days its gaze would be more clearly fixed upon the counsel of God for the future, by which it would gain fresh comfort for itself, as it regulates its program according to the peculiar conditions and demands of the Premillennial view. With the iron in its blood the witness of Calvinism for the King would be of commanding effect. "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when cometh shall find so doing" (Matt. 24: 46).