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"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS"—2d Timothy, i. 13.

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For the Editor, J. SAMOHT

"His Appearing and His Kingdom"

His Appearing and His Kingdom

When from any cause some vital doctrine of God's Word has fallen into neglect or suffered contradiction and reproach, it becomes the serious duty of those who hold it, not only strongly and constantly to reaffirm it but to seek by all means in their power to bring back the Lord's people to its apprehension and acceptance. The precious doctrine of Christ's second personal appearing has, we are constrained to believe, long lain under such neglect and misapprehension.

The foregoing is the opening paragraph of the call issued last Summer for a Conference upon the subject of "The personal pre-Millennial advent of Jesus Christ," which conference was held at New York at the end of October last.

Since that time, more than before, this subject has been discussed in the religious press and in the pulpits of this continent. Special care has been taken to teach the people, (notable our Baptist people) to believe that the Lord will not come to raise his Church to glory and to judge the world until after the conversion of the world and the Millennial period of peace. The views held by the pre-Millennialists are condemned as unorthodox and unscriptural, and practically antagonistic to the growth of true religion.

It is my purpose to show that the doctrine of the personal and visible reign of Christ with his elect, on the earth, during a Millennial period, to follow his coming again from heaven, the doctrine variously styled pre-Millennialism, Christian Chiliasm and in a less precise way, Second Adventism, has always been a part of the true Christian faith.

As the interpretation of Scripture gives scope for great diversity of opinion, so that any quotation of proof texts on my part would probably call forth counter-quotations of passages supposed to disprove my view, I propose to defer for the present this mode of argument (which must, however, always be the true basis of belief) and to bring forward the testimony of eminent Christian writers and others, from the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles down to our own times, showing how they have interpreted the Scriptures in relation to the subject under consideration. My authority for the most of the quotations to be adduced is the volume entitled "Pre-Millennial Essays," edited by Rev. Nathaniel West, D.D., of Cincinnati, and published by F. H. Revell of Chicago.

I shall first present testimony to the fact that the church in the first three centuries of the Christian era was pre-Millennarian. A few extracts must be taken as specimens.

I. TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS.

Papias, a companion of the Apostle John and of Polycarp, is said by Eusebius to

have held that "There will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth."

Justin Martyr, (A.D. 140). "I know there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years [reign] in Jerusalem, built, adorned, broadened, as the prophet Ezekiel, Isaiah and others declare!"

Irenæus, (A. D. 172) "In the times of the kingdom, the righteous shall bear rule, upon their rising from the dead, when the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with abundance of every kind." "John distinctly foresaw the first resurrection of the just, and the inheritance in the kingdom on earth."

Lactantius, (A. D. 309.) "It is ordained by the disposal of God Most High that the present unjust age shall have an end, when there shall flourish a quiet, tranquil, peaceable, and golden age, the Lord himself then reigning. The righteous king will institute a great judgment on the earth respecting the living and the dead, and will deliver the nations in subjection to the righteous who are alive; will raise the righteous dead to eternal life, and will himself reign with them on the earth, and will build the holy city, and this kingdom of the righteous shall be for a thousand years. Then the last judgment of God will come to pass against the nations. Then also shall the wicked arise, not to life but to punishment. The second resurrection shall take place. This is the doctrine of the holy prophets, which we Christians follow."

To these might be added the evidence of Barnabas and Clement, Polycarp and Hermas, Hippolytus and Tertullian, Cyprian, Melito, Nepos, Methodius, Gregory of Nyssa, Salpicius, Paulinus and others,—exponents of the Christianity of their times.

II. TESTIMONY OF MODERN WRITERS.

Chillingworth affirms that "The doctrine of Millenniarism was believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the age next after the Apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned; therefore it was the catholic, (i. e. universally prevailing) doctrine of those times."

Bishop Newton says: "The doctrine of the millennium, (as held by Millenniarists) was generally believed in the three first and purest ages."

Mede asserts that, "Chiliasm was the general belief of all the orthodox Christians in the age immediately following the Apostles, and none were known to deny it but the heretics, who denied the resurrection."

"I challenge the opponents of these views," says Cunningham, "to produce a single passage from any writer of authority in the first three or four centuries, in favor of the modern figurative interpretation of the words of Dan. vii. 13-14, and of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 30, and Luke xxi. 27."

The late Dean Alford wrote: "The whole Church for 300 years understood Rev. xx. 1-6 in a plain, literal sense," and "It is the most cogent instance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents."

Dr. S. H. Kellogg, says, "In the first two centuries of the Church's History, centuries distinguished above all others for their record of evangelistic zeal and activity, there is not the slightest hint that the church was expecting any general conversion of the world to follow as the result of her glorious labors and sufferings."

Dr. John T. Duffield of Princeton college, says, "The doctrine of a millennial era before the Advent," (the doctrine taught in our pulpits and in our Theological Seminaries) "is a novelty in the history of the church, proposed but little more than 150 years ago, and avowedly as a new hypothesis."

I shall close these quotations with the following from Edward Gibbon, the historian, certainly an unprejudiced writer: "The ancient and popular doctrine of the millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers, from Justin Martyr and Irenæus who conversed with the Apostles, down to Lactantius who was the preceptor of the son of Constantine. It appears to have been the reigning sentiment of orthodox believers. As long as this error (!) was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of the Christians."

LUKE.

July 17, 1879.

CIRCULAR LETTER

BY REV. I. E. BILL.

To the Churches Comprising the Eastern New Brunswick Baptist Association.

BELOVED BRETHREN:

Permit us in this our annual epistle, to respectfully invite your attention to the

SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Delicacy of feeling frequently prevents pastors from duly instructing their churches on this subject, and so sadly is this duty neglected that we greatly fear that few of us can truthfully say, with the Apostle, to our people, "We have not shunned to declare unto you the whole council of God." Pastors, churches, denominations, are suffering to-day in consequence of this neglect of a plain duty on the part of their pastors.

But why support the Ministry? Ist. Because Christian ministers are commanded to give themselves wholly to the duties and aims of their high vocation. Paul said to his son Timothy: "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon those things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." But if Timothy had to cultivate a farm, run a shop, build ships, houses or barns, or go into some secular profession for the sake of earning bread for himself or family, then this son Timothy must disobey the positive orders of his inspired father, Paul.

So pressing are the claims of the ministry for entire consecration to its demands, that the early ministers felt that they had no time to attend to even the finances of the church, but had seven men appointed to attend to this business, that they might "give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." This was in perfect accord with the instructions of the Great Teacher to his first ministers when he said to them, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves." Why not? "For the workman is worthy of his meat."

All this indicates single and entire consecration to the great business of publishing the gospel and of saving immortal souls. But if ministers are not to make provision for themselves, then inasmuch as they have bodies, as well as souls, that must be clothed and fed, as a reward for their devotion to their spiritual work, others must provide for them.

This is in perfect harmony with the requirement of the ancient economy. One tenth of the products of the soil was given for the support of the priesthood, or of those who, by divine command, devoted themselves entirely to the interests of religion.

Paul in his appeal to the Corinthians on the question of ministerial support, places it before them as a matter of common justice. He inquires, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt it was written, that he who ploweth should plow in hope, and be that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

The example of the Chief Shepherd is worthy of consideration in this connection. When he entered upon his great work he gave up his secular calling; but he must still have his daily bread. He who fed the five thousand with the five barley loaves and the two fishes, could miraculously supply himself; but he set before us the self-denying example of living upon the contributions of the people. Even "certain women, who followed him, ministered to him of their substance."

In the light of such teaching it must be clear to every unbiased mind that God's plan is that ministers of the gospel, be they pastors or evangelists, should be freed as far as possible from all secular encumbrances; that they should give themselves unreservedly to the onerous duties of the ministry; and that they should be sustained by the liberal contributions of the people.

Then the question naturally suggests itself, What should be the nature and extent of ministerial support? Looking at this matter from a business standpoint, the minister of Christ should be rewarded in proportion to the amount of talent, energy, and devotion he brings to bear upon the work he has in charge.

Here are two men of equal ability. One is a mechanic, or farmer, or physician, or lawyer, or politician; the other is a minister of Christ. Is the latter to live upon half pay or quarter pay because all his energies of body and mind are consecrated to the salvation of souls? Is he to be told because he is the servant of the Most High God, that he must therefore be curtailed not only in the luxuries but the necessities of life? Because he is an ambassador from the court of heaven, must he therefore necessarily endure the pangs of a pinching poverty? Because by the grace of God he has a passion for saving deathly souls from ruin, therefore must the reward of

his toil be less than that of the man who has a passion for saving money?

Think of the tremendous responsibilities of the minister of the Cross—of the far-reaching results of his consecrated service passing all the lines of mere secular callings, and entering the depths of the eternal ages,—and then tell us that the man of the world is to have his bread to the full, while the minister of God is to be kept at the starvation point. Are the men of the world to be so paid for their services that they can bring up their children in luxury, fit them by education for the highest positions in society, furnish them with the means of starting in life with brilliant prospects before them, and leave them with large legacies when they depart,—and must the minister of the Redeemer suffer the mortification of knowing that their salary is so limited that they can neither properly educate their children or make suitable provision for them in case they should early be deprived of parental support? Because a woman joins herself in wedlock to a minister of Christ, must she therefore be doomed to a life of poverty and toil, and in the issue be left to get her supplies from the charities of a cold-hearted world?

But some wondrously pious souls are greatly alarmed lest the minister should be seriously injured by a large salary. They are afraid he will become vain and haughty, and therefore, to keep him humble, they keep him poor; forgetting all the time that they are in equal danger should Providence crown their efforts with success.

While we thus speak, we do not ask for Christian ministers luxurious salaries; but we do say that ministers of the Lord Jesus, who are worthy of the name they bear, should have sufficient support to enable them to keep square with the world as they go along; to properly train their sons and daughters, if they have them, for positions of usefulness in life; to make a reasonable provision for themselves when sickness or the infirmities of age disqualify them for active service, and to save those who may be dependent upon them from the miseries of poverty when they are called to their rest above.

But some one will say, How is this provision to be made? A very general mode of raising the minister's salary in the past, with Baptist churches, has been the annual subscription. The people come together, and they decide to call the man of their choice, or, to use the common phrase, to hire him for three or six months, or for a year; then a subscription list is passed around, to see what the people will give for the term mentioned. At the expiration of the term the same thing is to be renewed, leaving the poor minister entirely in the hands of the subscription list. This may or may not be paid. Some sign, not intending to pay, as the man said when called upon for his subscription, he signed "to help the thing along." The term expires, a settlement is called for; some have paid in full, some in part, and others have paid nothing. The result is, the church is in debt to the pastor, and he not getting his salary in time, had to go in debt for his living, and is now unable to pay. The question comes up, Shall we hire our pastor for another year? Not having paid him up for the past, how can they enter upon new engagements? Nobody finds any fault with the pastor; but as the subscription list is not paid, and as he can't live without his salary, separation takes place. The pastor, poor man, has to go and look for a home, or he has to stay in the place; the probable result of what is a divided church, which means a broken-down community, or a disorganized church, wholly disqualified for united action.

If any our churches are still clinging to this God-dishonoring plan, they should abandon it at once and forever, and adopt a more excellent way.

Ist. Take all due caution in the election of your minister. Be sure first of all that he is a good man, and then be sure that he has sufficient intelligence to impart instruction to you, not for a few weeks or months, but for successive years; and then make arrangements for a permanent settlement. He is to be your minister, not simply for a few months, or for a year, but so long as rational circumstances may justify his continuance. Is the church too small to give him an adequate support? Then let the time and salary be divided with other small churches. If need be, two, three, or four churches may join in the support of one man. Such a compact involves grave responsibilities, and must not be treated as a light matter. Enquire how much is required, not only to keep the minister chosen above absolute want; but to place him in circumstances in which he will be able to make all needful provision for himself and family, to store his library with useful books and papers, and to keep himself fully abreast of the spirit of the age. The amount required, of course, must be governed more or less by surrounding circumstances; but let it, in all cases, be as generous as possible. If four, six, eight, or ten hundred dollars, more or less, let it be divided into weekly offerings, and let these be proportioned to the ability of the people, so that some be not eased and others burdened, but by an equality.

When the apostle speaks of the collections for the saints he refers to this equality thus: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This is the golden rule and applies with equal force to the provision made for ministerial support. All should contribute, male and female and in proportion as God has prospered. Let the offering be weekly instead of monthly or quarterly, and then the contribution is less burdensome, and the minister is kept in funds to meet his demands as he goes along. The church will find it convenient in most cases to appoint a finance committee, composed of competent persons, deacons or otherwise, to take charge of the weekly offerings and to see that they are promptly paid. In some country districts, money is

(Continued on fourth page.)