

THE LORD'S ADVENT:

OR,

REMARKS

ON

MR. W. TROTTER'S PLAIN PAPERS

ON

Prophetic Subjects.

BY

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THE LORD'S ADVENT.

- IN a recent work emanating from the pen of Mr. W. Trotter, entitled, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, the author, in commenting upon Revelation xx. 4, 5, observes:—"If you reject the plain obvious sense of the chapter, as foretelling an actual resurrection of the saints to reign with Christ, you are involved in inextricable difficulties."

In opposition to this dictum by Mr. Trotter, it is maintained that the post-millenarian interpretation of Revelation xx. 4, 5, in a figurative sense, so far from involving those who hold it in *inextricable difficulties*, is perfectly consistent and coherent in all its parts, the supposition to the contrary being based upon a misconception of the shape which the post-millenarian view of the passage takes.

In Revelation xix. 20, 21, we have the result of the anti-Christian confederacy against the Lord Jesus Christ and His cause. The two leaders, viz., the beast and the false prophet, are cast into the lake of fire, and the remnant (*οἱ λοιποὶ*) are slain. Then in chap. xx. 1, 6, follows a vision of the binding of Satan for a thousand years, and a vision of a reign of martyrs for the same period; the post-millenarian interpretation of which

visions is that immediately after the terrible judgments of God poured out upon the followers of Antichrist, a restraint will be put upon the powers of evil for a thousand years, during which our earth and its inhabitants will enjoy the blessedness predicted in numerous Scriptures, and the saints will possess the kingdom—not the saints dead in past ages, and now raised again to rule over the earth; but godly men, who, through the outpouring of the spirit, will then abound in the world.

In verses 5 to 7 we read of two events which are to happen when the thousand years shall have been finished, viz., the living again of the rest of the dead, and the loosing of Satan out of his prison. *The rest* of the dead are characterized by the same identical expression used in chap. xix. 21, to describe *the remnant* who were slain at the time of Satan being bound and the Millennium ushered in. During the Millennium the wicked (*οι λοιποι*), as a class, remain crushed and unable to raise the head; but, as would naturally be expected, when Satan is loosed and permitted again to exercise his wiles, the remnant (*οι λοιποι*) revive and spring into activity. The word which in verse 5 is translated *lived not again*, is the same word rendered in Romans vii. 9, *revived*—"sin revived, and I died." If it had been so rendered in Revelation xx. 5, and *οι λοιποι* had there been translated *the remnant*, as it is in chap. xix. 21, the connexion would have been obvious. The passage would then have run, *the remnant revived not until the thousand years were finished*. Thus then we have a vision of the *οι λοιποι* slain, and then the intervention of a millennial state in which there was no room for them.

But as soon as that blessed state is permitted to come to an end, these *οἱ λοιποὶ* reappear in vision. Nothing can be more consistent than the whole passage viewed in this light, or more free from those *inextricable difficulties* with which Mr. Trotter would surround it, when verse 4 is held to portray a spiritual rather than a literal resurrection. Whether the passage is to be figuratively or literally understood, is of course the turning-point in the discussion, the preceding remarks going merely to show that the post-millenarian interpretation is not *in itself* inconsistent, however much it may be at variance with the opinion of pre-millennialists.

Revelation xx. 4, 5, contains the description of a vision seen by the apostle, with the addition of a few words at the end of verse 5, explanatory of the meaning of what he saw. It was *the first resurrection*. Does that expression necessarily infer a literal resurrection of dead men, or is it compatible with a figurative description of the rise of a righteous class? The phraseology of verse 4 cannot be assumed as necessarily indicating a literal resurrection from the dead, being by no means stronger than that occurring in Ezekiel xxxvii., in the vision of the dry bones, which in verse 9 are called slain (*τοὺς νεκροὺς*, the very words of Revelation xx. 5, the rest of the *dead*), and the prophet goes on to say of them that they shall live, and that their graves shall be opened, and that God will cause them to come up out of their graves; and yet all this is explained by the prophet as signifying the restoration of Israel to the favour of God and to their own land. And, moreover, the period when the prophecy of Ezekiel is to be fulfilled, is identical with that which is to witness the

accomplishment of that by St. John. Indeed, it is the same event which is predicated of in both places, only that in the one case the vision vouchsafed to the prophet has reference to Israel alone, whilst that seen by St. John has a much wider scope and embraces all mankind, being, what in Romans xi. 15, is designated as "life from the dead," and, therefore, appropriately spoken of in Revelation xx. 5 as a *resurrection*.

Mr. Trotter, at page 479, holds that the phrase *the rest of the dead*, seems to be "an expression which absolutely and necessarily connects this *remainder of the dead*, later raised to life, with *the other dead*, just before said to have been earlier raised to life."

Any force which this argument might seem at first sight to carry with it, is derived from a mis-statement of what Revelation xx. 4, does actually say. It does not say that any dead at all have been raised, being simply the record of something shown in vision to the apostle; and to assume, as Mr. Trotter has done, that a literal resurrection of dead men is prefigured by it, is neither more nor less than begging the question, and taking for granted the very point in dispute. Mr. Trotter's error arises from the mistaken supposition that *the rest of the dead* (οἱ λοιποὶ), verse 5, refers to what the apostle saw, as recorded in verse 4, instead of looking back to the οἱ λοιποὶ of the last verse of the previous chapter. It is the same class, designated by the same words, that is spoken of in both places. They disappeared from the stage at the beginning of the Millennium, when Satan was bound; they reappear again with him when that Epoch comes to a close.

In reality it is Mr. Trotter's own view as to "the rest

“of the dead” of chapter xx. 5, which involves its adherents in *inextricable difficulties*. He holds them to be the wicked dead generally, identical with the dead of verses 12, 13 (*vide* pages 565, 566, of his work), who, according to his exposition, are to appear before the great white throne subsequent to the millennial era, to receive their doom of condemnation along with Satan and the fallen angels. But Mr. Trotter appears to have overlooked that the resurrection of verse 5 occurs at a different period altogether from that of verses 12, 13. That of verse 5 takes place concurrently with the loosing of Satan when the thousand years are expired. The very same words, *τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη*, are used to mark the time when both these events are to take place. They are synchronical, and occur at the commencement of what, in verse 3, is termed *a little season*; and, according to Mr. Trotter’s own exposition of the chapter, it is not till the termination of this little season that the dead specified in verses 12, 13, are to be raised and judged.

No clue can be gathered from the passage itself for even a conjecture as to the duration of this *little season*. There is nothing in the word *little* to prove that it may not last for centuries. It is the word (*μικρὸν*, yet a little while) used in Hebrews x. 37, to span the whole period from the apostle’s days to the second coming of Christ, which has already exceeded 1,800 years. But though the positive length of this little season is left undefined, great events are to have their accomplishment between its commencement and its termination. The world, which for a thousand years has been enjoying millennial blessedness, will, during this little season, once more become corrupt and wicked throughout its length and

breadth, and the great mass of mankind will again apostatize and turn aside from the worship of the true God. And then when wickedness shall have reached its climax, judgment will overtake the sinners, as shown in verse 9, followed by the raising of the dead to appear before the great white throne.

It is useless to speculate whether the *little season* to intervene between the loosing of Satan and his final discomfiture will be many years or few. Scripture has left the point undetermined. But be the period long or short, it seems beyond all possible question, upon Mr. Trotter's own showing, that the resurrection spoken of in verse 5 is to be at its commencement, and that depicted in verses 12, 13 at its termination, so that it cannot be the same resurrection which is referred to in both places. All this is consistently explained by the post-millenarian interpretation, while standing upon Mr. Trotter's platform, and looking at it from his own point of view, it leaves him upon the horns of a dilemma from which he will find it difficult to escape.

Keen-sighted as Mr. Trotter may be in discovering *difficulties* in the Scriptural interpretations of others, he appears blind to those with which his own pages abound. Take for example his account of the condition of our earth and its inhabitants during the millennial period:—

“ Creation is to be delivered—righteousness and peace
“ are to prevail from shore to shore, and from the rivers
“ to the ends of the earth ” (page 22).

“ Then and thus shall be fulfilled the unnumbered
“ predictions of universal peace, and righteousness, and
“ joy ” (page 23).

“ Heaven and earth no longer hostile and divided; as

“ they have been since the fall, but all things in heaven
 “ and in earth gathered together in one, even in Christ.
 “ These will be times of restitution indeed ” (page 253).

“ The curse being removed (page 503). Earth relieved
 “ from the curse. . . . Creation itself delivered from
 “ the bondage of corruption ” (page 521).

At p. 554 we are told that the millennium will be the
 renewal of the state before the fall.

Let the foregoing be contrasted with such passages as
 the following :—

“ We are far from affirming that these passages
 “ imply that every soul of man will be converted, even
 “ in the earliest stage of that period of universal bless-
 “ ing. The generations to be born during the
 “ millennial period *may* not, and there are passages
 “ which indicate that they *will* not, be universally
 “ regenerate ” (page 487).

“ It has always been by the quickening power of
 “ God’s Spirit that men have been regenerated, and
 “ thus turned in heart to God. These things will be as
 “ true in the millennium as they have always been ”
 (page 487).

“ Men on earth during the millennium will need to
 “ be born again, as surely as men in all ages need this.
 “ As long as Satan is bound, the righteous rule
 “ of Christ will restrain even those whose souls have
 “ not been quickened and renewed ” (page 523).

“ Sin and death, moreover, to however limited an
 “ extent, are found in the state of which the prophet
 “ testifies ” (page 557).

“ Any who in the course of the thousand years may
 “ be cut off for sin, ” (page 566).

How are such statements as these to be reconciled? In one set of passages we are told that during the millennium universal peace and righteousness shall prevail. Heaven and earth shall be no longer hostile and divided as they have been since the fall, but all things in heaven and earth gathered together in one, even in Christ. Earth will be relieved from the curse, and creation itself delivered from the bondage of corruption. It will be the renewal of the state before the fall.

Can such a state as is here described consist with the existence of sin and death upon earth? Sin and the curse have ever been deemed to go hand in hand. Where sin is, there the curse must be also. But now we are taught by Mr. Trotter that during the millennium the curse will be removed, albeit sin is to be everywhere prevalent, for, says he, at page 487, "Men must then be regenerated and have their hearts turned to God." And again at page 523, "Men on earth during the millennium will need to be born again, as surely as men in all ages need this." It is evident that if all will then need to be born again and to have their hearts turned to God, all must either have been born sinners, or must themselves have committed sin; and if the millennial population come under this category, they must to a like degree be under the curse; the perception of which obvious truth has led the pre-millenarian writer, Birks, to maintain that the curse will not be removed from the earth during the millennium. And how can a state in which there is sin and death be characterised as the renewal of the state before the fall? Did sin and death form features of that state,

and did mankind then need to be regenerated and have their hearts turned to God?

Mr. Trotter holds that the vision recorded by St. John in Revelation xix. 11—21, portrays the second coming of our Lord in glory, and that the same event is depicted in 2 Thessalonians i. 7—10, and then he pushes his premises to some very startling conclusions. He holds that the enemies of the Lord will be so far from being overwhelmed with terror and dismay by his glorious revelation of Himself in flaming fire with His mighty angels, that they will offer a determined resistance and maintain a prolonged struggle against the Almighty and His hosts. At pages 483, 484, he avers that the history of David's reign affords a striking type of the opening portion of the millennial period, and that it requires both David's reign and that of Solomon to furnish the complete type of the millennial period; so that during a portion of the thousand years Christ will be subduing His enemies by power, like David. At page 482, in speaking of the Gog of Ezekiel, Mr. Trotter writes, "The incursion of this northern confederacy, and the awful judgment by which it is visited, are both subsequent to the return of Israel and their peaceful establishment in the land under the protection of their Messiah." And he cautions his readers in a note at page 60, not to "Confound the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel with the Gog and Magog of Revelation xx. The latter do not arise till after the millennium. The former, as may be seen above, have their existence and downfall at its commencement." In like manner he maintains at page 482, that *the Assyrian* will come against Israel during the millennium.

According to these views, therefore, we must anticipate that after our Lord's return in glory and the destruction of Antichrist and his host, and the installation of Israel in their old possessions, there will be a regular series of campaigns, in which our Lord will call in the aid of human allies. For we are told at page 211, that Israel will then be the instrument in God's hand of executing His judgments on the wicked. And again, upon the same subject at page 367, it is said that Israel will then tread down the wicked, who are to be as ashes under the soles of their feet in that day.

It will require some ingenuity to reconcile the active part here assigned to Israel in the contest between Christ and His enemies, with what Mr. Trotter writes at pages 381, 382, where he says, that as at the deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites were directed to keep within their houses; so when the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, the Israelites will be "called into their chambers, and "shut their doors about them, while the final avenging "strokes descend on the congregated enemies of the "Lord, and on their wicked associates throughout the "whole earth."

If at the Lord's coming His final avenging strokes have descended on his congregated enemies, and on their wicked associates throughout the whole earth, while the Israelites were in their chambers with their doors shut; from whence come the enemies against whom the Lord and His allies, the Israelites, are to be engaged in combating immediately after the destruction of Antichrist and his hosts, when the millennium has commenced? Mr. Trotter has no occasion to search the

writings of post-millennialists for difficulties upon which to exercise his critical acumen. His own pages furnish a plentiful supply, and if that is insufficient, he may find employment for his powers in the conversion to his views of his pre-millenarian brethren; and then when something of concord shall have been established in their own camp, they will have the better ground for assailing the positions of the post-millennialists. No coalition ever presented more elements of discord than are to be found in the pages of pre-millennialist writers of the present day, as will be seen by any one who consults the works of Alford, Elliott, Birks, Molyneux, Bonar, Trotter, which everywhere abound with the most conflicting interpretations upon the cardinal points of unfulfilled prophecy. Take, for instance, that crucial subject, the judgment scene in the last parable of Matthew xxv. Mr. Trotter holds at page 483, that it is "a judgment of living nations, at the commencement " or introduction of Christ's kingdom." And at pages 562, 563, he contrasts this judgment scene of Matthew with that of Revelation xx. 11—15, and declares that "the two scenes are entirely distinguished from each other as to antecedent circumstances, time, sphere, " subjects of judgment, and character of proceedings."

Then let us see what the great pre-millenarian writer, Birks, has to say touching this judgment scene of Matthew. At pages 234 to 237 of his work on unfulfilled prophecy, he discusses at large the question as to who are the parties that are then to be brought into judgment. At page 234, he observes, "Some millenarian writers refer this to a judgment of the living " only, when the Lord returns." Then he writes at

pages 236, 237, " I shall endeavour to confirm the view
 " rejected by not a few millenarian writers, that it does
 " relate to the general judgment of mankind.
 " That it extends beyond the visible Church itself, and
 " the living generation, and embraces alike all nations
 " and all ages of mankind. It is in their resur-
 " rection bodies that all are to appear before the
 " judgment seat. It is the Lord's solemn decision
 " on the eternal state of the great body of mankind,
 " when they stand before him in resurrection bodies."

Alford takes an entirely different view of this judgment from either Trotter or Birks.

Mr. Trotter asserts at pages 132, 429, 500, that New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven at the beginning of the millennium, and Molyneux coincides with him ; whilst Birks and Alford hold it to be a post-millennial vision.

Mr. Trotter expects the manifestation of the new heavens and earth of 2 Peter iii. posterior to the millennium. At page 557 he writes, " It is quite
 " evident from other Scriptures that the millennial
 " heavens and earth are the same as the present.
 " Revelation xx. describes their passing away after the
 " close of the millennium, and predicts the creation of
 " the new heaven and earth which is to succeed." And going on to speak of the millennium, he continues,
 " Sin and death, moreover, to however limited an
 " extent, are found in the state of which the prophet
 " testifies ; and these, as all admit, have no existence in
 " the new heavens and the new earth." Nothing could well be more unfortunate than the assertion made in these last lines. Doctor Bonar in his tract " Behold, I make

all things new," maintains that the new heavens and earth of Peter are the millennial heavens and earth, and that sin and imperfection will be found in them. And Molyneux holds the same opinion.

Mr. Trotter avers at page 475, when treating upon the resurrection of the righteous at the beginning of the millennium, and that of the wicked, subsequent to its close, that this doctrine of a divided resurrection is taught in numerous passages besides Revelation xx. 5, and he goes on to add, "there is absolutely nothing in this passage unrevealed elsewhere, save what is evidently a subordinate point, a matter of detail—the duration of the saints' reign with Christ their resurrection, apart from that of the wicked, is amply revealed elsewhere."

Now let us turn to what another popular living pre-millenarian writer, Molyneux, says upon this same Revelation xx. 5, in his book, *The World To Come* at pages 201, 202. "Yet on this verse *alone* out of the whole Bible, despite its own internal evidence, and that of the context, to the contrary—on this verse alone has it been, and still it is maintained, that an interval of a thousand years shall elapse between the resurrection of saints and sinners. nay, and further still, not only is the assertion made, despite the opposing evidence of this passage, but despite the testimony of all Scripture which bears on the subject; for unexceptionable is the testimony of Scripture that, however the righteous may rise, *in order*, before the wicked, yet that the resurrection of the wicked, with all its attendant judgment and condemnation, shall quickly, yea, almost immediately, follow the coming of

“ the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven with power
 “ and great glory.” This writer, Molyneux, holds that
 the nine visions comprised in Revelation xix. 10, to xxi.
 2, each beginning with the words, *and I saw*, are all
 contemporaneous and not successive. *Vide* pages 208
 to 224 of his work, where he concludes by saying “ the
 “ setting up of the great white throne—the resurrection,
 “ judgment, and perdition of the wicked—and the
 “ appearing of the new heaven and earth shall come to
 “ pass, not at the end, but at the beginning of the
 “ millennial period.”

The trite observation that extremes meet, is signally
 illustrated in the close agreement between the opinions
 of the post-millennialists and those of Molyneux, the
 great champion of the most ultra pre-millenarian inter-
 pretation. Both concur in the belief that simultaneously
 with the second Advent of our Lord will take place the
 setting up of the great white throne—the resurrection,
 judgment, and condemnation of the wicked, together with
 Satan and his angels—the appearing of the new heavens
 and earth—the casting of death and hell into the lake of
 fire—the delivering up of the kingdom by Christ to the
 Father.

It is because the post-millennialists conceive that these
 events will come to pass concurrently with the Advent
 of our Lord in glory, that they hold that that Advent
 must be post-millennial. In direct contradistinction to
 the opinion of Molyneux and his adherents, the other
 section of pre-millenarian writers concur in maintaining
 with the post-nullennialists that those events are post-
 millennial; but then these last pre-millenarians dissent
 from the view of Molyneux and the post-millennialists,

that Scripture links their occurrence with the period of our Lord's coming again; holding on the contrary that these tremendous events are separated by an interval of more than a thousand years from the time of our Lord's re-appearance.

One of the two parties into which the pre-millenarians are divided, must be in error in their interpretation of this portion of Scripture, so vitally affecting the question whether our Lord's return is to be expected before or after the millennium. Mr. Trotter descants upon the alleged "inextricable difficulties" of the post-millenarian interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. It may be that he will now undertake to rebut the abundant Scripture evidence cited by Molyneux in proof that the judgment of Satan and the wicked dead—the appearing of the new heavens and earth—the delivering up of the kingdom to the Father,—are contemporaneous with the coming again of Christ. If Molyneux be correct, Mr. Trotter's volume must present a mass of erroneous teaching upon a subject regarding which he considers it so important that a right understanding should prevail.

Mr. Trotter informs his readers at page 35 that at the coming of the Lord, "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll." He also says at pages 42, 43, that then all the tribes of the earth "shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Again, at page 45,—“Every eye shall see him.” And yet notwithstanding all this, Mr. Trotter would have us believe that men who have seen these things—the Lord with all His holy angels coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,—will maintain a war against

the Lord for years after His coming. That as David reigned at Hebron for seven years before he reigned at Jerusalem, which period was one of conflict, the like must take place with regard to David's antitype. "There is to be a David reign as well as a Solomon reign of Christ; and both are included in the thousand years."

Is there any thing of *difficulty* in the post-millennial theory, which can be compared with this? Our Lord's glorious Advent is to be like an expedition of Napoleon, or any other great conqueror, and it will require a series of campaigns before Christ can subdue His enemies upon earth. All the pains which Mr. Trotter has bestowed in the proof that subsequent to the destruction of Antichrist and His adherents, there will still be war against Christ and His cause, tend in the strongest manner to show that the coming of Christ to effect that destruction, will be a figurative coming. Nor is there any difficulty inherent in such a supposition. Our Lord told the Jews that in consequence of their rejection of Him, the kingdom should be taken from them, and given to others. The Lord of the vineyard "will *come* and destroy the husbandmen, " and will give the vineyard to others" (Mark. xii. 9). Mr. Trotter will have no difficulty in admitting that *the coming* on that occasion was figurative. We read in Romans xi. that a time will come when there will be a reversal of what then took place. The Gentiles in their turn will incur the Divine wrath, and the Jewish nation will be restored to the favour of God. Christ will come to accomplish this great work, and to set up the millennial kingdom. The post-millennialists hold that there is abundant Scripture ground for the belief that *the coming* of the Deity in this case will be precisely

analogous to what it was in the former ; and that the Advent in glory will be at the close of the little season subsequent to the Millennium, when the great white throne will be set up and all the human race summoned before it.

There is nothing to excite surprise at the use of the same terms and expressions in speaking of the figurative and of the personal coming. The figure, to be a good one, must be taken from the personal coming. Look, for instance, at Isaiah xiii. where the Lord declares that he will stir up the Medes against Babylon, and the events are thus prophetically described:—"The Lord of hosts
 "mustereth the host of the battle. The day of
 "the Lord is at hand. Behold, the day of the
 "Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger.
 ". The stars of heaven, and the constellations
 "thereof, shall not give their light. I will shake
 "the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her
 place." Verses, 6, 9, 10, 13. The *language* being so similar to that used by our Lord to describe His coming for the overthrow of Antichrist, what is there contrary to reason in the expectation that the *coming* will also be similar?

Mr. Trotter holds to the belief that the Christians of the apostolic age looked for the return of the Lord in glory as likely to take place in their own day. He avers at pages 263, 264 that the New Testament is so written as to suggest at every turn the imminence of the event. Again at page 566, he writes, "the whole body of
 "New Testament passages represent the posture of the
 "Church to be that of the continual expectation of
 "Christ." And he denies that "Scripture interposes

“ *any* event, as of inevitable occurrence, between the “believer and the coming of Christ!”

Now let it be borne in mind that Mr. Trotter comments in the most emphatic manner upon our Lord’s declaration that the Temple should be utterly destroyed—that the kingdom should be taken from the Jews and given to others bringing forth fruit—that the Jews should be carried captive into all nations, and Jerusalem be trodden down till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled (page 169). The Apostles to whom these prophecies were spoken, had for the most part already reached middle life. Years kept passing on without any sign of their fulfillment. The Apostles are becoming advanced in age, whilst the Temple still stands as it did in the days of Christ, and yet we are called upon to believe that these aged men imagined that all these events would be accomplished in the few days that could yet remain to them.

Again—Mr. Trotter maintains that the Old Testament saints do not form part of the Church. Page 386. He holds that the Church commenced on the day of Pentecost, and that it will be complete at the Lord’s Advent, when it will be caught up to meet Him in the air. Let this be applied to the alleged expectation of the apostles that Christ would come in their day, and it follows that they only looked for the Church to continue from its first commencement to its completion, about half the length of the term assigned for man’s life. They were middle-aged at Pentecost when the Church had its beginning, and they expected that it would come to an end by the return of Christ and His taking it to Himself, during their own life-time! Verily Mr. Trotter had

no need to ransack the tenets of post-millenarians in search of difficulties. At pages 177, 178, he quotes Leviticus xxvi. as foretelling "the long dispersion" of the Jews for their iniquities. Mr. Trotter holds that they will be restored to their own land again when the Lord comes. The apostles are getting old men and see that the Jews have not yet been carried away into captivity; nevertheless, according to Mr. Trotter, the apostles must have been looking for the carrying away—the duration of their *long dispersion*—and the return from it, within the little remnant of their own lives.

Mr. Trotter descants at page 197 upon the prophecy in Romans xi, regarding the cutting off of the Gentile branch, and the grafting in again of the natural branches. According to his interpretation, the Apostles must have expected that the grafting in of the Gentiles was only to last for some 30 or 40 years at the outside, and that in that short period the fulness of the Gentiles would have come in.

At pages 417 to 420, Mr. Trotter argues that the Epistles to the seven Churches in chapters ii, iii of the Apocalypse, are to be regarded as exhibiting the successive states of the entire professing body up to the period of the excision of the Gentiles and the grafting in again of the Jews. Consequently, the Apostles must, according to Mr. Trotter's theory, have expected all these states of the Church to take place consecutively within a portion of one lifetime.

Is it possible, then, upon Mr. Trotter's own hypothesis, to think that the Apostles were always looking for the Lord's return as "imminent"—as a consummation to be expected at almost any moment; at all events as to come

to pass in their own time? Look at what he tells us at pages 231, 232, of our Lord's answer to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and 'the end of the age.'" Mr. Trotter writes that our Lord intimated that there must first occur the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Temple, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, apostacies, delusions, false prophets, iniquity abounding, and love declining. The Apostles also had heard the parable of The Talents in Matthew xxv, where Jesus represents the Lord's return to reckon with His servants as to take place "after a long time;" and as the minds of the Apostles had been opened to understand the Scriptures, can we think that they had so little understanding of them as in the face of all these things to be looking for their Master's immediate return?

At page 266, Mr. Trotter quotes 1 Corinthians xv. 52. The dead shall be raised and *we* shall be changed; and at pages 266, 282, 283, he comments on 1 Thessalonians, iv. 17, *we* which are alive and remain; and then he observes, "we see not how the conclusion can be avoided, "that the Holy Ghost intended the saints to understand, "that within the usual term of human life the coming of "the Lord might take place, and they thus, without "passing through death, be transformed and glorified." Let the reader now turn to 2 Corinthians iv. 14, where the same Paul who wrote the above passages, writes, "he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up *us* "also by Jesus." According to Mr. Trotter's own process of reasoning, this latter passage proves that St. Paul did not expect our Lord's return in his own lifetime, and did expect to pass through death. Weak

indeed, must be the ground upon which the argument rests that needs such flimsy supports. It is obvious that in all such passages, it is a class that is referred to, and not individuals.

And now it is conceived that not only has a valid reply been made to Mr. Trotter's allegation of "insuperable difficulties" in the post-millenarian interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy; but moreover that his own views are justly open to the charge which he has endeavoured to fix upon his opponents.

That mankind will see Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, attended by His holy angels, and that after seeing Him thus come, they will maintain a warfare against Him for a considerable period, is a proposition so astounding that it might be supposed that nothing but the most unmistakable Scripture assertion that so it will be, could induce any sane person for a single moment to admit its possibility. Yet to such a monstrous conclusion would Mr. Trotter have his readers commit themselves upon the evidence of texts so doubtful and difficult, that the pre-millennialists themselves are wholly at variance in their attempts to expound them. They cannot agree as to whether the resurrection and judgment of the wicked dead is to be at the coming of Christ, or a thousand years afterwards—whether the righteous and wicked are to rise simultaneously, or with an interval of a thousand years between—whether the new heavens and earth of Peter are to be manifested at the beginning of the Millennium, or at its close—at which of those two epochs Christ is to deliver up the kingdom to the Father—at which the judgment scene of the last parable of Matthew xxv is to

take place—at which death and hell are to be cast into the lake of fire—whether the nine visions in Revelation xix. 10, to xxi. 2, are, or are not all contemporaneous—whether there will be the curse on the millennial earth—who are “the rest of the dead” of Revelation xx. 5—whether Satan is to be cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the Millennium or after its close.

If unfulfilled prophecy speaks so darkly as to preclude agreement amongst the pre-millennialists upon topics so material to the points in issue between themselves and the post-millennialists, it is presumptuous folly to bandy asseverations that this and the other tenet has been *proved* from Scripture, when the very opposite is maintained with equal tenacity by writers of equal competency ranging themselves on the same side in the general controversy. Truly marvellous is it, that where all is so uncertain, any student of prophecy should propound such doctrines as those of Mr. Trotter as to the events which he maintains are to follow the Lord's return in glory to our earth, making impotent man to sustain a protracted struggle against the power of manifested Deity.

Pages upon pages of Mr. Trotter's work are taken up with disproving an alleged view of the post-millenarians, which in fact they are as far as Mr. Trotter himself from holding. He avers it to be a part of their doctrine that the Millennium is to be brought about by the gradual progress and spread of Christianity through the agencies at present existing. Nothing could be further than this from the opinions of the post-millennialists, who like the pre-millennialists, anticipate a prodigious development of antichristian wickedness, to be terminated by some terrible catastrophe, which will

be followed by the binding of Satan, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, producing the promised millennial blessedness. The details they do not profess to understand, and the opinion that they were not designed to be understood until the time of their accomplishment, is strengthened by the utter absence of anything like agreement in the interpretations of those who profess their ability to unravel them.

It has been already noticed that there is a remarkable agreement upon many points between the post-millenarians and that section of the pre-millenarians, of whose views Molyneux is a leading expositor. They concur in holding that the judgment and condemnation of Satan and the wicked—the resurrection of both righteous and wicked—the new heavens and earth of Peter—the delivering up of the kingdom by Christ to the Father—the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire; will all have their accomplishment at the coming of the Lord. The divergence lies in the affirmation by Molyneux that these events will come to pass at the opening of the Millennium, whilst the post-millennialists look for their fulfillment at the expiration of the little season which is to succeed that epoch; and these latter consider that the other section of the pre-millennialists are destitute of any *locus standi* for their position in dividing those events, and making one part of them to happen prior, and the other subsequent to the Millennium. The arguments of Molyneux for their being synchronical, are unanswerably cogent, and the conclusions which he would deduce from them are their logical result, provided the premises upon which they are based be granted, viz., that the Lord's Advent will be pre-

millennial. It is here that the post-millennialists hold him to be in error, in that having first decided, upon insufficient grounds, that the Lord will come before the Millennium, he necessarily, (and according to that hypothesis, justly), concludes that all those events will likewise be pre-millennial.

The post-millennialists on the other hand proceed with their argument after a different fashion. They admit that Scripture says that the Lord will *come* to destroy Antichrist, and that that coming is called "the day of the Lord." But in their view such expressions determine nothing as to whether the specified coming is to be a figurative coming or *the Advent* in glory; an inference deducible also from the admissions of Mr. Trotter himself. At page 414, he says, that "certain remarkable judicial interventions of God are called in a subordinate sense, *the day of the Lord.*" And he also says the same at page 283. Whether, therefore, *the coming* for the overthrow of Antichrist is to be figurative or otherwise, must be judged not from the form of words in which it is announced, but rather from the consideration as to how far the events then to take place coincide with the teaching of Scripture generally as to what may be looked for at *the Advent*. That the destruction of Antichrist is to be pre-millennial is admitted alike by pre- and post-millennialists; and the latter hold that the coming of Christ at that time must be figurative, because (in conjunction with Molyneux) they look upon it as demonstrated upon the clearest evidence that *the Advent* in glory will be the time when the great white throne is set up, and Satan and his angels and wicked men will be judged and condemned,

and the kingdom will be delivered up by Christ to the Father; all which events Trotter, Birks, Bonar, Alford, &c., acknowledge to be post-millennial.

It being admitted on all sides that there are *comings* of the Lord which are figurative, it is important to inquire whether any general rule can be laid down for determining whether any particular coming is figurative or otherwise. Mr. Faber, in his *Sacred Calendar III.* 466, has propounded a canon or rule which seems to supply a key for the solution of the difficulty; he says:—

“ When the judgment of some distinctly specified or
 “ plainly insinuated wicked empire or community is
 “ described as being effected by the coming of the great
 “ day of retribution, and by the Advent of the Lord
 “ with the clouds of heaven, then the temporal judgment
 “ of that particular empire or community is alone
 “ intended, and the language in which it is set forth must
 “ be understood *figuratively*, not *literally*. But, when
 “ the judgment of no distinctly specified or plainly
 “ insinuated empire or community is thus described,
 “ then the coming of the great day of retribution, and
 “ the Advent of the Lord with the clouds of heaven—
 “ being mentioned generally with reference to the whole
 “ world, and not particularly with reference to any
 “ special body politic—must be understood *literally*, not
 “ *figuratively*.”

Judged by this rule or canon, the coming of the Lord for the destruction of Antichrist must be a figurative and not a literal coming. That that coming and the final literal coming after the millennial period should be mixed and intertwined together in prophecy is only what might be anticipated from the analogy of the Old

Testament. At page 156, Mr. Trotter writes concerning God's messages by His prophets to Israel of old:—
 “Foreseeing the rejection of their message and the consequent hardening of the people in iniquity, they predict the judgments of God which were to overtake them. They generally begin with those judgments which were then at hand, and pass on to the final judgments which are to precede or attend the second coming of Christ. Thirdly, they predict the coming of Christ. But as His first coming to suffer was an event still future when they wrote, we find them, just as we might expect, blending together in the same prophecy predictions which relate to His first coming and predictions which relate to His second; and that often, without any intimation in the passage that He would come more than once.”

This is precisely the view taken by post-millennialists of the prophetic announcements in the New Testament of events which were still in the far distant future when the prophecies were uttered. They are so blended together and the perspective is so indistinct, that only their fulfillment will enable us to separate and define them with any approach to accuracy.

Mr. Trotter argues at great length that the millennial period must be subsequent to the literal coming again of Christ, because He is said to reign over the earth at that time. But upon Mr. Trotter's own interpretation of Scripture there is nothing inconsistent in the post-millenarian view that such a mode of expression indicates merely a spiritual rule of the Lord. At page 153, he writes of God's chosen people:—“From Moses to Samuel the government of Israel was a pure theocracy

“—God was their king. He raised up officers, indeed, such as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and the Judges, by means of whom he administered the government of the nation; still there was nothing but *the King eternal, immortal, invisible.*”

In like manner do the post-millennialists hold that Christ will be king and reign in the Millennium.

At page 262, where Mr. Trotter is engaged in combating certain alleged views of the post-millennialists, he asks, if the Saviour “knew that the issue would be as our brethren suppose, how is it that he does not explicitly say so?” Let this be contrasted with what Mr. Trotter enunciates when the point which he wishes to establish demands a different process of reasoning. The inference which he obviously designs by the above-quoted extract and its context, is, that the Saviour would never allow to be uttered by Divine inspiration anything which would naturally lead to wrong impressions. But at page 264, where he is arguing that the Christians of the apostolic age expected the speedy return of the Lord, he says that the New Testament is *so written as to suggest at every turn the imminence of that event.* And again at page 279, referring to the expectations which he alleges to have been so raised in the minds of the apostles, he writes,—“We cannot conceive a more decisive proof of the Lord’s gracious solicitude that nothing should interpose between the souls of His people and the hope of His own coming.”

In advertence to the question which Mr. Trotter has addressed above to his post-millenarian brethren, we in our turn are now in a position to ask him, why, if the Saviour knew that His own coming was not to be for

many centuries, he permitted His Holy Spirit to inspire the sacred penmen so to write the New Testament *as to suggest at every turn the imminence of His coming?* But in truth nothing can be more out of place in the controversy, than the introduction of such a topic at all. Why God has not revealed everything connected with Himself and man's future, in such a way as to preclude the possibility of misunderstanding or error, is a subject altogether beyond our reach; and the attempt to discuss it betokens a constitution of mind singularly ill adapted for taking a comprehensive and enlightened view of the prophetic field.

In conclusion it only remains to ask if a greater misnomer can be imagined, than the title prefixed by Mr. Trotter to his work, viz.—“*Plain papers on prophetic subjects.*” If it was possible further to confuse a subject upon which it seems that no two writers can agree, Mr. Trotter may claim the merit of success, and of having made it *plain* that his pages only tend to exemplify the difficulties with which the attempt to expound unfulfilled prophecy is surrounded.

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