

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This doctrine of the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings of Christ, established by Jesus Himself and theologically addressed by the Apostles' teaching in the New Testament, was continued to be taught by the Early Church Fathers in conjunction with premillennialism and in expectation of the imminent *Parousia*. This is best put by Brian E. Daley in his book *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (2003:4): "The history of eschatology in the Patristic age . . . cannot be separated from the whole development of early Christian reflection on the mystery of salvation in Jesus." In addition to these writings of the Early Church Fathers were the baptismal creeds of the Early Church, coupled with the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist as promises and "types of symbols of the life of the world to come." This premillennial eschatological perspective did not begin to change until the time of Origen and his allegorical interpretation of Scripture in the late third century, and did not fully change until Augustine's amillennial doctrine became the orthodox view of the Catholic Church in the early fifth century.

With the start of the Medieval Period there remained a steady stream of the Eschatological Gospel and premillennialism that ran throughout the Medieval Church Period, flowing primarily from the newly established Creeds of the Church, the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and isolated Post-Nicene Fathers until the beginning of the eighth century. After that time, the stream began to dry up and become isolated throughout Christendom. Due to the mainstream amillennial doctrine of the Catholic Church, there remained a huge void in the Church of teaching the Eschatological Gospel during this period. This void in teaching began to be refilled just prior to, through, and after the Reformation through the writings of several mainline Catholic and Protestant theologians and the Confessions. This revival of Eschatological

Gospel teaching was soon followed by systematic theologians, who included eschatology as part of their theology. This then gave rise to eschatological theologies and Christologies; which in turn gave birth to the Plymouth Brethren and dispensationalism in England, the Dispensational Baptists and Presbyterians, Bible Prophecy Conferences, Bible schools, and newsletters/magazines in the mid-to-late nineteenth century both in England and the United States. And finally, in the twentieth century all this premillennial, dispensational, eschatological resurgence, coupled with the American Pentecostal Revival that occurred at the turn of the century, gave rise to the rebirth of the Eschatological Gospel as a central doctrine in the founding of several American churches: A. B. Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Assemblies of God and Aimee Semple McPherson's International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

This resurgence in the teaching and preaching of the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings of Christ then became a central doctrine in many American churches, evangelical tent meetings, revivals, and crusades in the late 1940s and 50s. So much so, that it became a central part of both Billy Graham's and Oral Roberts' ministries. Later in the 1950s, and then into the 60s and 70s, this resurgence flooded the Church through such well-known theologians and writers as George Eldon Ladd, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, Hal Lindsey, Oral Roberts, and Billy Graham. This trend has continued until the present time through such theologians and writers as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye, Jack Van Impe, Salem Kirban, John Hagee, and Norman Geisler.