

2.5 ESCHATOLOGICAL THEOLOGIES AND CHRISTOLOGIES

In the late eighteenth century and around the time of the French Revolution, especially in Great Britain, there arose a great interest in interpreting prophecy in Scripture and a renewed interest in eschatology. Consider the following from the history of premillennialism. The French Revolution caused a renewed concern for the state of the Jews and the rebirth of the doctrine of the premillennial Advent of Christ and formed the basis for the rise of British Millenarianism. This movement involved strong advocates from the laity (Scottish Presbyterian William Cuninghame of Lainshaw and James Hatley Frere), the business community (Lewis Way, founder of the “London Society for Promoting Christianity Among Jews” to help Jews return to Palestine and rebuild their homeland) and the clergy (Rev. George Stanley Faber and Rev. Edward Irving) – (Sandeem 1970:8-12). Edward Irving moved from Scotland to London to take a parish in 1822. In 1825, he became a disciple of Frere. By 1826, Irving had translated Lacunza’s *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* into English, along with Frere and Way established the “Society for the Investigation of Prophecy” and began preaching on premillennial eschatology (Flegg 1992:40-50). In 1831, the manifestation of speaking in tongues and prophesying broke out in Irving’s church and caused the focus to shift from premillennialism to the move of the Spirit.

About the same time, John Nelson (J. N.) Darby and Benjamin Wills Newton began to turn away from the secularness and laxness of the Church of England. Consequently, they formed an independent group, called the Plymouth Brethren, with a focus on apostolic Christianity and premillennialism. During the autumn of 1831, Lady Thedosia Powerscourt (who hosted Irving during a preaching tour in Dublin) hosted the first Irish Prophetic Conference in her County Wickham home. It was attended by thirty-five clergy, fifteen laymen and twenty

ladies. The main topics were as follows: interpretation of the 1,260 days of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13; the corrupt state of Christendom; the imminent Return of Christ; and ways to identify the antichrist. During the following year's conference a potential split in premillennial doctrine was identified: Historicists, who believed that most of the events described by Daniel and John in Revelation were being fulfilled in European history (many of the existing millenarians fell into this group); and Futurists, who believed none of these events had occurred yet and would occur at the end of the dispensation of the Church, just prior to the Second Advent (also called dispensationalists and included J. N. Darby and most of the Plymouth Brethren) – (Sandeen 1970:29-37).

Ernest R. Sandeen (1970:50-8) continues with the historical treatment of premillennialism in America. William Miller (a self-educated farmer from upstate New York and converted in 1816) had developed his own version of historicist premillennialism from his personal exegesis of prophecy. The main differences between his and the British form were the following beliefs: the Jews were not to be restored to Palestine; no non-believers would survive the Second Coming and the firm conviction of a specific date for the Second Coming around 1843. By 1834, Miller gave up farming and put all his efforts into spreading his message throughout New York and New England. In 1839, his movement became organized, nationalized and promoted by Rev. Joshua V. Himes and reached fifty thousand followers. In 1840, Miller called for a series of conferences on the Second Coming and ultimately refined the exact date to October 22, 1844. After that day came and went, the movement took a huge blow and began to rapidly die off, and so did American premillennialism (for a time). It was not until after 1845 that British premillennialism began to have an impact on the United States (Hebert 2004b:8-11). According to Kyle, who quotes Sandeen (1970:50), Miller was “the most famous millenarian in

American History” (1998:87). And, “Darby systemized dispensationalism and spread its major principles throughout the English-speaking world” (1998:74).

From this point in the nineteenth century, the Premillennial Dispensational Movement exploded both in England and the United States and gave rise to more *theologians (mostly Plymouth Brethren, Baptists and Presbyterians) who began to express the primacy of the Gospel as viewed through an eschatological lens and the importance of teaching/preaching the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings of Jesus Christ* [emphasis added]. A list of these theologians (from both England and America) included the following. Horatius Bonar, who started the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* in Scotland in 1849, which ran for twenty-five years and culminated in a 1867 three day Public Prophecy Conference in London that declared Darby’s futurist doctrine “orthodox” and the Historic view as false doctrine. The Mildmay Park Conferences (1879, 1886) were sponsored by Bonar, William Freemantle (President of the “Prophecy Investigation Society”), and Plymouth Brethren Preacher Joseph Denham Smith (Sandeen 1970:82-9, 152-9).

While in America, Rev. W. R. Gordon, who with John Terhune Demarest, argued for premillennialism against Rev. William Fulton and postmillennialism in debates from 1863-5 (Sandeen 1970:90-3). James Inglis, David Inglis, Charles Campbell, George S. Bishop, George O. Banes, Benjamin Douglas, L. C. Baker, and George C. Needham, who were responsible for publishing *Waymarks in the Wilderness* and holding an informal Prophecy Conference in New York City in 1868. They then held others in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Galt, Ontario, over the next few years, restarted in 1875 in Chicago, and then moved to Niagara on the Lake, Ontario, where in conjunction with Rev. James H. Brookes (as its founder, planner and main speaker) named it the Niagara Conference from 1883-97 (Sandeen 1970:133-7).

Rector Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., author of *He Will Come* (1877), and who convened the first “American Bible and Prophetic Conference” at New York’s Holy Trinity Episcopal Church on 30 October 1878 (Sandeen 1970:152-9). Dwight L. Moody (1837-99), from Chicago, and who held prophecy conferences in Northfield, Massachusetts, starting in 1880, founded Bible Institutes for training laypeople for ministry and started the Student Volunteer Movement in 1886 for overseas missions (Sandeen 1970:71-3, 173-6, 180-3, 186). Adoniram Judson (A. J.) Gordon (d. 1895), from Boston, and who organized the “Baptist Society of Bible Study” in 1890, started the *Watchword* as their official periodical and voice and gained support for millenarianism from James M. Stifler, Professor of New Testament at Crozier Seminary (1882-1902), Edgar Y. Mullins, President of Southern Baptist Seminary (1899-1928), and James R. Graves, editor of *Tennessee Baptist* (Sandeen 1970:164-6).

Sandeen (1970:135, 141-4, and App. A.) brings all of this to culmination in America with the following. James H. Brookes from St. Louis, who started his own periodical *The Truth* in 1875 (which ran till 1897), established the Niagara Conference, drew up a Niagara Creed of Fourteen Articles, was the principle speaker, and scheduled other speakers (including, George C. Needham; Henry M. Parsons; Presbyterian Pastor William G. Moorehead, Professor of New Testament at Xenia Presbyterian Seminary, Ohio; Nathaniel West, Presbyterian Pastor and Professor at Danville Theological Seminary, Kentucky; W. J. Erdman, Presbyterian Pastor; A. J. Gordon and Arthur Tappan Pierson, who became premillennialists after being influenced by George Müller), and ran the Niagara Conferences from 1883-97 (Hebert 2004b:12-16).

After the turn of the twentieth century, two new leaders took over the Darby dispensationalist mantle and continued to spread the Eschatological Gospel: Arno C. Gaebelein, a German immigrant and Methodist minister who established a monthly paper in New York City,

Our Hope, with a two-fold purpose of proclaiming the imminent Second Coming and the Zionist Awakening among the Jews; and Cyrus I. (C. I.) Scofield, raised in Tennessee, fought in the Civil War under Lee, converted in St. Louis in 1879, studied under James H. Brookes, and became Pastor of First Congregational Church in Dallas and then the Moody Church in Northfield, Massachusetts. Scofield came up with the idea for a dispensational chain reference Bible while strolling on the Massachusetts beach in 1901. He was encouraged by both sides of the debate to pursue the idea. He started work on it in 1902 and produced the first draft in 1908 (Scofield 1967). During the period 1901-1914, Gaebelein reinvigorated the conferences by espousing pretribulational Darbyism and fighting growing liberalism in the Church (Sandeen 1970:216-225).

About this same time, came the birth of *The Fundamentals*, a paper devoted to describing the movement that married conservatives and millenarians in the fight against Modernism, Progressivism and Liberalism. This paper was the brainchild of Lyman Stewart, a shy, retiring businessman, with the help of Rev. A. C. Dixon. It ran from 1910-1915. At the outset, they established “Seven Articles of Doctrine” that closely aligned with Darbyism. The intent was to pick up the movement where the millenarians had left off (Sandeen 1970:188-9, 192-3, and 206-7).

All this activity carried the Millenarian Movement to the brink of WWI, which in and of itself renewed the public interest in prophecy (especially after the British captured Jerusalem in May, 1918). Gaebelein sponsored conferences in Philadelphia and New York City in 1918. This caused great controversy between the newly dubbed “Fundamentalists” and the Modernists. As a result, new leaders emerged to lead the movement: William Bell Riley, Southern Baptist Theologian and President of NW Bible Mission Training School in Minneapolis; James M. Gray,

Dean of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago; Rueben A. (R. A.) Torrey, Dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA); and William M. Pellingill, Dean of the Philadelphia School of the Bible. Scofield died in 1921 and Gaebelein continued with *Our Hope* and became a prolific writer, but stopped speaking at conferences (Sandeen 1970:233-9). Finally, according to Sandeen (1970:246), in 1919, at the first meeting of the World's Conference on Christian Fundamentals, the millenarians officially changed their name to Fundamentalists and continued to fight battles with the Liberals and Modernists (one of the biggest being against the "theory of evolution" in the 1920s) - (Hebert 2004b:17-8).

As addressed above, this period in the history of theology gave rise to many written works that spoke of the dispensational view of the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings, including the following: the periodicals *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* (1849-1874), *Waymarks in the Wilderness* (1868), *The Truth* (1875), *Watchword* (1890), *Our Hope* (1901-), and *The Fundamentals* (1910-15); Tyng's *He will Come* (1877); Sir Robert Anderson's (1841-1918) ["staunch Darbyite and investigator for Scotland Yard"] *The Coming Prince* (1882), which strongly influenced America (Kyle 1998:104); Ethelbert William Bullinger's *Ten Sermons on the Second Advent* (1901) and *Commentary on Revelation* (1909); Scofield's *Dispensational Chain Reference Bible* (1909); Albert Benjamin (A. B.) Simpson's *The Coming One* (1912); Reuben A. (R. A.) Torrey's *The Return of the Lord Jesus* (1913); Arthur Walkington (A. W.) Pink's *Redeemer's Return* (1918); and William E. Biederwolf's *The Second Coming Bible Commentary* (1924). This period of dispensational eschatological fervor also gave rise to the more formal eschatological Christologies of the following theologians: Johannes Weiss (1971:129-31) and Albert Schweitzer (Mozley 1951:87-9, 95-6, 114-17); and later Rudolf Bultmann (1957:19-21, 28, 33-54, 63-73, 138-54); Jürgen Moltmann (1967:16-7, 225-29; 1993:340); Wolfhart

Pannenberg (1977:66-73, 106-8); Bart D. Ehrman (1999:120-1, 139-55, 163, 183, 207, 227, 239, 244-5); and ultimately, George Eldon Ladd, John F. Walvoord, Dwight J. Pentecost, Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, and Norman Geisler. Consider the following excerpts on two of these eschatological Christologies.

Johannes Weiss taught in his book *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (1892) that Jesus believed the messianic time was imminent and the kingdom of God had dawned but that the actualization of the kingdom was not yet. Not even Jesus of Nazareth could establish the kingdom of God, only God Himself. When God did establish the kingdom, He would transfer it to the "Son of Man" and make Jesus Lord and Messiah at that time. According to Weiss (1971:129-31), Jesus thought that this would happen before His death, but it did not. Therefore, Jesus' Second Coming/Glorious Appearing will inaugurate the kingdom of God, destroy the old, evil, corrupted world, bring the Judgment, and create a New World. At that time, both the Jew and the Gentile will enter into the New Kingdom, which will be finally actualized in Jesus (Hebert 2005b:4-5).

Albert Schweitzer followed in the early 1900s, with a further expansion of Weiss' eschatological Christology. He taught that Jesus was influenced by the Jewish eschatology of His time regarding the coming of the kingdom of God. Based on His expectation, proclamation and teaching of this kingdom Jesus thought of Himself as the Messiah. Just as Weiss, Schweitzer believed that the fulfillment of the kingdom would not come until the Second Coming. Schweitzer then wrote that Paul believed, taught and wrote in the New Testament that the death and resurrection of Jesus was the kingdom come and that through "mystical fellowship" with Jesus, believers share in that supernatural kingdom. Therefore, Paul believed the kingdom had already come and was growing. Schweitzer then turned to the Early Church, of whom he stated

“did not agree with Paul and believed the Kingdom was a far off divine event” (Mozley 1951:87-89). Schweitzer goes on to state that since Jesus Himself did not teach the doctrine of the Atonement, that He must have left the Apostles to discover it for themselves. They were the ones who saw Jesus’ death as forgiveness for sins and an escape from the coming judgment of the kingdom of God (Mozley 1951:95-6). Finally, E. N. Mozley (1951:114-117) concludes with Schweitzer by stating that Jesus visualized the kingdom coming in the Spirit but it was never supported by documented physical events (including His physical death). Therefore, modern faith sees the beginning of the kingdom of God in Jesus and the Spirit of God, who came into the world through Jesus. This modern community of faith should not be content with the idea that the kingdom will come at the end of time, but they should believe that the spiritual kingdom of God can come in their hearts before it can and will come in the world (Hebert 2005b:5-6).

These eschatological Christologies, coupled with the American Pentecostal Revival of the early twentieth century, became the fertile ground for the genesis of several new movements that taught the Eschatological Gospel as a central doctrine. These movements then became the following churches: the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Albert Benjamin (A. B.) Simpson; the Assemblies of God of Hot Springs, Arkansas (and later Springfield, Missouri); and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel of Aimee Semple McPherson.