

**THE DOCTRINE OF “LAST THINGS”  
Part III: The Modern Church**

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**I. INTRODUCTION.**

The focus of this final class shall be upon Chiliasm since its renewal in the era of the Reformation. Focus shall first be placed upon the development of Postmillennialism through Whitby to a host of scholars from John Cotton and Jonathan Edwards to Charles Hodge as well as the development of the same position within Liberal Theology. Then focus shall turn to the premillennial position and the crucial importance of John Nelson Darby.

**II. THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF POSTMILLENNIALISM.**

The clue to the systematic development of postmillennial thought, which occurred in England, is captured by Sandeen who wrote (*Fundamentalist Movement*, 5): “In reaction to the excesses of the Puritan revolution, millenarianism fell into disfavor in the eighteenth century, but churchmen did not return to the Augustinian period; “that is, England in reaction to such millennialists as the Fifth Monarch Men a severe reaction against it in the restoration era. In harmony with the Lockean tradition of rationalism and optimism, a new eschatology, most influentially stated by the Salisbury rector Daniel Whitby became popular”. Sandeen states that Postmillennialism begun with Whitby is overstated; Puritan divines, such as John Owen, of the Cromwellian era appear to be postmillennial in eschatological perspective.

**A. Postmillennialism and Daniel Whitby.**

1. **Daniel Whitby (1638–1726)**, a major popularizer of the postmillennialism was born in Northamptonshire, England, and educated at Trinity College, Oxford (B.A., M.A., and D.D.). Afterwards, he served as chaplain to the bishop of Salisbury then as rector of St. Edmund’s in Salisbury. Not only a popular preacher and a writer (39 volumes), he was primarily a controversialist. His most noted work was *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (2 vols. 1703), which continued to be used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is the source of his views.
2. **Whitby and Postmillennialism.** In the latter part of the *Paraphrase* he wrote a twenty-six page essay on a “new hypothesis” that “I shall now offer it to the consideration of the Learned” (688). His thoughts can be constructed as follows:

Present Age	Millennium (Gradual Improvement of World)	Eternity
<p>Judgment of Antichrist Conversion of Jews Spiritual Resurrection</p>		

3. Whitby begins spiritualizing the resurrection prior to the millennium understanding it as individualized, spiritual resurrection at the new birth (i.e., the experience of redemption). The title of his work explicates his view (*Paraphrase*, 687): “A Treatise of the True Millennium: showing that it is not a reign of persons raised from the dead, but of the church flourishing gloriously for a thousand years after the conversion of the Jews, and the flowing-in of all nations to them thus converted to the Christian Faith.”  
  
Again, (*Paraphrase*, 708): “This Chapter contains Arguments against the literal Resurrection, and the Reign of Martyrs upon Earth a thousand Years. First, From the Inconsistency of it with the happy State of Souls departed. I. Secondly, From the accurate Description of the Resurrection in the Holy Scripture, without any mention of a first and second Resurrection, and with such Descriptions of the Qualities of the Bodies raised, the efficient Cause, of the Time, Circumstances, and Consequents of it, which suit not with the Doctrine of the Millennium, II. Thirdly, From the Inconsistency of it with the Genius of the Christian Faith, and the Nature of the Gospel Promises”.
4. Whitby then argued that the fall of Anti Christ precedes the millennium as does the binding of Satan. He wrote (*Paraphrase*, 696): “How far I differ

from the ancient and modern Millenaries, and in which I agree with them, I. The Proposition that the true Millennium is only a Reign of the converted Jews, and of the Gentiles flowing in to them, Ibid. Where it is noted, 1. That all spiritual Blessings have been still conveyed from the Jews to other Nations. 2. That there will be a glorious Conversion of the Jews to the Christian Faith, II. That the Description of this Conversion of the Jews, made by their own Prophets and Writers, answers fully to the Millennium of St. John, which he speaks of in the very Words of the said Prophets, III. The Characters which the Patrons of the Millennium give to those Times, accord exactly with the Characters given by the Prophets of the Conversion of the Jews, IV. The Prophets seem to intimate, that this Conversion shall be effected by a full influence of the Holy Ghost upon them, V. All the Passages cited to this Effect, from the Jewish Writers, speak only of the Millennium, the Resurrection, the New Heavens and Earth belonging to the Jewish Nation, VI”.

5. Of the earthly millennium, he wrote in glowing terms (*Paraphrase*, 700):

“IV. Add to this, that all the Characters which the Patrons of the Millennium give of those Times, exactly accord with the Characters given by the Prophets of the Conversion of the Jews, and many of them are taken from the very Words of the Prophets, foretelling those Times: For Instance,

First, Indolence and Plenty, saith Dr. Burnet, [B.4. cap. 7. 183.] seem to be two Ingredients of this happy State. Accordingly the Prophets every where speak, how the Riches of the Gentiles shall then flow into them, Isaiah 60:5, 11 and they shall eat the Riches of the Gentiles, chap. 61:6. That there shall be then no Hunger nor Thirst, no Heat nor Sun to finite them, no Voice of Crying or Weeping. See Isaiah 49:10.

Secondly, That is shall be a Time of universal Peace, and Freedom from War and Persecution, [Ibid., 184] and this he proves from the Words of the Prophets declaring, That at the Day, that Time when God shall create New Heavens and New Earth, the Lamb and the Lion shall lie down together, and the sucking Child shall play with the Basillisk, and they shall not hurt in all my holy Mountain, as it is written, Isaiah 11:6, 7, 8, 9 and chap. 65:25 and saying, That the Nations shall beat their Swords into Plough-shares, and their Spears into Pruninghooks; Nation shall not lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more, Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3 as appears also from the Promises, that God will then make her Officers Peace, Isaiah 60:17 and will extend Peace to her as a River, chap. 66:12.

Thirdly, That is shall be a Kingdom of Righteousness, [Ibid.] Accordingly of this holy City, Jerusalem, it is said, There shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and unclean, Isaiah 52:1. An Highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the Unclean shall not pass over it, chap. 35:8 which exactly answers to those Words of St. John, Into the holy City shall nothing enter that is polluted or unclean, Rev. 21:27. And again, Thy People shall be all righteous, chap. 60:21. See Zeph. 3:9; Zach. 14:20, 21.

Moreover, this faith [185] will be a State under a peculiar Presence and divine Conduct, because the Tabernacle of God will be with Men, and He will dwell with them; and this we see was promised at the Conversion of the Jewish Nation, Ezek. 37:27.

The last Character, saith he, that belongs to this State, or rather to those that enjoy it, is this, that they are Kings and Priests unto God;”

Again it is to resemble the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost (*Paraphrase*, 700): “V. Nor is it to be wondered that there should be then such a glorious Conversion of them, and such a flowing-in of the Nations to them, seeing the Prophets seem to intimate there shall be then a full Effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them, somewhat resembling that which was vouchsafed to the first Ages of Christianity. So the Prophet Isaiah speaks of the Desolation of the City, until the Spirit be poured upon them from on high, Isaiah 32:15 which is the very Phrase in which our Lord promiseth the Spirit to His Apostles, Luke 24:49. St. Paul proves their Conversion from those Words of the Prophet Isaiah, The Delivered shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away Inquiry from Jacob: with which these are immediately connected, And this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and My Words which I have put into thy Mouth, shall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, not out of the Mouth of thy Seed’s Seed from henceforth for ever, chap. 59:20, 21. And again, chap. 54:3. I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing on thy Offspring”.

6. After this “literal” reign of saints in peace, Christ returns (*Paraphrase*, 707-708):

“Hence then I argue thus against this Doctrine: Since Christ is to continue in Heaven till the Completion, or Consummation of all Things, spoken by the Holy Prophets, if the Millennium were any

of them, Christ must continue in Heaven till the Consummation for that also, and therefore is not to come down from Heaven to reign on Earth till the Millennium be ended; nor can that be contemporary with our Lord's Second Coming, which is from Heaven.

The Arguments produced in favour of this Millennium, from Rom. 8:19, 20, 21, from 2 Thess. 2:1, from Heb. 1:6 and 2:5, and from 2 Peter 3:8-12 are sufficiently answered in the Notes upon those Places”.

## B. Postmillennialism and Conservative Theology in America.

The inroads of the Owenite/Whitby eschatological scheme was profound both in England and America. The point is simply that Owen's teachings were embraced by some Puritans, who, through Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, passed it on to such Presbyterian stalwarts as Charles Hodge.

1. **John Cotton (1585–1652)**, the Cambridge-trained Puritan, became the giant among early colonial clergy. Through the publication of *The Churches Resurrection, or the Opening of the Fifth and Sixth Verses of the 20th Chap. of the Revelation* (1642), he argued a Owenite, immediatist eschatology.
  - a) The resurrection is not a literal event, but a rather the appearance of men who possess the same spirit as the martyred saints by the Antichrist. He wrote (*Churches Resurrection*, 6): “What? shall they rise again in their bodies? No, that is not the meaning, but there shall be men of the same spirit; as John the Baptist is said to come in the Power and Spirit of Elijah.” The resurrection is a quickening, an awakening of the church from apostasy and Israel of blindness; it is spiritualized.
  - b) Christ does reign directly for the subsequent one thousand years, but mediately through the instrumentality of the saints and the church. He notes for example, that during the millennium wickedness will be held in check, “chiefly by Church censures, and partly also by punishment from Civil Magistrates as need shall be” (*Churches Resurrection*, 6).
2. **Jonathan Edwards (1703–58)** argued strongly for a postmillennial eschatology (See Yale Edition of his collected works, *Apocalyptic Writings* [v. 5]). He understood that the millennial kingdom would be preceded by a very dark period of religious interest. He wrote, “Whether the times shall be any darker still, or how much darker, before the

beginning of this glorious work of God we cannot tell.” It is quite obvious that to Edwards the next scheduled event was the fall of Antichrist, this he felt would be accomplished by the preaching of the gospel.

- a) He argues for an imminent kingdom by identifying the drying of the Euphrates as a judgment on the papal Antichrist (i.e., loss of revenues); the sixth vial (“broke to history within the last twenty years”) as the ruin of French and Spanish commerce by England and the cutting off of revenue to the pope by Spain and Portugal. He wrote (*Works*. 3, 502): “These things duly considered, I imagine afford us ground to suppose, not only that the effect of this sixth vial is already begun, but that some progress is already made in it, and that this vial is now running apace. And when it shall be finished; there is all reason to suppose that the destruction of Antichrist will very speedily follow; and that the last two vials will succeed one another more closely than the other vials”.
- b) Thus, a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit will bring about a renewal of religion on a universal level. He wrote (*Works*. 3, 503): “A great outpouring of the Spirit accompanied that dispensation that was preparatory to Christ’s coming in his public ministry, in the days of his own flesh: so, much more with a great outpouring of the Spirit accompany the dispensation that will be preparatory to Christ’s coming in His kingdom”.

Again (*Works*. 3, 493): “There is not the least reason to think that all this will be brought to pass as it were at one stroke, or that from the present lamentable state of things, there should be brought about and completed the destruction of the church of Rome, the entire extirpation of all infidelity, heresies, superstitions and schisms, throughout all Christendom, and the conversion of all the Jews, and the full enlightening and conversion of all Mahometin [sic] and Heathen nations, through the whole earth, on every side of the globe, and from the north to the south pole, and the full settlement of all in the pure Christian faith and order, all as it were in the issue of one battle, and by means of the victory of the church in one great conflict with her enemies”.

Christianity’s victory thereby will be universal in extent. Heresy will be abolished, the papacy overthrown, Islam destroyed and Jewish and pagan infidelity vanquished; this is the first resurrection. Above all else, the millennium is chiefly the time of the church’s prosperity, the principal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. He wrote (*A Humble Attempt*, 2, 288):

“A time approaches wherein this whole great society shall appear in glorious beauty, in genuine amiable Christianity and excellent order, as ‘a city compact together, the perfection of beauty, an eternal excellency,’ shining with a reflection of the glory of Jehovah risen upon it, which shall be attractive and ravishing to all kings and nations, and it shall appear ‘as a bride adorned for her husband.’—A time of great temporal prosperity; of great health; (Isa. 33:24.) ‘The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick’ of long life; (Isa. 55:22.) ‘As the days of a tree, are the days of my people.’ A time wherein the world shall be delivered from that multitude of sore calamities which before had prevailed, (Ezek. 47:20) and there shall be an universal blessing of God upon mankind, in soul and body, and in all their concerns, and all manner of tokens of God’s presence and favour, and ‘God shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, and the mountains shall as it were drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk;’ (Joel 3:18.)

A time of great and universal joy, we are taught to expect, will take place through all the earth, when ‘from the utmost ends of the earth shall be heard songs, even glory to the righteous,’ and God’s people ‘shall with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ God shall ‘prepare in His holy mountain a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,’ which feast is represented, Rev. 19 as the marriage supper of the Lamb. Yea, the Scriptures represent it not only as a time of universal joy on earth, but extraordinary joy in heaven, among the angels and saints, the holy apostles and prophets there; (Rev. 18:20 and 19:1-9.) Yea, the Scriptures represent it as a time of extraordinary rejoicing with Christ Himself, the glorious head, in whom all things in heaven and earth shall then be gathered together in one; (Zech. 3:17.) ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save; He will rejoice over thee with singing.’ And the very fields, trees, and mountains shall then as it were rejoice, and break forth into singing; (Isa. 60:12.) ‘Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.’ (Isa. 44:23.) ‘Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every

tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel”.

- c) The end of the “glorious reign of righteousness” will result in a general apostasy (i.e., Gog and Magog). Christ will return, put down the rebellion, judgment follows, and the world destroyed. Christ, then, delivers up the Kingdom to the Father. He wrote (*Works*. 1, 497): “And then will come the time when all the elect shall be gathered in. That work of conversion which has been carried on from the beginning of the church after the fall through all those ages, shall be carried on no more. Then never shall another soul be converted. Every one of those many millions, whose names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world, shall be brought in; not one soul shall be lost. And the mystical body of Christ, which has been growing since it first begin in the days of Adam, will be completed as to number of parts, having every one of its members. In this respect the work of redemption will now be finished. And now the end for which the means of grace have been instituted shall be obtained. All that effect which was intended to be accomplished by them shall now be accomplished”.

3. **Princeton and Charles Hodge.** Postmillennial eschatology became dominate through Edwards among the New England divines: Congregationalists such as Bellamy, Hopkins, and Taylor; among Baptists such as A. H. Strong: (Strong states his dependency on Whitby [*Systematic Theology*, 1014]; “Our own interpretation of Rev. 20:1-10, was just given, for substance, by Whitby”); and the Presbyterians such as the Princeton scholars. Charles Hodge, since he has given us a *Systematic Theology*, is perhaps a good example of Presbyterian Postmillennial Eschatology. He wrote (*Systematic Theology*. 3, 792):

“The common Church doctrine is, first, that there is to be a second personal, visible, and glorious advent of the Son of God. Secondly, that the events which are to precede that advent, are

1. The universal diffusion of the Gospel; or, as our Lord expresses it, the ingathering of the elect; this is the vocation of the Christian Church.
2. The conversion of the Jews, which is to be national. As their casting away was national, although a remnant was saved; so their conversion may be national, although some may remain obdurate.

3. The coming of Antichrist.

“Thirdly, that the events which are to attend the second advent are:—

1. The resurrection of the dead, of the just and of the unjust.
2. The general judgment.
3. The end of the world. And,
4. The consummation of Christ’s kingdom”.

Of a literal resurrection prior to the millennium Hodge is adamant in his statements (*Systematic Theology*. 3, 843-44):

“The common millenarian doctrine is, that there is to be a literal resurrection when Christ shall come to reign in person upon the earth, a thousand years before the end of the world, and that the risen saints are to dwell here and share with Christ in the glories of his reign. But this seems to be inconsistent with what is taught in 1 Corinthians 15:50. Paul there says: ‘Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.’ It is here expressly asserted that our bodies as now constituted are not adapted to the state of things which shall exist when the kingdom of God is inaugurated. We must all be changed. From this it follows that the spiritual body is not adapted to our present mode of existence; that is, it is not suited or designed for an earthly kingdom. Luther admits this. He admits that the renovated, or transfigured, body of necessity supposes a renovated earth. He admits also that when the bodies of believers are thus changed they are to be caught up from the earth, and are to dwell with Christ in heaven. When Christ appears, His people are to appear with Him in glory, by assuming that risen saints are to rule this kingdom, not from the literal Jerusalem, but from heaven. This, however, is to introduce an extra-scriptural and conjectural idea.

It has already been said, when speaking of the restoration of the Jews to their own land, that this whole theory of a splendid earthly kingdom is a relic of Judaism, and out of keeping with the spirituality of the Gospel”.

He concluded (*Systematic Theology*, 3, 866): “It seems therefore that the torch of the literalist is an ‘*ignis fatuus*,’ leading those who follow it, they know not whither. Is it not better to abide by the plain doctrinal teaching of the Bible, rather than to trust to the uncertain expositions of unfulfilled prophecies? What almost all Christians believe is: (1.) That all nations shall be converted unto God. Jesus shall reign from the rising to the setting of the sun. (2.) That the Jews shall be reingrafted into their own olive-tree and acknowledge our Lord to be their God and Savior. (3.) That all Antichristian powers shall be destroyed. (4.) That Christ shall come again in person and with great glory; the dead shall be raised, those who have done good unto the resurrection of life, those who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation; and (5.) That the righteous clothed in their glorified bodies shall then inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and the wicked be consigned to their final doom”.

**N.B.** It must also be noted that the German Liberals of the nineteenth century (the Ritschlians particularly) were postmillennial. This, in part, explains the decline of this eschatological opinions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries! Another factor was the failure of the “Benevolent Empire” and the catharsis of the Civil War.

### III. THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

Events of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth did not make postmillennialism appear consistent with world history. A pessimism began to prevail that subverted prevalent optimism and resulted in a renewal of prophetic excitement.

1. The French Revolution was directly responsible for the revival of prophetic concern. Sandeen wrote (*Fundamentalist Movement*, 7), “The identification of the events of the 1790s with those prophesied in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 provided biblical commentators with a prophetic Rosetta Stone.” Nineteenth-century converts to millennialism looked upon the French Revolution as the frustration of hopes built on faith in man’s abilities.
2. Also, a renewed interest in the state of the Jews emerged through the influence of Lewis Way, a wealthy lay-Englishman and the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (1809). Way published a series of articles in the society’s journal (*Jewish Exposition*) under the name “Basilicus.” Sandeen wrote (*Fundamentalist Movement*, 12): “The

doctrine of the premillennial advent, the third aspect of the millenarian revival, seemed novel, probably mistaken, possibly heretical to most Anglicans of the day. In keeping with the standard Whitbyan eschatology. Christians had not been taught to expect the second coming during their own lives. The second advent, they felt, would occur only after the millennium and, therefore, must be more than one thousand years away. Many of the clergy had never troubled themselves over this kind of bewildering eschatological question or were frankly skeptical of the divine import of the apocalyptic mysteries of Daniel and Revelation. The tracts of ‘Basilicus’ seemed to catch fire, however, among many of the evangelical party. This series of letters was given credit, years later, by leaders of the millenarian movement for having first turned their attention to the doctrine of the premillennial advent”.

#### A. The Development of Premillennialism in Britain.

1. **Edward Irving (1792–1834)**, a Scottish preacher and disciple of Thomas Chalmers, was deeply influenced by the emerging English Prophetic movement. He not only translated Manuel Lacunza’s *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, an early preterist millenarian treatise, but advocated the emerging Bible prophetic conferences, such as the Albany Conferences, 1826–28. Irving’s notoriety as a result of “tongues” in his London church was detrimental to millenarianism and fatal to himself.
2. Interest in prophecy in the 1820s mounted with the founding in 1826 of the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy, followed by the Albany Park Conferences (e.g., Horatius Bonar came to premillennial convictions after hearing Irving there in 1828!). The eschatological scheme set forth at Albany is given by Drummond (*Dialogues*. 1, 2-3):
  1. This ‘dispensation’ or age will not end ‘insensibly’ but cataclysmically in judgment and judgment and destruction of the church in the same manner in which the Jewish dispensation ended.
  2. The Jews will be restored to Palestine during the time of judgment.
  3. The judgment to come will fall principally upon Christendom.
  4. When the judgment is past, the millennium will begin.
  5. The second advent of Christ will occur before the millennium.

6. The 1260 years of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 ought to be measured from the reign of Justinian to the French Revolution. The vials of wrath (Revelation 16) are now being poured out and the second advent is imminent”.

The Powerscourt Conferences continued prophetic investigations into the 1830s where the emerging Brethren Movement became heavily involved.

3. **John Nelson Darby**, an early leader in the Brethren Movement (founded 1831), participated at the Powerscourt Prophetic Conferences in the 1830s and solidified his opinions on eschatology by the 1840s. Darby adopted not only premillennialism, but Modern Premillennialism, dispensationalism, and the concept of a “secret rapture.”
- N.B.** At this point the secularist Sandeen wrote of the origin of Darby’s rapturist teaching [*Fundamentalist Movement*, 64-65]: “Darby never indicated any source for his ideas other than the Bible—indeed, he consistently affirmed that his only theological task was explicating the text of Scripture. The secret rapture was a distinctive development, however, and considerable interest has been aroused about the source of the doctrine. As late as 1843 or possibly even 1845, Darby was expressing doubts about the secret rapture. In later years he seemed to have felt that he was convinced about the doctrine as early as 1827. Darby’s opponents claimed that the doctrine originated in one of the outbursts of tongues in Edward Irving’s church about 1832. This seems to be a groundless and pernicious charge. Neither Irving nor any member of the Albury group advocated any doctrine resembling the secret rapture. As we have seen, they were all historicists, looking for the fulfillment of one or another prophecy in the Revelation as the next step in the divine timetable, anticipating the second coming of Christ soon but not immediately. After Irving’s death the Catholic Apostolic church continued to teach historicist doctrines. It is true that among the English phrases pronounced by one or another of the illuminati in Irving’s church there occurred fragments such as ‘Behold the bridegroom cometh,’ and ‘count the days one thousand three score and two hundred—1,260—. . . at the end of which the saints of the Lord’s should go up to meet the Lord in the air.; but such utterances can scarcely be considered as evidence for any doctrine and have, in any case, little reference to the secret rapture as Darby taught it. Since the clear intention of this charge is to discredit the doctrine by attributing its origin to fanaticism rather than Scripture, there seems little ground for giving it any credence”.

Darby’s organizational and oratorical gifts brought both himself and his doctrines to a place of prominence; his incessant travels both in Europe

and America (seven trips, 1862–77) brought many influential pastors and teachers to his opinions.

## **B. The Development of Premillennialism in America.**

The impact of British Premillennialism was not felt in this country until after 1845 although Premillennialism is nowhere more evident in the elaborate teachings and fatal error of William Miller (1782–1834), though his brand of premillennialism was preterist. After his conversion to Christ from Deism, Miller became a zealous student of prophecy. His study led him to the exact day of the premillennial advent which, of course, failed to be realized. On 22 October 1844 the sun sank as it had every other day since creation and Christ had not come. In retrospect, the Millerite movement appears to have given premillennialism an onus of sorts in America for a generation!

1. In the 1840s some periodicals of a preterist millennialist orientation emerged such as the *Literalist* (1840), the *American Millenarian and Prophetic Review* (1842), and *Millenarianism Defended* (1843); the latter was edited by George Duffield pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Detroit.
2. The incessant travels of J. N. Darby and events in the post Civil War era provided a basis for the renewal of studies in premillennialism. James H. Brooks of St. Louis the founder of *The Truth* and a leader in the Niagara Bible Conferences; perhaps he influenced Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, D. L. Moody of Chicago, Robert Cameron of New York, and Adoniram Judson Gordon of Boston). A more accurate interpretation might be that the Brethren (i.e., Darby) was less influential than traditionally supposed. The influence of various periodicals, obscure figures such as James Inglis and George Needham as well as native cultural and intellectual factor influenced pastors to see the bibliocentricity of the view.
3. In 1863, *The Prophetic Times* was begun and was destined to have a major leadership role in the renewal of Premillennialism. In the first edition this creed was set forth by the editors.
  - “1. That we are living in the last periods of the present dispensation.
  2. That Christ will soon reappear upon earth, to avenge His elect, and fulfill His covenant to them.
  3. That the expectation of a Millennium of universal righteousness and peace before the return of the Saviour, is an unchristian delusion.

4. That the Church will remain under the cross until Christ comes; and that the present dispensation is only preparatory to another.
  5. That the personal return of the Lord Jesus is the great hope of the Church, to which, and not to the triumph of present institutions, we are to look for the fulfillment of the great promises of the world's ultimate blessedness".
4. It was the emergence of the early Bible conference movement in America that brought premillennialism a degree of acceptance.
- a) The Believers Meetings for Bible Study (Niagara Bible Conference) began in New York in 1869 and continued until 1900. The idea of such meetings originated in Ireland through George C. Needham, a Darbyite. The annual meetings stressed the "imminent advent of Christ" which became widely popular.

**N.B.** The conference declined over a rift among the Premillenarians over the validity of the Rapture ("pre" or "post" tribulationalism). Robert Cameron, a Canadian Baptist and Nathaniel West, a Presbyterian disputed Darby's opinions. Indeed, Cameron wrote (*Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return*, 145-46):

"About the year 1883, the writer was pastor of Park Baptist Church, Brantford, Canada, and having attended the Clifton Springs, afterwards Niagara Conference, was appointed one of the committee of nine to take charge of subjects, speakers and other matters. At the 1884 Conference it came to be the 'fashion' of every speaker to 'ring the changes' on the possibility of Christ Coming any moment—before the morning dawned, before the meeting closed, and even before the speaker had completed his address. Feeling that this was utterly unscriptural and dangerous, the writer opened his heart to the late Dr. Nathaniel West, the greatest and most exhaustive student of the bible and of historic theology, among the teachers participating in the Conference. When pressed for the reason, it was frankly made known, and this led the Doctor to accompany the writer to his room in the 'Annex.' We talked and prayed until beyond two o'clock in the morning. After walking the floor backwards and forwards in silence, the great man stopped, pointed his finger at me and said: 'Cameron, I

begin to think you are right. I will give these matters careful and exhaustive attention, and if I find that the Scriptures teach contrary to what is taught in this Conference, I will reverse myself and boldly defend the truth”.

They were strongly reprovved by C. I. Scofield and Arno C. Gaebelein and, with the popularity of the Scofield Reference Bible, the “post” position lost favor. Recently it has gained a rich renewal of interest through the writings of Robert Gundry (*The Church and the Tribulation*, 1973).

- b) The American Bible and Prophetic Conferences met periodically (1878, 1886, 1895, 1901, and 1914) with wide interest, but it kept to the major features of premillennialism.

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this lesson plan has been to trace with the major developments in Chiliasm since the Protestant Reformation. Although Amillennialism was advocated by the great reformers (Luther, Calvin), the traditions that they initiated did not remain in their Augustinian construct. Postmillennialism was popularized through the influence of John Owen and Daniel Whitby and had a significant impact upon American Congregationalism (Cotton, Edwards), Baptists (Strong), and Presbyterianism (Hodge). In the nineteenth century interest in Premillennialism experienced a resurgence through Irving and Darby in England, Brookes and Scofield in American in the context of the popularity of the Bible Conference Movement.