

## CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF TERMS—THE GREAT QUESTION WHEN IS THE MILLENNIUM TO OCCUR?—PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION.

**MILLENNIUM** (*Latin*) *Mille*, a thousand, and *annus*, year. A thousand years; a word used to denote the thousand years mentioned in Rev. 20; during which period Satan will be bound, and holiness become triumphant throughout the world. During this period, as some believe, Christ will reign on earth in person with his saints.\* “MILLENNIUM. Thousand years; generally taken for the thousand years in which some Christian sects expected, and some still expect the Messiah to found a kingdom on earth full of splendor and happiness.”†

“MILLENNIUM, thousand years: generally employed to denote the thousand years during which, according to an ancient tradition in the church, our blessed Saviour will reign upon earth, after the first resurrection, before the final completion of beatitude. The time when the millennium will commence cannot be fully ascertained, but the common idea is that it will be in the seven-thousandth year of the world.”‡ “The seventh chiliad (or 1000 years) from the creation. All sober commentators take this literally.”§

“MILLENNIARIANS or CHILIASTS. A name given to those who believe that the saints will reign on earth with Christ a thousand years.”||

\* Webster's Dictionary.

† Encyclopedia Americana.

‡ Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

§ Cottage Bible.

|| Buck's Theological Dictionary.

It is generally conceded by the Christian world at the present time, that the Apocalyptic millennium is yet to occur in the future, and to commence immediately upon the expiration of six thousand years from the creation of the world, it seeming to be more decidedly proper and Scriptural thus to chronologically locate it: but as there have been and still are some who deny this, and as those who maintain its futurity are divided both in regard to the manner of the events and the events themselves, which are to introduce and occupy the millennial era, manifestly composing at least *three classes* of millennial believers; to avoid a multiplicity of terms and introduce simplicity, it has been thought proper in the following pages to classify under *three heads*, all who have at any time written concerning the millennium of the Apocalypse; denominating them severally as follows:

**ANTI-MILLENNARIANS**, or *Anti-M.*, all those who deny that the Apocalyptic millennium is in the future, or those who locate it in the *past*, though not denying the future personal reign of Christ on earth.

**POST-MILLENNIALISTS**, or *Post-M.*, all those who hold that the Apocalyptic millennium is in the future, and who postpone the personal advent of the Redeemer, and literal resurrection of the holy dead till its close, thus *denying* the *personal* millennial reign.

**PRE-MILLENNIALISTS**, or *Pre-M.*, all those who hold that the Apocalyptic millennium is future,—the seventh thousand years,—and that it is to commence with, and be introduced by, the *personal advent* of Christ, and literal resurrection of the just: thus *affirming* the *personal* reign of Christ on earth.

These terms are frequently varied throughout these pages and others in common use are substituted, as *Temporal Millennialists*, *Post-millennialists*, *Whitbyans*, etc., to denote the *second class*; and *Literalists*, *Pre-millennialists*, *Chiliasts*, etc., to signify the *third class*, whose view or

doctrine, of the *personal reign of Christ on earth*, is advocated in the present volume.

Says *Professor Bush*: "The etymological import of the word millennium is, as is well known, the space of a thousand years. The term considered by itself does not point to any particular period of that extent, but may be applied indifferently to any one of the five millenniums which have elapsed since the creation, to the sixth, now verging to its close, or to the seventh, which is yet to come. But long established usage has given the word a restricted application, and where it occurs without specification, it is universally understood to refer to the period mentioned by the prophet of Patmos, Rev. 20: 1-7"\*

## THE GREAT QUESTION.

Says *Bishop Henshaw*: "In our day much is said of the millennium. It is a common theme in the pulpit and on the platform. It animates the conceptions of the poet, and the glowing periods of the orator. It is held forth as the great incentive to missionary effort; the glorious reward of self-denial, liberality and prayer in the good work of propagating the Gospel."†

"And here," remarks *Dr. Elliott*, "the famous question opens: In what way are we to understand this vision and prophecy of the millennium? What the first resurrection spoken of, literal or figurative? Who the persons who partake of it? What the nature of the devil's synchronous binding and incarceration? What the state of things on earth corresponding? What the chronological position and duration of the millennium? What the sequel of events on the devil's being loosed again at its termination? Finally what the relation of the millenary period and its blessedness to the New Jerusalem afterwards exhibited in the

\* *Bush on the Millennium*, p. 1.

† "The Second Advent."

to its meaning : of which offence, however, Jerome himself was also guilty."\*

Says *Rosenmuller* : " All ingenuous and unprejudiced persons will grant me this position, that there is no method of removing difficulties more secure than that of an accurate interpretation derived from the words of the texts themselves, and from their true and legitimate meaning, and depending upon no hypothesis !"†

Says *Hooker* : " I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous and delusive than that art, which changes the meaning of words, as alchemy doth or would the substance of metals ; making of anything what it listeth, and bringing in the end all truth to nothing."

*Dr. John Pye Smith* defines the literal sense as " The common rule of all rational interpretation, viz. : the sense afforded by a cautious and critical examination of the terms of the passage, and an impartial construction of the whole sentence, according to the known usage of the language and the writer."‡

Such is the system adopted in this volume, it being regarded as the only safe principle of interpreting the Bible.

\* Annotations on Deut. Cap. i., Fol. 55.

† Cox's Immanuel Enthroned, p. 70.

‡ Scripture Testimony to the Messiah. Vol. 1, p. 214.