

## SECOND ADVENT AGITATION.

The religious theme that now pervades Christian churches more than any other, apparently, is the second coming of Christ. Not that the doctrine of His speedy advent is universally accepted, but the belief is spreading in a literal fulfilment of the predictions of Ancient Prophets concerning it, instead of a figurative interpretation as formerly. The Latter-day Saints, in the midst of universal derision, have given an impetus to this as they have to many other advanced doctrines of the Church. The denial of infant damnation; the belief in different degrees of glory and punishment; the hope of eternal progression, and the release of the ungodly from their dark imprisonment when they shall have sufficiently suffered for their sins, doctrines preached for fifty years by "Mormon" Elders, are now among the acknowledged principles enunciated from many pulpits, but which were long repudiated by religionists of most all denominations. And it is surprising that much of the prejudice which prevails against the "Mormons" was originally created by the opposition of ministers to these very doctrines when taught by the Saints in an early day.

And although the doctrines have found their way gradually into the popular creed, the people who first, in the present century, aroused opposition by advocating them, are still under the truce.

Henry Ward Beecher used to say that it was "as fatal an error to be ahead of our time as to be behind it." How true! yet how strange it seems, that those who "ahead of their time" in thought or revelation are brave enough to present the benefits of their researches to the world, should always be made martyrs for the world's good. After irreparable wrong has been done them, their former opponents open their eyes, and a most acute vision supplants the "nine days' blindness" which made them rebel. Then the most singular part of the history transpires; instead of at once acknowledging their past perversity and repairing the injury as far as possible, these *quondam* critics of so-called "heresy," proceed in the most arrogant way to claim the old condemned doctrines as their own new ones; and thus deprive the pioneer in the great field of principle, of even the credit of his discovery.

Now comes the Baptist conference in Brooklyn, and the record shows that it is clearly the opinion of many of its leading men that "the second coming of Christ is at hand." And we find pre-millennialists among all denominations springing up "like long-lost heirs to a valuable estate." A great revival is pending among all the churches of Christendom on this thrilling theme; and the "evangelists" are likely to exceed the most zealous of the "Mormon" advocates in locating the time of the Savior's appearance.

It is well known by the best students of Scripture, and among them the Latter-day Saints, that certain important events are to precede the coming of the Lord; such as the gathering of the Jews to rebuild their ancient city and temple, the pouring out of plagues, with universal war and confusion among the nations, as also

the preparation of a people who shall be ready to receive the Savior through the preaching and practical acceptance of His Gospel. But the pre-millennialist of the "new craze" as it is termed, to use the language of Dr. Cuyler concerning Doctor Tyne, "never goes to bed without expecting to see the Lord next day," and we may add, some of them before morning. Concerning the second advent, as a principle or event to be literally construed and believed, there are many very sensible expressions by leading clergymen. Among these is Rev. A. B. Pritchard, pastor of the Cumberland Street Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn. This divine said recently, "I consider that an unbiased study of the Scriptures can result only in one's hearty approval of the pre-millennial theory of interpretation. How one can obey the oft-repeated injunctions of scripture, 'to look for the Lord's appearing,' if a millennium of time is to intervene between this and His advent, is to me a contradiction of terms which I am unable to reconcile. I utterly repudiate the custom of spiritualizing that which in any other literary work would be judged by the common rules of grammar, to be capable only of literal interpretation." The same divine declares that it is nothing but ignorance and prejudice that are the "chief causes of opposition to the pre-millennial system."

Doctor De Witt Talmage, strange as it may seem for one so ostensibly learned, according to an interviewer, disclaims any knowledge in regard to the doctrine, and admits that "It is not in his line." The sensational expounder of the scriptures expresses the belief, however, that Christ will not re-appear on earth "until the judgment day," but hedges by asserting that on this subject he does "not speak authoritatively." Whether the gentleman refers to the judgment of the nations when, as it is asserted in the New Testament, the "Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory," or to the time when, at the second resurrection, "all the dead both small and great shall stand before God," is not made clear by his statement. But it is altogether probable that he has, like many other "preachers of great price," mixed doctrinal things up a little in his mind, and having "fatter financial fish to fry," left the discussion of these deeper but non-productive subjects to less popular divines who have less to do and consequently more time for study. Again, the fact that popularity is enhanced more by a conservative acquiescence with everybody than by the radical advocacy of one's own ideas, has doubtless substantially impressed the gentleman whose annual income "is greater than that of the President of the United States." Hence we hear him saying, "these are Christian men who make special study of certain branches and are most competent therefore to discuss them."

\* \* \* The pre-millennialists, many of whom I know and entertain the friendliest and highest opinion of, have made the scriptures the subject of the most thorough thought and investigation. It would not become us therefore to denounce their belief as false, when for all I know to the contrary they may have arrived at the faith. I have read the proceedings of the Conference with the greatest interest, but

yet not so thoroughly as to feel like expressing any decided opinion on the views presented." The gentleman I think is to be credited for courtesy if not for candor in his expressions, but why has he not manifested the same charity and conservatism in dealing with the "Mormon" question? Why should he so readily denounce what the Saints proclaim as the truth of heaven, and yet halt between two opinions when other preachers present the same and similar doctrines? Has he so "thoroughly studied their views" that he feels able to "express himself decidedly" upon them, while he confesses ignorance as to one of the plainest doctrines of the New Testament? I leave the impartial reader to draw his own conclusions.

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## AN ANTI-CATHOLIC BREAK.

Semi-occasionally the Salt Lake *Tribune* makes an effort to throw dust in the eyes of its readers on the relation of the Catholic Church to the Pope and to civil government. The manifest purpose of that paper in all this pettifoggery is to make it appear that the Mormon Church and Priesthood is the only ecclesiastical organization in the world that is not in harmony with the principles of free government.

Of course, the man who does that sort of work for the *Tribune* may not know any better. He may know better and be obliged to suppress his own convictions, for the reason that he is employed by a Catholic to write for an anti-Mormon paper. A man like the manager of the *Tribune* is only assuming a virtue that he does not possess. He is a Catholic by birth, but he is a churchman now only from policy, and the usual fear that such men carry through life, that it is best to keep a nominal connection with the "throne of grace" to bar against accidents and hedge on the inevitable. He is not a religious man under any church, but he is that which "pays best." Hence we have in Salt Lake a Catholic paper that is the most malignant sheet published in the United States, and its venom is flung in a continuous stream of rabid saliva against the Mormon people; that is, against a people who have never in word or deed shown anything but a kindly disposition towards the Catholics. As a matter of fact, Brigham Young made about the first donation for the starting of a Catholic church in Salt Lake. If the *Tribune* were honest, but what is the use of talking about that! Until the leopard develops some magic, as yet unknown outside the brain of the horse jockey who dies his nag to make him saleable, whereby it can change its spots at will, there is no possibility that the *Tribune* can be honest. It was not built that way. Hence it will continue to represent the Catholic church as being in love with the American form of government and the Mormon Church as being opposed to it.

But will that paper give its readers some statement from any pope of the Catholic church, any *papa* of the ecclesiastical organization founded upon Peter that can be construed,