

# THE TWO MODES OF HUMANITY, PART 2: THE HISTORY OF THE VIEW

PHILIPPE R. STERLING

Pastor  
*Vista Ridge Bible Fellowship*  
*Lewisville, TX*

## I. INTRODUCTION

**T**here has been a continuing stream among dispensational premillennialists from the 19th century to the present upholding the view of an eternal destiny for a sanctified natural humanity. They will be capable of reproduction and live on the new earth (and perhaps eventually colonizing other planets). There will also be a sanctified and resurrected/glorified humanity, no longer marrying and reproducing, with the overcomers within that group ruling with Christ over the new heaven and new earth and the capital city New Jerusalem. Some interpreters have also strongly objected to this view. This article will survey the supportive tradition, beginning with John Nelson Darby and continuing to the present day.

## II. NINETEENTH CENTURY ADVOCATES

### A. JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800–1882)

Darby was an influential figure among the Plymouth Brethren and an early dispensational premillennialist. F. S. Elmore cites him as a progenitor of the view of two modes of humanity in the eternal state. “Hoyt agreed with Darby that there would be saints living in their natural state forever, thus allowing

for two modes of life in the eternal state.”<sup>1</sup> The two following quotes from the collected works of Darby suggest that he was an adherent of the view:

Because when, for us at any rate, “immortality sets in,” and that is the proper hope of our calling, there will be saints on earth in quite a different state.<sup>2</sup>

The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the Gentiles... Those that are in the city find food in its fruit, and from its leaves proceed the resources of life for those who are still on the earth.<sup>3</sup>

### B. GEORGE N. H. PETERS (1825–1909)

Peters was an American Lutheran minister and author of *The Theocratic Kingdom*. Published in 1884 by Funk and Wagnalls, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, a three-volume defense of dispensational premillennial theology, was Peter’s major work. It was reprinted in 1952 and 1972 by Kregel Publications. In the preface of the 1952 edition, Wilbur E. Smith calls it “the most exhaustive, thoroughly annotated and logically arranged study of Biblical prophecy that appeared in our country during the nineteenth century.” In this work Peters presents an extensive discussion of the two modes of humanity in the eternal state.<sup>4</sup> He summarizes his view:

*Observation*. 2. While thus firmly holding to and advocating the perpetuation of the race *after* the Second Advent in a condition similar (not attained at once but gradually) to that before the

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<sup>1</sup> Floyd Sanders Elmore, “A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Two Peoples of God in John Nelson Darby” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990), 305.

<sup>2</sup> John Nelson Darby, *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, ed. William Kelly, 2nd ed., 34 vols. (Sunbury, PA.: Believers Bookshelf, 1971), 10:251.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:103.

<sup>4</sup> Peters develops his argument concerning the Theocratic Kingdom through a series of Propositions. Proposition 152 is entitled, “This Kingdom is connected with the perpetuation of the human race.” The three volumes are available on the internet at <http://theocratickingdom.info/StrangerandPilgrims/PetersKingdom.html> (accessed 10/25/12).

fall, yet, to avoid misapprehension, it is necessary to define our position more accurately.

Holding to a restoration of the race to that which was forfeited by sin, our opinion is guided mainly by the account preceding the fall. Able writers (as D. N. Lord, Rev. Newton, etc.), contend for an eternal, everlasting perpetuation of the race, perpetual and strictly never-ending, and rely exclusively upon the words rendered "eternal," "perpetual," "forever," etc. The argument thus presented looks plausible and weighty; sufficiently so, that while not fully accepting of it, we at the same time do not deny it.

The reasons which influence us to this caution are the following: The words depended upon (as eternal, perpetual, etc.) have sometimes, as critics of the most diverse sentiments state, a limited meaning, denoting simply a long duration, or a duration coequal with existing orderings or dispensations. The fact that actual eternity, never-ending succession, is meant, must be derived from a more detailed statement, in which this is asserted.

Now, it is not stated that if Adam had not fallen his posterity would have gone on perpetually and forever increasing. This is only inferred. The announcement before the fall is simply to "multiply and replenish the earth," and the inference might be made (as some theologians suggested), that at some remote future period, when the earth was filled with inhabitants, a general glorification would cause the multiplication of the race to cease, etc. If never-ending generations had been promised to Adam, then indeed the argument in favor of this view would be valid, *for restitution would then embrace it.*

Then again, coming to the close of the Bible, where the fact is admitted of generations witnessing and enjoying the light and glory of the New Jerusalem state, and the decided impression is made *for ages even*, yet nothing specific is asserted of never-ending generations.

Our position is this: We are satisfied to end the discussion where *the Bible ends it*, viz., with

a portion of the race glorified and the race itself redeemed from the curse, passing on to higher stages of blessedness, and entering *into the eternal ages* in this happy condition. If Adam forfeited never-ending generations—if this was part of God's original design—then the restitution will restore and carry it out; but if not, *then only* that wonderful increase commensurate with God's design will be produced. Here we stop: that the race is perpetuated *after* the Advent is true; that this will continue on *after* the thousand years (which only limits Satan's binding, etc.), is most certain; that it even may continue on forever may, for aught we know, be also correct (seeing that some language can scarcely be interpreted otherwise), but as to the latter, not feeling positive, we stop with "*the many generations*" of Isa. 60:15.

The doctrine is not essential in our argument in that form, for if we show, as the Bible does, a completed restitution of all things, that is all that is required to perfect our system—the rest can well be left for the succeeding or eternal ages to develop. Desirous, on the one hand, not to limit the mighty power of God, and on the other hand not to pass beyond that which is positively (not merely inferentially) asserted, we proceed, with this expressed caution, in our argument, with the simple remark added, that such a posture accords best with the ideas of the primitive church on the subject. So far as the ordering of God in the matter is concerned, we are willing cordially to accept of the same, whatever it may be.<sup>5</sup>

### C. ELIJAH RICHARDSON CRAVEN (1824–1908)

Craven was a premillennial Presbyterian pastor. He received his B.A. in 1842 at College of New Jersey (Princeton); and then completed Princeton Seminary in 1848. He was pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Newark from 1854–87 and then served as secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Publication

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<sup>5</sup> Proposition 152, observation 2," in Peters, *Theocratic*, 2:538. Note that Peters mentions "able writers" who held the view of the two humanities continuing forever.

and Sabbath School Word from 1887–1904. He was an editor who enlarged Lange’s commentary on the book of Revelation. In this work, Craven supplied many comments on premillennialism. Concerning the two humanities in the eternal state he commented:

We should distinguish between the citizens of the city and the nations. The former are risen and glorified saints who constitute the Bride, the governors of the new creation. The later are probably men in the flesh who “walk in the light of the city,” who “bring their glory and honor into it,” and who are healed (or kept in health) by the leaves of the Tree of Life...

The nations will consist of men in the flesh, freed from sin and the curse, begetting a holy seed and dwelling in blessedness under the government of the New Jerusalem. They will not be the offspring of the glorified saints, who “neither marry nor are given in marriage,” but the descendants of those who live in the period of the millennial kingdom...<sup>6</sup>

#### D. JOSEPH AUGUSTUS SEISS (1823–1904)

Seiss was an American Lutheran minister and one of the founders of the General Council of the Lutheran Church. He edited *Prophetic Times* and was the author of *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, which was published in 1900 by George C. Cooke and reprinted several times by Zondervan Publishing House. The following quotes are from the 1977 Zondervan reprint:

I therefore hold it to be a necessary and integral part of the Scriptural doctrine of human redemption, that our race, as a self-multiplying order of beings, will never cease either to exist or to possess the earth.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John Peter Lange, *The Revelation of John*, ed. Philip Schaff (Edinburgh: Clark, 1870; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960), 391. Peters, *Theocratic*, 2:549, quotes Craven in "Proposition 152, observation 6, note 3."

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), 483. See <http://www.indywatchman.com/>

When discussing the inhabitants of “The Redeemed World” (new heaven and new earth) he distinguishes between “the holy people of God from Abel to the last martyr under the Antichrist” and “the still ongoing race”:

All these are there [the resurrected/glorified saints], not in flesh and blood, not returned to an earthly corporeal life, but in resurrection transfiguration, made like to the angels, like to their Redeemer now in glory, and having their home-place and palace in the Golden City for which they looked, and wrought, and waited, and suffered when on earth. These are there, as occupants of the new heavens, the dwellers in the new city, the sublime and heavenly kings and priests of the eternal nations and generations.<sup>8</sup>

*And the still ongoing race redeemed is there. Many can think of none but glorified saints in this grand picture; but the terms of the record will not construe with that idea.*<sup>9</sup>

There is not a word which asserts any purpose of God to terminate the perpetuity of humanity as an ever-expanding race. It was constituted and given command for unending perpetuity before sin touched it. If it fails to go on forever, it can only be in consequence of the introduction of sin. But there has been promised and constituted a Redeemer to ransom it from all captivity to sin and corruption. And if his redemption does not go far enough to exempt the ongoing race from being finally extinguished, then it is not redemption, and the Destroyer beats out the Almighty Redeemer. There is no escape from this alternative if we do not allow that the race of man as a race continues in the new earth, and there realizes its complete and final recovery from all the effects and ill consequences of the fall. Ransomed nations in the flesh are therefore

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wp-content/uploads/2008/12/The-Apocalypse-Joseph-Seiss.pdf for the commentary on the internet (accessed 10/25/12). Note especially Lectures 48-50.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 491.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

among the occupants of the new earth, and the blessed and happy dwellers in it, as Adam and Eve dwelt in Paradise.<sup>10</sup>

Two classes of people are thus distinctly recognized in the new heaven and earth; — a class in glory who get the fruits of the Tree of Life, and a class in the estate of “nations” who get the leaves; but, whether fruits or leaves, a great and glorious blessing. As there will always be need for the ministrations of these celestial king-priests to those dwelling on the earth so will those ministrations also bring them the healing leaves from the Tree of Life. As the Life-waters are not wholly shut up in the city, but descend in a form to men on the earth; so the Life-tree, in a form, yields its benefits to them too. The meaning is not that the nations are full of sicknesses and ailments; for these remains of the curse are gone then, though it may be from the virtue of these leaves. The meaning rather is the preservation of health and comfort, and not that maladies then exist to be removed. The Life-leaves are for the conservation and augmentation of Life-blessedness of men on earth, as the Life-fruits are for the joy of the saints in heaven.<sup>11</sup>

“*And they shall reign to the ages of the ages.*” Not for the thousand years only, but forever shall their glory and dominion last. This tells at once their eternal dignity, and the eternal perpetuity of men in the flesh. If they are to be kings forever, they must have subjects forever; and their subjects, whom they shepherdize, over whom they rule, and for whom they hold the dominion, are everywhere described as “*the nations*”— “all people, languages, and nations under the whole heaven.” (Revelation 2:26; 12:5; 22:1; 24:26; Daniel 7:14, 27; Matthew 19:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 6:2.) Either, then, their kingdom must come to an end for want of subjects, or nations, peoples, and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 492.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 507.

men on the earth must continue in the flesh, as Adam and Eve before the fall. But these glorified ones are to “reign to the ages of the ages,” and their “kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;” and as they cannot reign without subjects, so nations on earth must last coequally with their regency. Both their office, and the activities in which their sublimest happiness is located, must fail them, if the nations over whom their rule is, ever cease to be. They neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for they are as the angels of God; but their subjects are of a different order, and their dominion and glory shall grow forever, by the ceaseless augmentation of the number of their subjects throughout unending generations.<sup>12</sup>

### E. ALEXANDER PATTERSON (MID 19<sup>TH</sup>–EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Patterson provides an extended discussion of a natural and glorified humanity in the eternal state in the book *The Greater Life and Work of Christ*, published by the Fleming H. Revell Company in 1896.<sup>13</sup> The concluding chapter, “Christ in the Eternal Future,” sets forth the details. The following quotes exemplify his view:

These are then *restored humanity* entering the new earth. They are what Adam was before he fell, and therefore are fit for the presence of God, who can now resume the original fellowship of Eden so long interrupted. This will be the perfect restoration of humanity never before secured...The great restoration of the race gives him spirituality and immortality in his own sphere. It makes natural man superior to the power of death and sin. There is bestowed upon the restored race more than Adam enjoyed...By the eternal edict from the Throne, that in man which responds to the attack of temptation, is

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 511.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Patterson, *The Greater Life and Work of Christ: As Revealed in Scripture, Man and Nature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming, 1896). The book is available on the internet at <http://archive.org/details/greaterlifeworko00patt> (accessed 11/6/2012).



removed. Man will be physically, psychically, and spiritually perfect...To lay man aside in the hour of final victory, would be to acknowledge a mistake in his creation or a defeat in his redemption.<sup>14</sup>

There seems at first something incongruous in the idea of there being a race of human beings living as now, and increasing in the eternal ages. This comes partly from preconceived opinions as to the future state. There is nothing in Scripture forbidding the idea of material beings in the eternal ages. It is the leaven of heathenism in our Christianity, which deprecates the material as inherently sinful...what was right and fitting in the original Eden, is also fitting in the new earth. There was here contemplated the holy increase of the race of man, and their gradual filling of the earth.<sup>15</sup>

In the Fatherhood of God there will be established the perfect theocracy—God reigning absolutely and directly over all...The order is God the Father, Christ, the glorified saints arranged in closer or wider circles in the New Jerusalem, then the angelic hosts of many and varying offices, then the myriads of humanity and innumerable worlds of organic and inorganic nature, all permeated by the Spirit of God, and living, moving, and having their being by the life of God...<sup>16</sup>

## F. EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH (1825–1906)

Bickersteth offers in verse an early reference to a natural humanity in the eternal state. A graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, he served as Vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, Dean of Gloucester, and Bishop of Exeter. He edited three hymnals, and wrote at least thirty hymns of his own including *Nearer My God to Thee*. His work, *Yesterday, Today and*

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 389.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 390-39.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 405.

*Forever: A Poem, in Twelve Books* contains the following verses:<sup>17</sup>

And yet the earth through all her vast expanse  
 Of golden plains and rich umbrageous hills  
 Already seem'd too narrow for the growth  
 Of her great human family; so quick  
 The virtue of her Maker's law, when once  
 Sin's crushing interdict was disannull'd,  
 That primal law, "Be fruitful; multiply  
 Your joys; replenish and subdue the earth."  
 Blest mandate! Blest obedience! Earth was full  
 Of goodness, full of glory, full of grace:<sup>18</sup>

The increase of that government and peace,  
 Messiah's heritage and ours. For as  
 Our native orb ere long too strait became  
 For its blest habitants...  
 But at the voice of God, the stars, which rolled  
 Innumerable in the azure firmament,  
 By thousands and ten thousands, as he spake  
 Six words of power, the seventh, it was done,  
 Were mantled and prepared as seats of life;  
 And it was ours to bear from earth and plant,  
 Like Adam, in some paradise of fruits  
 The ancestors of many a newborn world,  
 Like Adam, but far different issue now,  
 Sin and the curse and death forever crushed.  
 And thus from planet on to planet spread...<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Henry Bickersteth, *Yesterday, To-Day, and For Ever: A Poem, in Twelve Books*, 7th ed. (London: Rivingstons, 1872). That edition is on the internet at [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23362761M/Yesterday\\_to-day\\_and\\_for\\_ever](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23362761M/Yesterday_to-day_and_for_ever) (accessed 11/6/2012).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 379 (book xii, lines 493-502).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 382-83 (book xii, lines 601-617). Peters, *Theocratic*, 2:549, quotes Bickersteth in Proposition 152, observation 6, note 3, as one who is correct in this view.

### G. ROBERT GOVETT (1813–1901)

Govett was a British theologian and Pastor of Surrey Chapel, Norwich, England. He wrote many brochures and several books. His best-known book is *The Apocalypse: Expounded by Scripture* (1861–65), written under the pen-name Matheetees. The following quotes on his view of the two modes of humanity in the eternal state are taken from *The New Jerusalem Our Eternal Home* and *Govett on Revelation*.<sup>20</sup>

At this point, then, I would gather into one focus the notices found in the two last chapters of the Apocalypse, in proof of *the twofoldness of the saved*. The two classes, then, (1) THE RISEN, (2) THE NATIONS, differ in their relation to God...<sup>21</sup>

As the nations are still *men in the flesh*, “the glory of the terrestrial” is different from “the glory of the celestial” (1 Cor. Xv.), while both will have their place in the eternal kingdom of God. They do not dwell with the risen. God has provided different abodes for the two; and abodes suited to the differences implied in their condition. The risen dwell in the city of God (rev. xxii. 14, 19), in which there is no night. But that would not suit men of bodies like ours. There must be in their case need of rest, and suited season in which to take it; that is, there will be alternation of day and night. That alternation will go on forever.<sup>22</sup>

Thus also among mankind as settled in the new earth, there are two great classes: the risen, and those still in the flesh. To the risen sons of men belong the fruits: and they give of the leaves to the nations.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Govett, *The New Jerusalem Our Eternal Home* (Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle, 1985); Robert Govett (under the pseudonym Matheetees), *The Apocalypse: Expounded By Scripture* (London: 1861), reprinted as *Govett on Revelation* (Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> Govett, *New Jerusalem*, 68.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>23</sup> Govett, *Revelation*, 4:472.

### III. EARLY TO MID- TWENTIETH CENTURY

#### A. CLARENCE LARKIN (1850–1924)

Larkin was an American Baptist pastor known for his many dispensational premillennial writings and charts. In answer to the question “Who Are to Be the Happy Inhabitants of This New Earth?” he wrote:

Where did the people who inhabited the earth *after the Flood* come from? They were the lineal descendants of Noah, how did they escape the Flood? They were saved in an Ark which *God Provided*. Gen. 6:13-16. Shall not God then during the “Renovation of the *Earth by Fire*,” in some manner, not as yet revealed, take of righteous representatives of the Millennial nations that He purposes to save, and when the earth is again fit to be the abode of men, place them back on the New Earth, that they may increase and multiply and *replenish* it, as Adam (Gen. 1:27, 28), and Noah (Gen. 9:1), were told to *multiply and replenish* the present earth.<sup>24</sup>

It seems clear from the presence of the *Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden*, that God intended the human race to populate the Earth, and when it became too thickly populated, to use the surplus population to colonize other spheres. Our “Solar System” is only in its infancy. The Earth is the only one of its planets as yet habitable. Where are the inhabitants for the other planets to come from? Think you that the planets of our *Solar System*, and the planets of other solar systems, of which the stars are the suns, were made simply to adorn the heavens for our little earth? God does not plan things on a *Small Scale*, and it magnifies His power and wisdom to believe that

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<sup>24</sup> Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside, PA: Larkin Estate, 1919), 206. The commentary can be found on the internet at <http://www.davidcox.com.mx/library/L/Larkin,%20Clarence%20-%20Book%20of%20Revelation.pdf> (accessed 11/6/2012).

He created man in His own likeness... with the power of *Procreation*, that He might by means of him populate the Universe. This magnifies the Scheme of Redemption.<sup>25</sup>

No, God will not permit Satan to block His plan for peopling this earth with a *Sinless Human Race*. The death of Christ was not merely to redeem a few millions of the human race, but to redeem the *Earth*, and the *Race Itself* from the curse of sin, and the dominion of Satan.<sup>26</sup>

When this Earth shall have gone through its “Baptism of Fire,” and shall be again fit for the occupancy of man, the representatives of the “Saved Nations” (Rev. 21:24) will be men and women in whom no taint of sin will remain, and who cannot therefore impart it to their offspring, who will be like the offspring of Adam and Eve would have been if they had not sinned. This magnifies the whole scheme of redemption, and justifies God in the creation of the human race.<sup>27</sup>

## **B. LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER (1871–1952)**

Chafar founded and served as the first president of Dallas Theological Seminary. He does not make an explicit statement concerning an eternal sanctified natural humanity but there is perhaps an implicit statement in his *Systematic Theology* where he comments on the Gentiles of the Kingdom in the eternal state:

A peculiar and distinguished group of Gentiles are those of the last generation which appear before the throne of Christ’s glory at the end of the tribulation, and on the basis of their ministry to Israel are received into the earthly kingdom. This kingdom, it is said by the King, is one prepared for these Gentiles from the foundation of the world. A purpose which thus originates in

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 206-207.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

eternity past may well be expected to continue into eternity to come. It is evidently given to these Gentiles to continue with Israel in the new earth under the everlasting reign of Messiah... Those Gentiles who are of one generation and who enter Israel's kingdom and continue with Israel forever, will be distinguished from those gentiles who throughout this age have been called and saved into heavenly glory.<sup>28</sup>

## IV. LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO DATE

### A. HERMAN A. HOYT (1909–2000)

Hoyt was one of the founding professors of Grace Theological Seminary. He was president of Grace College and Seminary from 1962 to 1976. He wrote expositions of the book of Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation along with works on theology. The book *The End Times* includes a chapter on the eternal state that presents his view of the two modes of humanity.

The identification of the redeemed includes two classes of humanity.

*Those who are glorified.* There are the redeemed of mankind who have experienced glorification either through the channel of death and resurrection, or through the channel of transformation. The church constitutes one company of the redeemed. This company will be constituted of those who experience glorification by resurrection and transformation (I Cor. 15:51-54). So far as the Scriptures reveal, no other group will experience transformation. The Old Testament saints and the martyred tribulation saints will experience glorification by resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19-21). These all will have special relation to the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24).

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<sup>28</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 4:416.

*Those with complete salvation.* There are also the redeemed of mankind who have experienced complete salvation (Rev. 21:24). This great company is made up of both Jews and Gentiles who were saved during the tribulation period (Rev. 7:1-8; Matt. 25:1-13, 31-46), and constituted the nations that populated the millennium. From the children born of these people during the millennium the vast majority are saved during the most favorable period of mankind and enter the eternal state (Isa. 11:9; Rev. 21:25). From the reading of the text, it appears that they have access to the New Jerusalem but will live in the broad expanse of the restored earth. It would seem that they live in natural bodies in which there is no longer any sin nature, as Adam once was before the fall, and as Christ lived during the days of His flesh (Heb. 4:15; 22 Cor. 5:21)... Moreover, it would also seem that there will be procreation as well, the multiplication of a sinless humanity, as God originally intended (Gen. 1:28).

Some may hesitate at the possibility of overpopulation of the earth. But it must be remembered that there will be more than eight times the present land surface for supporting this population because there will be no more sea (Rev. 21:1), and that same area will be productive beyond the fondest dreams of men. There is also the added possibility that surplus population will be transferred to other spheres in this vast universe. The creation of the new heaven may provide other habitable spheres just as will the creation of the new earth.<sup>29</sup>

The condition of the redeemed is amply described in the Bible.

*Spiritual.* The spiritual condition of the redeemed is that of complete salvation. This is true of the glorified and the naturalized, for all have access to the New Jerusalem, and all must

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<sup>29</sup> Herman A. Hoyt, *The End Times* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969), 229f.

be written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:27). Inasmuch as the former things are passed away, this can only mean that the sinful nature is also gone forever...

*Physical.* The physical condition of the redeemed is that of complete health. This is clear concerning the glorified (I Cor. 15:35-54) from what is known of the resurrection body. But it is also true of the naturalized. There will be no curse, pain or death (Rev. 21:4; 22:3). But more than that, the tree of life through its leaves will preserve the health of these nations.<sup>30</sup>

## **B. ROBERT L. THOMAS (1928–)**

Thomas (ThD, Dallas Theological Seminary) was chairman of the New Testament Department at Talbot Theological Seminary from 1959 to 1987. In 1987 he became Professor of New Testament at The Master's Seminary. Moody Press published his two-volume commentary on Revelation in 1995. His comments on Rev 21:24 address the issue of the identity of the nations in the eternal state.

The change of character of the nations and the kings prompts an investigation regarding their identity...None of the earlier proposals has any direct support. In fact, this is an issue on which the text of Revelation is silent, but there is one further theory which seems to satisfy the available criteria best. (10) This opinion holds that "the nations" are composed of saved people who survive the millennial kingdom without dying and without joining Satan's rebellion and who undergo some sort of transformation that suits them for life in the eternal state. They will be like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall (cf. Govett, Seiss). They will be unresurrected human beings who will inhabit the new earth, Paradise restored (22:1-5), throughout eternity. These will be the ones over whom God's resurrected saints will reign (22:5). Nations, peoples, and men on earth must

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 231.



continue in the flesh as Adam and Eve did before the Fall (Seiss).<sup>31</sup>

### C. HENRY M. MORRIS (1918–2006)

Morris was a professor of Civil Engineering at Virginia Tech and one of the founders of the Creation Research Society and the Institute for Creation Research. Among his many works is a commentary on the Book of Revelation and *The Defender's Study Bible*. Concerning humanity in the eternal state, he commented:

Another possibility is that all true believers among the earthly nations and kings will still be in their natural flesh, having been translated (like Enoch and Elijah) into the heavenly city before the holocaust and then returned to the new earth, finally to fill it and have godly dominion over it as God originally commanded Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-28). This would help explain the occasional Biblical references to “perpetual generations” (e.g., Genesis 9:12) and similar expressions (Genesis 22:17; Isaiah 9:7; Ephesians 3:21). Once the earth was “filled,” then future generations could be sent to colonize other planets, and so on, forever. At this time, we simply don’t know.<sup>32</sup>

### D. DAVID REAGAN (1938–)

Reagan is the founder and director of Lamb and Lion ministries. His book, *Wrath and Glory*, covers the book of Revelation.<sup>33</sup> He comments on Rev 21:24:

Perhaps the greatest mystery of Bible prophecy is introduced in verse Revelation 21:24 where it states that “the nations shall walk by its light

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<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 476-78.

<sup>32</sup> Henry M. Morris, *The New Defender's Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2006), note on Revelation 21:24. The complete note can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.icr.org/bible/Revelation/21/24/> (accessed 11/8/2012).

<sup>33</sup> David Reagan, *Wrath and Glory* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf, 2001).

[the light emanating from the Shekinah glory in the city], and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.” Who are these nations and kings outside the New Jerusalem on the new earth? They must be in fleshly bodies, for we are told in chapter 22 that the leaves of the tree of life inside the city will be used “for the healing of the nations” (22:2).

We, the redeemed, are assured that we will reign with Jesus “forever” (Revelation 1:6, 11:15, and 22:5) In order to reign, there must be someone to reign over. We know who that will be during the Millennium. But who are these people on the new earth in the eternal state? Are they people who accepted Jesus during the Millennium? I ask that because we are never told what will become of those who receive Jesus during His millennial reign.

I once browsed through over 60 commentaries on the book of Revelation looking for an answer to this intriguing question. About 90% simply ignored the issue. Some tried to argue that this was a flashback to the Millennium, but that idea is clearly invalid for the whole context of Revelation 21 is the eternal state. A couple of writers suggested that these might be people saved during the Millennium who are brought into the eternal state in their fleshly bodies and allowed to propagate new beings over whom the Redeemed will reign.

I have this question at the top of a list that I intend to ask the Lord when we stand face-to-face.<sup>34</sup>

### **E. TONY EVANS (1949–)**

Evans is the Pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, the head of The Urban Alternative, and a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary (ThM and ThD). In his book *The Best Is Yet to Come*, he comments:

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<sup>34</sup>This comment can be found on the internet at [http://www.lambliion.com/articles/articles\\_revelation20.php](http://www.lambliion.com/articles/articles_revelation20.php) (accessed 11/8/2012).

There is only one group of people left on earth to go into eternity in their physical bodies—those who were true to Jesus Christ and served Him during His millennial kingdom. They go into eternity after the millennium with physical glorified bodies, not spiritual glorified bodies like we will have, because they did not experience death and resurrection.<sup>35</sup>

The Bible indicates that the new, renovated earth will be occupied in eternity. This group from the millennium will fill the earth because they will be able to procreate. These will make up the nations who do not live in the New Jerusalem, but will have access to the city.

Why? To pay homage to God and bring Him their worship, and because they will need the leaves of the tree of life for their continued health and well-being.<sup>36</sup>

#### **F. KEITH KRELL (1971–)**

Krell is the Pastor of Emmanuel Bible Fellowship in Olympia, Washington. He is a graduate of Multnomah University and Biblical Seminary, Talbot School of Theology, and University of Bristol (PhD); and has taught classes for Multnomah University and Moody Bible Institute-Spokane. In an article on Rev 21:1–22:5 published on Bible.org, he makes a comment partially adapted from Tony Evans:

The identity of these nations and kings is difficult to determine. It is clear from the context that John is talking about a group of people who have access to the New Jerusalem but who don't live there. There is only one group of people left on earth to go into eternity in their physical, bodies—believers that served Christ during His millennium kingdom. They go into eternity in their physical, glorified bodies, not spiritual,

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<sup>35</sup>Tony Evans, *The Best Is Yet to Come: Bible Prophecies Through the Ages* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2002), 283. Chapter 17 “What Is Heaven Like?” is well worth reading. Note especially the section “The Life of the Nations.”

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 284.

glorified bodies like we will have because they did not experience death and resurrection. These people will go into eternity with bodies like Adam and Eve had at their creation before they were flawed by sin. Their physical bodies will be maintained through a special provision from God (“the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations,” 22:2b). In the New Jerusalem the gates will never close; anyone can enter anytime (21:25-26). These nations and kings, therefore, may enter whenever they wish, pay homage to God, and seek out the leaves of the Tree of Life for their continued health and well-being.<sup>37</sup>

### G. ROBERT L. BRYANT (1949–)

Bryant, Pastor of Cypress Valley Bible Church in Marshall, Texas, presented a session entitled, “The Unique, Eternal role of Resurrected People” at the 2009 Grace Evangelical Society Conference. He stated in the message manuscript:

The nations on the new earth are spoken of in Revelation 21:22– 22:3. It seems that the people referred to as *the nations*, will be people in natural bodies, not glorified bodies; will be without sin, like unfallen Adam and Eve; will marry and have children who will populate the new earth; and will give glory to God for all eternity for what they see He has done for saved, resurrected people...And the number of resurrected people will be a tiny, tiny fixed number in comparison to the ever-expanding population of natural-bodied people...Resurrected people will be the special trophies of His grace who will bring glory to Him as God of creation, God of salvation, and God of resurrection. This is the unique, ever-expanding, eternal, major role of resurrected people...<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Keith Krell, “It Just Doesn’t Get Any Better Than This!—Revelation 21:1–22:5” (Created 2006). The article can be found on the internet at <http://bible.org/print/book/export/html/3815> (accessed 11/8/2012).

<sup>38</sup> A message by Bob Bryant on the topic can be heard on the internet at <http://old.cypressvalley.org/audio/2009-04-26-message.mp3> (accessed 11/8/2012). The message outline is found at <http://old.cypressvalley.org/>

## H. ROBERT VACENDAK (1960–)

Vacendak, Pastor of Ridge Pointe Fellowship, Dallas, Texas, authored the commentary on Revelation in the *The Grace New Testament Commentary*. Concerning “the nations” of Rev 21:24 and 22:2, he wrote:

Most speculate that the *nations* refer only to the masses of regenerate and resurrected saints. Another possibility is that God will create human beings to live on the new earth just as He created Adam and Eve—sinless people whose status and condition will be similar to Adam and Eve’s before the Fall (see comments on 22:2). More likely, believers who are alive on earth at the end of the Millennium will be brought into the new heavens and earth in their unresurrected bodies to populate it. These bodies will be transformed into sinless bodies, but will not have been resurrected. They will be like Adam and Eve before they sinned, but without the ability to sin. As such, they will procreate and populate the new heavens and the new earth, and so they will form *the nations*.<sup>39</sup>

However, the *leaves of the tree of life* will perform an additional function as well. They are *for the healing of the nations*. In that day, even though there will be no death or disease because of sin, it may still be possible for people who do not possess glorified bodies to be injured or hurt. The *leaves of the tree of life* will bring healing and restoration.<sup>40</sup>

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outline/2009-04-26-outline.htm (accessed 11/8/2012). William H. Lee, a pastor and author of *Grace Recovered: How Reading the Bible Led Me Away from Tulip* (Corinth, TX: Light Point Press, 2012), also presented a workshop at the 2012 Grace Evangelical Society Conference on the topic entitled “Counting the Stars: The Descendants of Abraham.”

<sup>39</sup> Robert Vacendak, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” in *The Grace New Testament Commentary* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 1329f.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 1331.

### I. ROBERT N. WILKIN (1952–)

Wilkin, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary (ThM and PhD) and the Executive Director of the Grace Evangelical Society wrote in his book, *The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible*:

It is possible, though highly speculative, that there will be children born forever. If so, the Church, fixed in number, would become more and more of a minority in the kingdom as Israel and the nations would expand forever. The way in which this could happen would be if people from Israel and the nations in natural bodies will go from the Millennium on to the new earth, but without sin natures and without the ability to pass on a sin nature to their children... Christians, in glorified bodies, would thus rule over people in natural bodies, not primarily over other glorified saints.<sup>41</sup>

### J. MARTY CAULEY (1960–)

Cauley, in the two volume *The Outer Darkness*, presents an extensive discussion of the proposition that the nations in Rev 21:24-26 and 22:4 are comprised of perfected people in flesh and blood bodies in the eternal state that procreate.<sup>42</sup> He quotes and interacts with several of the supporters and detractors of the view. He provides support for the view from the OT and NT backgrounds and answers some of the objections. He gives this summary:

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<sup>41</sup> Robert N. Wilkin, *The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2012), 80f. I think it's unnecessary for Wilkin to characterize the view as "highly speculative." It unintentionally minimizes the validity of the view as a plausible theological inference suggested by scriptural texts. The science of theology involves making inferences. For good discussions concerning theological inferences see "Rules of Affinity" by Paul Henebury at <http://sharperiron.org/tags/series-affinity> and "Theological Inferences" by Malcom Yarnell at <http://baptisttheologians.blogspot.com/2012/06/theological-inferences-be-careful-when.html> (accessed 11/27/2012).

<sup>42</sup> Marty A. Cauley, *The Outer Darkness* (Sylva, NC: Mithological Press, 2012), 643-56.

In conclusion, procreation will continue so that mankind can inhabit and rule the whole creation. No rulership can exist without subjects to be ruled. A distinction must be made between the nations and those who rule over them in the millennial age (Rev 2:26). This distinction extends into the eternal age. Yet the transition from one age to the other will bring a change. Whereas the millennial nations will be composed of men and women in *sinful* fleshly bodies who reproduce offspring with sin natures, the eternal nations will be composed of men and women in *sinless* flesh and blood bodies who likewise reproduce sinless offspring. Correspondingly, a change in the nature of the rule will occur that reflects the change in the nature of the subjects. Ruling with a rod of iron and forcing submission will no longer be necessary (Rev 2:27). In eternity their subjects will submit joyfully to the serving rulership of their rulers.<sup>43</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

Proponents of the view that there will be childbearing after the Millennium span the time from the nineteenth century to the present.<sup>44</sup> They come from Europe and America. They represent various denominations. Many are accomplished academicians from respected theological institutions. A significant number are writers and pastors.

That there are many such adherents of the view does not prove its validity. It does, however, establish the view as one with a significant history that should be accurately represented, respectfully engaged, and whether agreed with or not, humbly

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 650.

<sup>44</sup> It is possible that there are proponents of the view in earlier centuries. William Watson, Professor of History at Colorado Christian University, presented a paper at the 2012 Pre-Trib Study Group Conference, "Pretribulational Rapture in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century England," that documents such references contrary to the common view that it originated 150 years ago with John Nelson Darby. He searched Early English Books Online (EEBO) to find them. Perhaps a search using some terms of the time that could reflect two modes of humanity in the eternal state would yield supportive references to the view.

acknowledged as a plausible theological inference concerning the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.