

Adventists, who are said at one time to have numbered over fifty thousand. Carried away by blind enthusiasm they made their preparations for the end of all things, which they confidently expected in the summer of 1843. As the time drew near the believers made all preparations for their final departure from the world, many of them selling their property, and arraying themselves in white "ascension robes," which were actually put on sale by the storekeepers for the occasion. But the day and the year went by without the fulfillment of the prophecy. Miller claimed to have discovered an error in his calculations and fixed one or two other dates later on, but as these also proved false, his followers lost faith and the delusion died out. The Adventists still number fifteen or twenty thousand, the largest body being in southern Michigan, but although they hold the doctrine of the near advent of the final end, and endeavor to be at all times ready, they no longer undertake to fix the date.

It may be noted here that the idea of a millennium, when the Messiah shall come in person upon the earth and reign with the just for a thousand years, was so firmly held by many of the early Christians that it may almost be said to have formed a part of the doctrinal tradition of the church. The belief was an inheritance from the Jews, many of whose sacred writers taught that time was to endure through seven great "years" of a thousand years each, the seventh and last being the Sabbatical year or millennium, when their Messiah would appear and make their kingdom the mistress of the world. For this materialistic view of the millennium the Christian fathers substituted a belief in the spiritual triumph of religion, when the armies of antichrist would be annihilated, but the expectation of the return of Christ to rule in person over his church before the last days was an essential part of the doctrine, founded on numerous prophecies of both the Old and the New Testament.

OTHER PARALLELS

BEEKMANITES

It would require a volume to treat of the various religious abnormalisms, based on hypnotism, trances, and the messiah idea, which have sprung up and flourished in different parts of our own country even within the last twenty years. Naturally these delusions thrived best among the ignorant classes, but there were some notable exceptions, particularly in the case of the Beekmanites or "Church of the Redeemed." About 1875 Mrs Dora Beekman, the wife of a Congregational minister in Rockford, Illinois, began preaching that she was the immortal reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Absurd as this claim may appear, she found those who believed her, and as her converts increased in numbers they established their headquarters, which they called "heaven," near Rockford, built a church, and went zealously to work to gather proselytes. Beekman refused to believe the new doctrine,