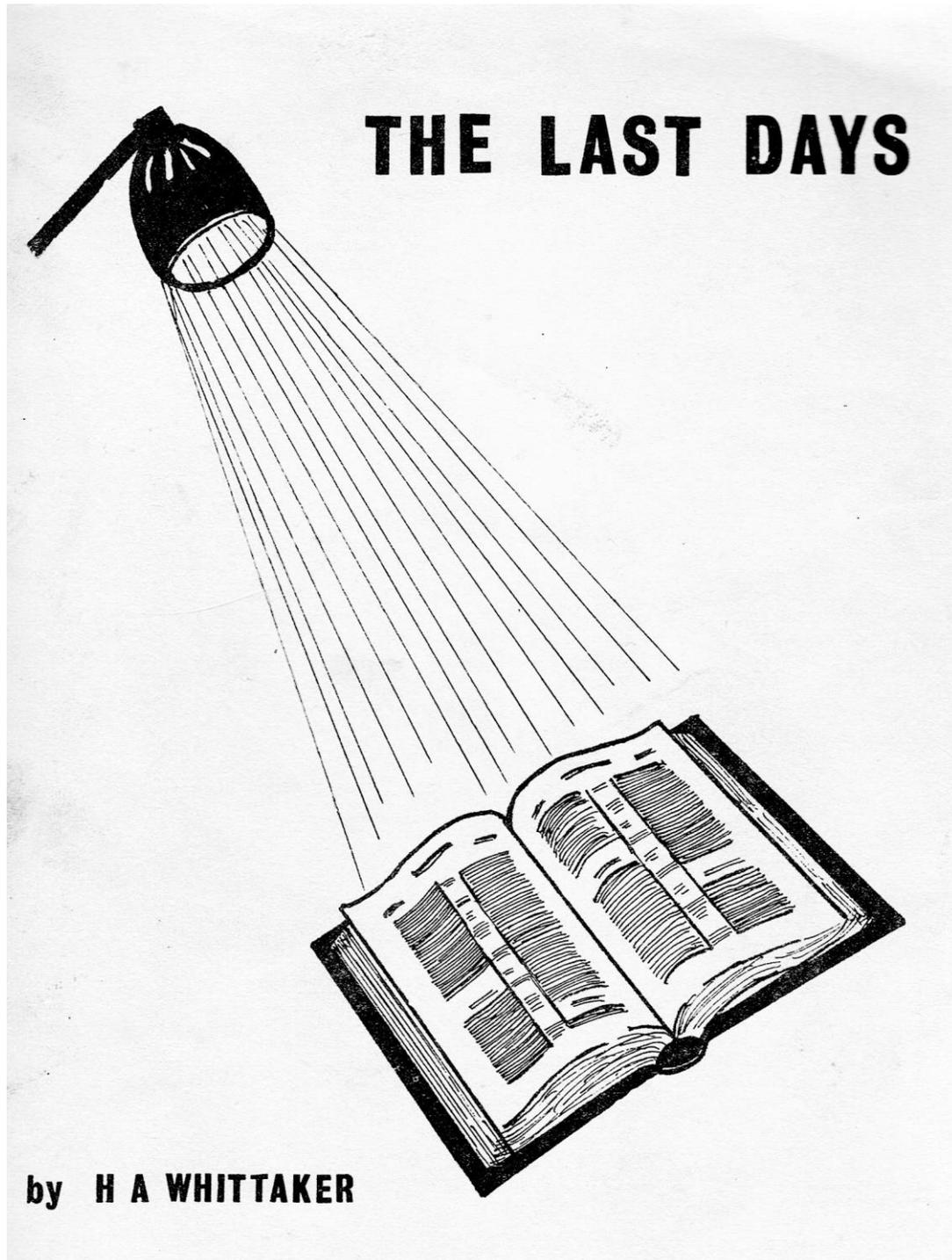


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Preface

The studies of “The Last Days” brought together here have often been asked for since they were circulated by the Christadelphian Isolation League. Through the kind help and encouragement of Brother Roger Heming they are now made available in a handier form.

It is hoped that these chapters serve to stimulate in those who read a greater enthusiasm for what the Bible teaches about the imminent End of the Age— “set your hope perfectly on the grace that is being brought unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ”.

The help of Sister Muriel Palmer in getting this compilation ready for circulation has been considerable. I am very grateful to her.

HARRY WHITTAKER

11th June 1967

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Chapter 1 - The Gog-Magog Invasion. When?

For many years it has been almost a dogma among Christadelphian students of Bible prophecy that World War III, the great conflict, which is to herald, the coming of the Lord, will begin with a Russian invasion of Palestine. This, of course, on the basis of Ezekiel 38. Yet, whilst there is nothing known to the present writer which is decisive in favour of such a conclusion, there are certain considerations which suggest that that familiar Ezekiel prophecy be fulfilled *after* Christ is enthroned in Zion.

For instance, the sequence of the chapters (Ezekiel 37 to 40) points strongly towards such a conclusion. Chapter 37 has the “resurrection” of Israel and their re-establishment in the land of their fathers. Next, there is a picture of “David my servant” ruling over them in righteousness. It is a spiritual, as well as a national, revival of Israel. Then chapter 38 continues with its vigorous portrayal of an invasion which meets with due retribution, as the fuller picture of Ezekiel 39 shews. After this, appropriately, is the detailed picture of Zion as the centre of worship—“a house of prayer for all nations”.

To put the northern invasion before the coming of the Messiah is to seriously dislocate this sequence. On the other hand, to accept the order of events suggested by the order of the chapters means at once the elimination of certain long-standing difficulties. The motive for the invasion is given thus: “to take a spoil, and to take a prey . . . against the people that have gotten cattle and goods . . . Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?”

The efforts of prophetic expositors (including the present writer on more than one occasion) in an attempt to impart reality to these words in the wrong framework have varied from the ingenious to the ludicrous. Perhaps the favourite device has been to read the words “goods” as meaning “oil” especially. But this will hardly do, for there is almost no oil in Israel. The best supplies of oil are in an altogether different direction. If Gog goes into Israel for oil, he has lost his bearings!

Alternatively, emphasis is put on the immense value of Palestine as the strategically important land bridge between the continents. This is doubtless true, though now of less and less importance as the powers become more and more committed to nuclear war. But in any case this, if valid, is a vastly different consideration from that intimated in the words just cited. The prophecy does not say: “I will go to the land of unwallled villages because I covet its geography”.

Instead of these shifts it is manifestly much more satisfactory to accept the sequence which Ezekiel himself supplies and to take his chapter 38 as having a fulfilment *after* the Lord has come to be King of the Jews¹ and after he has already raised his people to a pitch of prosperity (see Isaiah 60) such as would make chapter 38 the natural and inevitable sequel of chapter 37.

Yet another difficulty evaporates with the one just discussed. The invaded people are described as being “at rest, dwelling safely (RV securely), all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates”.

¹ How many are aware that in Eureka II 557, and III 405, 602 precisely this interpretation is given to Ezekiel 38?

Under the domination of the old hypothesis, the best that the present; writer used to be able to make of these words was to read them as a contrast between the realization of Jewish nationalism as it is today in their proud little state of Israel, and the ancient terror and restriction of the ghetto life which Jews have had to put up with for the best part of two milleniums.

Yet this is at best an exegete's expedient. A glance at any newspaper published since 1948 will provide evidence that Israel, ringed round by implacable Arab foes, will never be "at rest", will never "dwell securely", will never abandon their "bars and gates" (their defensive armaments), until the ancient hostility between Esau and Jacob has been finally ended by the lasting acceptance by Esau of Jacob's right to the Land (as in Genesis 33 and 36).

There is also a purely Biblical argument of considerable force, which seems to have suffered from quite unwarrantable neglect. Revelation 19 has a vivid symbolic picture of the Word of God going forth against nations whom he is to "rule with a rod of iron". He rides at the head of the armies of heaven in the character of King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. At this time an angel cries to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven: "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of the mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them . . ." (Revelation 19:13-18). What is this but the culmination of the destruction described in Ezekiel 39? "Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come . . . Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth" (Ezekiel 39:17, 18).

These passages are the only two places in Scripture where such an idea and such phrases meet the reader. If the principle of interpretation of Scripture by Scripture is worth anything, one of two conclusions seems to be inescapable — *either* that Ezekiel 39 is to be fulfilled *after* the Lord's coming in glory, *or* that immediately before and after his coming two similar divine judgements are to be visited upon the warring enemies of Jehovah. Of the two the former is obviously the more preferable and the more likely.

In conclusion, the question may be asked: Over against the arguments adduced in this study, what points of positive *evidence* are available in support of the more usual assumption that Ezekiel 38, 39 are to be fulfilled *before* the Lord comes.

Are there *any*?

Chapter 2 - Jew And Arab

It is the purpose of this chapter to suggest that, contrary to common expectation, the *last* great conflict *before* the coming of the Lord will be between Jew and Arab, and not (as is often thought) between Jew and Russian. Just as there are weaknesses (pointed out in chapter 1) in the hypothesis of a Gog-Magog invasion of Israel before the coming of the Lord, so there is a corresponding strength about the repeated emphasis in the prophets on an Arab victory over the Jews. Whilst many students of prophecy have lately found anticipations in Scripture of the present Arab-Jew antagonism, few seem to have taken these prophetic foreshadowings to their logical conclusion. The evidence — Biblical, not political — calls for re-examination.

First, it is taken as a conclusion requiring no proof that the prophecies of the last days concerning Edom are about the Arabs since so many of the Arab tribes are descended from Esau and because ancient Edom is unquestionably Arab territory today.

The first of these prophecies calling for attention is Ezekiel 35, 36. The words here are remarkably explicit: "I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not be inhabited, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Because thou hast said, These two nations (i.e. Edom and Israel) and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the Lord was there: therefore as I live, saith the Lord, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thine hatred against them; *and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee*" (Ezekiel 35:9-11).

A careful consideration of these words shews that certain events are clearly implied:

- a. The annexation of Israel by Arab foes.
- b. A divine judgement on these boastful enemies to be followed immediately by
- c. The manifestation of divine glory among the Jews.

Almost every verse in the chapter reinforces these conclusions.

Ezekiel 36 is, if anything, even more emphatic. There, Edom is pictured as gloating over a recent triumph: "Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession" (v. 2). For this, divine judgement is pronounced "against all Edom, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart" (v. 5).

But, by contrast, there is to be re-gathering and blessing for Israel: "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they are at hand to come" (v. 8).

What is specially impressive is that this Arab desolation of the Land is represented as Israel's *last* agony before the fulfilment of all their ancient hopes: "Thou (land of Israel) shalt devour men *no more* . . . neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen *any more*, neither shalt thou hear the reproach of the people *any more*, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to call *any more*" (vv. 14,15).

The logical conclusion seems to be that *the Arab conquest of Israel will be the last that it will experience*.

The prophecy of Obadiah "concerning Edom", has exactly the same shape, so that reinforcement of this conclusion just reached is only to be evaded by denying altogether a last-day application of the prophecy. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever" (v. 10).

There is the same emphasis on the unlawful possession of Israel's territory: "Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity" (v. 13).

Therefore judgement from the Lord must inevitably follow: "For the day of the Lord is upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually . . . they shall be as though they had not been" (vv. 15, 16).

Nevertheless Israel will be delivered: "Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (v. 17).

The ensuing verses (vv.18, 19) indicate that the whole of the Land promised to Abraham will be restored
"and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (v. 21).

Thus, again, Israel's final tribulation appears to come from *Arab* enemies.

Psalm 83, then, describes a highly successful confederacy against the people of God: "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance" (vv. 3, 4). Then follows a long and impressive list of names of the hostile peoples—all of them Arab peoples, or modern Arab territories: Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, the Philistines, Tyre, Asshur, the children of Lot (vv. 6-8). And the plea for divine succour (vv. 9-11) is based not, as is so commonly the case elsewhere, on God's mighty deliverance from Egypt under Moses, but on His rescue of His people from Arab oppressions—Sisera and Jabin, the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna. And the Psalm ends with the words: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth". Such words require reference to the end of this era.

Further evidence may be adduced from Jeremiah 30, 31. "The time of Jacob's *trouble*" (30: 7) is one

out of which he is to be saved, so that “strangers shall *no more* serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king (the Messiah: ch. 23:5, 6), whom I will raise up unto them” (30:8, 9). The Hebrew word here-translated “trouble” is the same as that used in Genesis 32:7: “Thy brother Esau cometh to meet thee and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and *distressed* “. In the ensuing prophecy in Jeremiah 31: 7-22 about the re-gathering of Israel phrase after phrase goes back to the Genesis narrative of Jacob’s return to the Land in fear because of Syrian foes behind him and Edomite foes coming to meet him. About twenty of these allusions are traceable. The obvious intention is to represent that return of Israel the patriarch as a type of the return of Israel the nation.

Read thus the prophecy carries a strong implication that in the great “time of Jacob’s trouble”, it will be *Arab* (Esau) hostility and opposition, which must be feared rather than Russian.

The familiar details of Zechariah 14 harmonize with this view . . . “and the city shall be taken . . . and half the city (i.e. half of the population of the city) shall go forth into captivity . . . Then shall the Lord go forth . . .” (Zechariah 14:2, 3).

It is not unreasonable to identify this “captivity” of Israel in the Last Days with that described in Joel 3 :1-8. If this equation is correct, then the gathering of the hostile nations for retribution in “the valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3 :2) is highly appropriate also inasmuch as the great deliverance in King Jehoshaphat’s time was from a fearsome invasion by “Ammon and Moab, and mount Seir (Edom)” (2 Chronicles 20:10).

This prophecy of Joel concludes with the words: “Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land” (3:19).

From the foregoing accumulation of Bible evidence it can be justly claimed that a fair case is to be made out for believing that the great climax of Israel’s history is to come not with the crushing of a tiny Jewish state by a Russian steam-roller, but by the fulfilment of the great historic types of Genesis— Ishmael against Isaac, Esau against Jacob. The ultimate outcome of this clash is assured, both in type and prophecy. But first Israel must learn, through the bitterest experience of all, to abandon all reliance on working out its own salvation. As yet the Jews shew no sign whatever of assimilating the vital lesson that cleverness and industry can never be any substitute for humble faith in the God of their fathers.

Chapter 3 - A Neglected Feature Of Daniel's Prophecies

The Book of Daniel contains five separate visions or prophecies. These, on careful examination, are found to have several characteristics in common. For instance, in the brief explanatory passages they are all given a “continuous historical” fulfilment. Also, they are all Messianic—they all find their great climax in the appearance of Messiah the Prince. Yet another feature, which they have in common, is this — they all include a *long gap or break in the continuity of the fulfilment*.

All students of the prophecy have noticed this in chapter 11. Early in that chapter the vision merges into a long sequence of literal historical detail.²

This impressive sequence of detail continues to the period of the Maccabees, and then all at once the reader finds himself transported to the Last Days — “a time of trouble such as never was”, and the day of resurrection (ch. 12:1, 2—the continuity into chapter 12 is undeniable).

Somewhere, then, the continuous character of the revelation breaks off, and at a leap one is taken to the end of the age. Students of prophecy have been unanimous in their recognition of this fact. Some put the break at the end of verse 35, most at the end of verse 39; but all are agreed that the gap is there.

The ram and he-goat vision of chapter 8 is almost as explicit in making similar requirements. The explanation of the prophecy begins at verse 19: “I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation”. Then for three verses the exposition of the details proceeds in a “continuous historic” fashion presenting little difficulty.

Then, “in the latter time of their kingdom (i.e. of the four Greek kingdoms), a king of fierce countenance shall stand up”. At first, the student may be inclined to apply this to Rome, which power certainly destroyed “the holy people” and “the Prince of princes” himself. But this interpretation is vetoed by the words: “but he shall be broken without hand” (i.e. by divine power; compare chapter 2:34). This fact, combined with the clear assurance that “the vision belongeth to the time of the end” (v. 17 RV), requires that this “king of fierce countenance” be looked for in the Last Days—though doubtless Antiochus Epiphancs (vv. 9-12) or the hard power of Rome provide a vivid prototype.

It would seem then that the true exposition of verse 25 will equate this ruthless king with the Beast of Revelation 17 who, with his ten allies, is to make war with the Lamb and suffer destruction at his hands (Revelation 17:14). But whether this equation be correct or not, the gap in the prophecy is certainly there.

The same approach is now seen to provide a much more realistic view of Nebuchadnezzar's image.

² Detail so full and complete as to lead conservative scholars such as C. H. H. Wright and Boutflower to speculate that here the original prophecy has been replaced by a targum or commentary.

The commonly accepted interpretation has the following scheme (roughly):

Gold	Babylon	70 years (approx.)		
Silver	Persia	200	“	“
Brass	Greece	180	“	“
Iron	Rome	600	“	“
Iron/clay	Divided Kingdoms	1500	“	“

With the first four items here, there can be no quarrel. But the fifth is hardly so satisfactory, since in the vision the feet with their ten toes are to be destroyed by the Stone, the Messiah, whereas throughout the long period indicated they have been vigorously engaged in destroying one another.

It is more reasonable, surely, to regard the ten toes as representing *the ten kingdoms in existence at the time of Messiah's coming*. Once again, as in chapter 8, there is an equation with the ten kings who give their power and strength unto the Beast (Revelation 17: 14). Read thus, Daniel 2 provides the ten kings and Daniel 8 foretells the Beast—the two visions are complementary here.

If this alternative interpretation be accepted—and it is to be noted that it also avoids the anomaly of having the least important part of the metallic anatomy represent by far the longest period—then once again the gap in the continuity of the historical fulfilment is plainly there, between the iron representing Rome and the mixed iron and clay representing the discrete powers of the time of the end.

The problem of Daniel 7 is more complex and calls for more detailed treatment than this chapter will allow. All that can be said at the moment is that probably the familiar “Papacy” interpretation of the little horn is at best only a partial or preliminary fulfilment. An impressive case can be made for the view that the little horn represents a power which will oppress the Jews (the “saints”, the holy people; Daniel 8:24) in the Last Days immediately before the coming of their Messiah—in other words, that the little horn and the other ten correspond to the Beast and ten Kings of Revelation 17:12-14.

If this were so, then once again there appears a noteworthy gap in the prophetic sequence of Daniel 7 between the fourth kingdom (Rome) and the sensational developments of the Last Days.

To sum up so far—it may be taken as almost certain that the prophecies of Daniel 11 and 8 require a gap in the historical fulfilment, that of Daniel 2 *probably* has the same feature, whilst Daniel 7, even if it does not *require* a similar view, at any rate lends itself readily to the same scheme of interpretation. To put the matter thus is probably to understate the case.

Students of the Olivet prophecy will already have recognized that what is being argued for here is the existence in Daniel's prophecies of the same gap which exists so markedly in the words of Jesus there: “and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. This

is A.D. 70, and its ghastly consequences. The next words transport the reader to the day of Christ's return: "And there shall be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity . . .". Would any first-century student of the words of Jesus have even the smallest reason for suspecting the existence of a 1900-year gap between those two sentences?

Now back to Daniel. An examination of the famous "Seventy Weeks" prophecy in chapter 9 reveals the possible existence of the same kind of gap. The precise dating of the fulfilment does not affect the issue under consideration. The prophecy is explicit that "in the midst of the (seventieth) seven he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27). This can only mean that the cutting off of "Messiah the Prince" was to correspond to a time of 37~ years from the end of the full period of 490 years.

The question promptly thrusts itself forward: What is the significance of the remaining 3½ years?

The usual answer that this leads on to the death of Stephen and the conversion of Paul simply will not do. It is too obviously make-shift — for the following reasons:

- a. This prophecy is about "Messiah the Prince" and his great work. To have the climax of the prophecy concerned with one of his disciples is bathos, even though that disciple be Stephen or Paul.
- b. There is absolutely *no evidence* available to demonstrate that Stephen died or that Saul was converted precisely 3½ years after the crucifixion. The guesses of the "experts" about the dating of the events mentioned range from one to ten years after the death of Christ.
- c. The climax of the "seventy weeks" is to be to "finish transgression (in 'thy people' and 'thy holy city'), to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24). Is this language appropriate to the death of Stephen?

Is it possible, then, that the prophetic gap already clearly discernible in several other revelations is asserting itself here also, and that the outstanding 3½ years represent a deferment to the Last Days when the words of verse 24 just quoted will receive an abundant literal fulfilment in connection with the people of Israel and "the holy city"?

Such a possibility opens up the way to sensational re-interpretation of a number of Bible prophecies. It is proposed to explore some of these in later studies.

Chapter 4 - The Little Horn Of Daniel 7

This brief study is intended to draw attention to certain features of the commonly accepted interpretation of the Fourth Beast of Daniel 7. It would seem that the familiar application of the little horn prophecy to the Papacy is at best only a partial or preliminary fulfilment. At several points the "Papal" interpretation is hardly adequate when one considers the immense power and force of the language used.

For instance:

- a. Chapter 7:25: "he shall wear out the saints of the most High". When, it may be asked, has the Pope done this? For certainly the Huguenots were not "saints" in the true sense of the term; and the ancient confessions of faith of the Vaudois published in Muston's "Israel of the Alps" (trans. by Hazlitt) make it abundantly clear that *they* were not "saints". Then who? The present writer is not aware of any documented history that would answer to this Scripture adequately. Recent research by Bro Alan Eyre (first made public at Glasgow Youth Gathering, Easter 1963) points to the probable conclusion that if the Truth really existed in the 16th and 17th centuries, then its chief persecutors were the leaders of the orthodox *Protestant* churches!³
- b. Verse 25 again: "they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" i.e. for the prophetic period of 1260 days or "years". If this is taken as ending in 1870, then the point must be pressed that long before that date the Pope had no power at all to persecute any Protestant, much less any "saint", since such—if they existed at all during the 18th century—were emphatically not to be found in Catholic countries.
- c. There is also the awkward fact that the "Papal" interpretation runs out at 1870, leaving an unexplained hiatus of about a century up to the present day. Yet the prophecy says: "they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time". That word "until" implies very strongly that with the passing of the 3½ times there will also pass the power to persecute. Verses 21, 22 are even more pointed: "the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came..."
- d. Can it be said of the Papacy that it has truly fulfilled the words: "it shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces"?
- e. Does the Papacy really speak "great words against the most High"? Surely a phrase like this requires as its fulfilment an evil railing of the kind, which Sennacherib indulged in before the walls of Jerusalem. The words are more appropriate to modern atheistic

³ The Anabaptists" by Smithson supplies emphatic supporting evidence for this conclusion.

Communism than to a church, which does worship God, if only after a fashion.

- f. Are readers altogether satisfied with the usual explanation concerning the three up-rooted horns, that they were the three Papal states comprising “the Campagna of Rome, the Exarchate of Ravenna and the region of Pentapolis”? There seems to be a singular lack of importance about these territories. Further, if three of the horns correspond to these comparatively insignificant territories, how is the rest of the “Roman habitable” to be covered by the other seven? A consideration of the lists given by Dr. Thomas and Bro. C. C. Walker on pages 326, 327 of *Elpis Israel* (1924 edition) makes this problem acute.

The existence of difficulties such as the foregoing suggest that the “Papal” reference of the little horn prophecy is only a partial fulfilment foreshadowing something yet more drastic and precise in the Last Days.

It is interesting to observe that Dr. Thomas seems to have swung away somewhat from his original ideas on this question as expressed in *Elpis Israel*. In his *Exposition of Daniel* (page 13) written some years later, he has the following:

“The Feet of the Image and the Feet (misprint for Horns?) of the Dragon have yet to be formed out of existing elements, and it is the King of the North’s mission to accomplish the work . . . I know of no place where it is written that the Horns and Toes were to have an uninterrupted existence for 1260 years, but I do find that “The Ten Horns receive power as kings one hour with the beast” . . . so that we need not be careful to identify them until then.”

Nevertheless, somewhat surprisingly the same page identifies the little horn which up-roots three others as “The Holy Roman Empire” in existence in A.D. 800. The two points of view are not easy to reconcile. The present writer inclines to the idea implied in the quotation given above, that the ten horns refer to a development in the time of the end, and that it is in the Last Days when the little horn power will develop and do its sinister work. Further reason for this view will be advanced in a later chapter.

Chapter 5 - Daniel's Time Periods

The prophetic periods included as details in Daniel's visions have long been recognized as among the most exciting features of his prophecy. Their close connection with the time of the end is undeniable. Consequently students eager to know "when shall be the end of these wonders" and reluctant to believe their Lord when he said: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven", have indulged in an electronic orgy of ingenious computation in a laudable attempt to identify the precise time of the return of Christ.

Such zeal is wholly praiseworthy, but it is to be doubted whether it is well-directed. Certainly the fruits of these efforts have been piling up in ecclesial waste-paper baskets for the past century. A re-examination of these prophetic periods from a rather different point of view may not be amiss.

There are four of these periods mentioned:

- a. "A time, times and the dividing of time"—the duration of the little horn's power to persecute: chapter 7:25. This recurs in 12:7.
- b. 2300 days "to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot"; 8:13, 14.
- c. 1290 days, and
- d. 1335 days, closely associated with the "time, times and an half" in 12:7,11,12.

The first of these meets the student of Revelation in Revelation 12:14. It is generally agreed that "a time, times and an half" and "forty and two months" (Revelation 11:2) and 1260 days (Revelation 11:3) are equivalent; all of them represent 3 1/2 years of 360 days each. It can be mentioned in passing that no satisfactory explanation of two associated problems has (to the present writer's knowledge) ever been advanced—why a "year" of 360 days should be used, when the ancients from the time of Daniel onwards certainly knew that this was 5 3/4 days in error; and what special significance is intended by the three variants of the same period: 3 1/2 years, 42 months, 1260 days.

The classical approach to all these prophetic periods has been on the assumption that each day represents a year. The difficulties inherent in such a method of interpretation do not seem to have been adequately considered.

There are several:

- a. If the intention behind the use of days instead of years was to save Daniel from overmuch discouragement, then its use was not only morally questionable but its effect was actually cancelled out by other explicit assertions: e.g. Daniel 8:26, 27.
- b. The book of Daniel nowhere supplies a hint that a year for a day is the proper basis of interpretation. In Daniel 4:16 "seven times" means "seven literal years". And if the Seventy Weeks prophecy of chapter 9 be cited as adequate evidence, it must be

stressed in reply that neither days, weeks nor years are actually mentioned there. The phrase is, literally, “seventy sevens”.

- c. In the only other places where the Bible used a day to represent a year (Numbers 14:33, 34; Ezekiel 4:4-6), this is explicitly stated. There is nothing to match these statements in the Book of Daniel.
- d. The fruits of the application of the “year for a day” theory are singularly unsatisfying, even though~ questionable assumptions are often made in the process. In a previous chapter the termination of the 3½ “years” of Daniel 7 at A.D. 1870 was found to be not altogether satisfactory since (i) the persecuting power of the Pope ended long before that date, and (ii) the extra century which has elapsed since 1870 goes unaccounted for.
- e. The starting points of these periods have to be selected in very arbitrary fashion. It may not unreasonably be asked why the 1260, 1290 and 1335 periods of Daniel 12 are usually given as their beginning the epoch of Mohammedan ascendancy in Palestine. The clues supplied in Daniel 12 hardly suggest this: “from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up” (12:11) can hardly be applied in fairness to the Mohammedan epoch, since (i) the daily sacrifice was taken away by the Romans in A.D. 70 and (ii) Jesus himself gave a Roman application to the words: “the abomination that maketh desolate” (Matthew 24:15=Luke 21: 20).
- f. Similarly, the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13, 14 requires to be dated from the time that “the sanctuary and the host are trodden underfoot”. Yet if the date of Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the temple be used, the period runs out too soon; whilst if the desolation of Jerusalem by Titus be selected, the result is distressingly and indeed impossibly late. Attempts to cope with this difficulty have taken two forms. One stresses that the original is, literally, “two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings”, which may conceivably mean 1150days. But this becomes impossibly short, so that even the unwarranted expedient of a Mohammedan starting point is of no avail. Others have preferred the dubious Septuagint reading of 2400 days, but this does not materially ease the difficulty of the application either, as a little mental arithmetic will speedily shew.

In view of the fact that criticisms such as the foregoing can be so readily multiplied and when also regard is had to the accumulated wrecks of discredited computations, it is not altogether to be wondered at that this field of Bible study is in the doldrums, either a ground for puzzlement and vague speculation or the butt of open ribaldry because of the futility of the results arrived at. Is it possible that there is another, different, way of making sense of these enigmatic prophecies?

In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that the prophecies of Daniel all seem to include a gap in the historical fulfilment. It was also shewn that the “Seventy Weeks” prophecy left a period of 3½ years

unaccounted for at its end. Since this 32 years is exactly equivalent to the “time, times and a half” of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12, there is here a pointed suggestion that *the prophetic periods of Daniel are intended to be taken as meaning precisely what they say*, and not on the basis of a year for a day. In that case, the 1260,1290, 1335 days are to be regarded as indicating the duration of “the time of trouble such as never was” which is to engulf the people of Israel immediately before the manifestation of their Messiah.

It has also been shewn earlier in this study that many prophecies speak of a third war between Jews and Arabs in which Israel will be overrun by their implacable enemies. Putting the two ideas together, it would now appear that the duration of this final down-treading of Israel will be for a period of 31 years during which all the fruits of their national resurrection will be wrested from them or destroyed. From this desperate situation of black hopelessness only their Messiah will be able to save them.

With this idea as a working hypothesis—a hypothesis, be it noted, which has been suggested in the first place by Scripture itself—it is interesting and even exciting to go back and review the prophecies where this 32 year period is involved.

Daniel 11 concludes with the words: “and he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious mountain”, This can only mean mount Zion, midway between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. The words in this quotation pointedly suggest a prolonged occupation which is the “time of trouble such as never was” (Daniel 12:1), “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).

It is during this time that “many (in Israel) shall be purified, and made white, and tried” (12:10). No wonder that it is with regard to this period that the angel swears by Jehovah with hands uplifted, that “it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be accomplished” (12:7).

According to this interpretation, the little horn of Daniel 7 (in its final fulfilment) is this same persecutor of the Last Days: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them” (7:21). These “saints” are the Jews, the “holy people” (the same word is so translated and so used concerning Israel in chapter 8:24).

This persecutor will “speak great words against the most High”. The application of these words to the Papacy is hardly self-evident inasmuch as the Catholic Church is Christian, after a fashion, and in this 20th century is the main contender for a theistic philosophy of life against atheistic communism. But the relevance of this prophecy to a Russia-directed overthrow of the new State of Israel needs no demonstrating.

“And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time”, after which period of 3 2 years “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High” (7: 27). Possibly, though not certainly, there is a distinction here between “the people of the saints” (those who “live and reign with Christ”) and “the saints of the most High” (the nation of Israel). But this is not a conclusion that can be insisted on.

In any case the visions of Daniel are now seen to be solidly—and appropriately—*Jewish* in their reference. No one could question the appositeness of such a scheme of interpretation. Would any wish to do so? Papal and Mohammedan interpretations fly out of the window, and the purpose of God is revealed once again as an essentially *Jewish* purpose made known through Jewish prophets in a Jewish context. In chapter 8 reasons will be given for believing that the corresponding passages in Revelation are to be given a similar reference.

The existence of the gap in the continuity of the Daniel prophecies now finds a simple and more than adequate explanation: *THE VISIONS CONCERN THE EXPERIENCES OF ISRAEL IN THEIR OWN LAND*. When Israel is cast off and scattered the detail of the prophecies ceases, just as in the wilderness when Israel was punished for lack of faith in God's promises there was a period of 38 years of wilderness wanderings of which no single detail is recorded.

It is now possible to see the familiar words "the times of the Gentiles" as having yet another significance. Besides referring to the long period of Israel's scattering, they also describe specially the literal "time, times, and an half" of down-treading of Jerusalem in the Last Days. The word "times" in Luke 21:24 is the same as in the Septuagint version of Daniel. There can be little doubt that Jesus was making deliberate reference to Daniel especially since he had just quoted words "spoken by Daniel the prophet (whoso readeth, let him understand)".

One last and important conclusion remains to be brought to the reader's attention. It will be evident that if the viewpoint advocated here is correct, there now remains no material on which to base a computation of the date of the return of the Lord. All the prophetic periods of Daniel and Revelation are now seen to describe a comparatively short epoch immediately before the coming of Messiah. The gap in the prophecies is of unspecifiable duration. It is not possible to know beforehand *when* the vital 31 years will begin. Hence it is still true that "of that day and hour knoweth no man". These things "the Father hath kept in his own power". But with his saints there is the power of prayer: "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, give him no rest until he make Jerusalem a joy and a praise in the earth".

A period of 1260 days (42 lunar months and 21 days) measured from A, the Feast of Trumpets, ends at H, which would normally be the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a week after Passover G. But this period includes the accumulating error of four full years. Thus an intercalary month is necessary here. The month FJ has to fill this role, thus making JM the True Nisan for this particular year. The 1290 days finish at L, the end of the true Feast of Unleavened Bread.

And now the 1335 days run on to P, which is precisely the Feast of Pentecost.

Thus all three periods are seen to slip neatly into the Jewish calendar. And since the prophecies of Daniel are about *Israel* and Israel's relations to the great powers of the world (and not about Moslems), this kind of conclusion is almost to be expected *a priori*.

A close look at these details provides good reason for these particular feasts being chosen by God as key points in His time-table for the final deliverance of Israel.

Why should the 1260 begin from the Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23: 24)? Because this feast and the blowing of trumpets is specially associated in Israel's history with the proclaiming of the Law of God. See Nehemiah 8:2; Exodus 19:16, 19; Amos 3: 6, 7; Psalms 81: 3, 4, 8, 13, 14. This period of 32 years will later equate (chapters 7, 8) not only with the time of Jacob's trouble but also with the time of Elijah's appeal to Israel and his summons to repentance.

The blowing of trumpets is also associated with resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:31; Revelation 11: 15; 1 Corinthians 15:52). This 3½ year period marks the spiritual resurrection of Israel, the *true* fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy about the Valley of Dry Bones.

Why should the 1290 days end with the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Because now is the time when Israel ceases to eat "the bread of affliction" (see Deuteronomy 16:3). From this date forward "the abomination that maketh desolate" is no more set up in their Land (Daniel 12:11).

And why should the 1335 days end at Pentecost? Because it is the time of bestowal of the Holy Spirit. It was at Pentecost that Peter quoted to the assembled multitude of Jews the words of Joel 2 :28, 29—which prophecy has another fulfilment awaiting it in future days besides that which Jerusalem witnessed then. Wherefore—"blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1335 days".

Chapter 7 - The Repentance Of Israel

An important but sadly neglected factor in the stirring events associated with the return of the Lord is the necessary repentance of his people. In the minds of many it has been too often tacitly assumed that the coming of their King in glory will *bring about* a national repentance in Israel. Probably this is a somewhat uncertain inference from the familiar words of Zechariah 12:10: "They shall look upon me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son". The change of pronouns "me . . . him" very subtly suggests the divine character of the one who had been pierced but who now appears in glory: "The house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them" (v. 8).

It is vitally important, however, to recognize that the actual repentance of Israel is represented in an impressive mass of Bible passages as a necessary *prelude* to the coming of Christ. His return to the earth will not happen *until* the Jews turn to the God of their fathers in faith and importunity.

From the earliest days of their history this has been the reiterated burden of the prophets that there can be no divine deliverance apart from repentance. This is the necessary and sufficient condition for salvation, whether it be individual or national:

If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary to me . . . Then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the Land (Leviticus 26:40-42).

And it shall come to pass, when all these things shall come upon thee . . . and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return to the Lord thy God . . . that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations... (Deuteronomy 30:1-3).

The same essential truth is emphasized yet again in a powerful eloquent petition in Solomon's dedicatory prayer in the new temple (1 Kings 8: 44-53). The entire passage should be studied in all its impressive detail.

Here, then, is the principle upon which God has declared that He will work in His dealings with His chosen people. Through all their colourful history it has been illustrated over and over again. The book of Judges is one long series of variations on the theme. Yet the present-day restoration of Israel, after one of the most ghastly experiences in their history, appears to have been achieved without any real sign of contrition or godliness. Sad to say, the modern state of Israel has been built on fanatical human endeavour and incredibly clever human contrivance. Admission of guilt before God and prayers for His pardon are not an outstanding characteristic of modern Jewish life.

Then is not the inference inevitable that the present re-construction of national Israel is without the

blessing of God and must inevitably crash into ruin? Can God permanently bless that which ignores His control and indeed denies His very existence?

Before Israel can be truly restored to God's favour, and experience the happiness of Messiah's reign, there must be a willingness to acknowledge the divine law and also to say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".

Prophet and apostle combine in their emphasis on this necessary principle. Jeremiah has two majestic passages where the reign of the promised Messiah is made conditional on Israel's repentance:

Return, O backsliding children, saith the Lord . . . and I will take you one of the city and two of a family (the wholesome minority in Israel?), and I will bring you to Zion; and I will give you shepherds according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding . . . At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the name of the Lord.

Again the entire passage—Jeremiah 3: 12-19 should be studied.

Jeremiah 4:1, 2 has the same basic message:

If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, *if* thou shalt not remove, *if* thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgement, and in righteousness; *then* shall the nations bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. (Corrected translation)

The apostle Peter's appeal to Jerusalem was the same:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . . *and that he may send* Jesus the Messiah which before was preached unto you (Acts 3:19, 20 RV).

The clear meaning of the Greek text makes Jewish repentance a necessary condition of the coming of Christ—even as he himself plainly declared: "I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth *till* ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23: 39)".

Paul's argument in Romans 11 stated almost like a proportion sum in arithmetic, requires the same conclusion: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (11:15); i.e. as the consequence of Israel's rejection of the Christ has been the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, so also the repentance of Israel will bring the resurrection (at the coming of the Lord).

Add to the lengthy evidence already cited such other Scriptures as Zephaniah 2:3, Isaiah 59:20, Amos 5:15, Psalms 81:13, 14, Zechariah 6:15, and it may fairly be claimed that the conclusion argued for is not merely probable but inevitable. Neither Biblically nor morally is there any alternative.

But how is this return of Israel to their God to come about? Certainly not through the persuasive efforts of modern preachers of the gospel. What Jesus himself failed to do and what defeated the best efforts of Peter and Paul is hardly likely to be achieved through the eloquence, skill and zeal of the best team the modern Christadelphian world can muster.

The Bible indicates that two factors will combine to achieve what three milleniums of history have not yet wrought.

An earlier chapter in this series indicated Bible evidence for believing that Jewish pride of achievement in their new state of Israel — a very justifiable pride, humanly speaking — is soon to be humbled by yet another desolation of the Land, this time at the hands of their Arab enemies.

It needs but little exercise of the imagination to realize what will be the effect of such an experience on those who have laboured and schemed through their own self-reliant efforts to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Here amid Arab squalor, laziness and ineptitude the Jews have bent all their national energy and skill to the fashioning of a jewel of modern statecraft. For the Arabs around them, whom they have three times defeated with ease in recent wars, the Jews have nothing but contempt.

What, then, will be the psychological effect when these despised enemies ruthlessly and gloatingly destroy all that has been done by the clever planning and consecrated endeavour of a generation of irrepressible Jews? This is to be their national home, to which any Jew can come for asylum from the world's insane anti-Semitism. This State of Israel is to be the focus and expression of all that is finest and best in Jewish life throughout five continents.

To see all this crash in ruins and to experience again the worst horrors of Belsen as Esau out-Hitlers Hitler in his mad fury against Jacob — such an experience will utterly and finally extinguish the hitherto incurable Jewish adherence to the doctrine of salvation by one's own works. A nation, which has never properly learned the meaning of faith in God — (children in whom is no faith) —, will then be shut up to faith in His power to deliver, as the only alternative available to them. Then "they will cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he will deliver them out of their distresses".

At precisely such a time there will appear among them a second John the Baptist to turn the hearts of the fathers into those of children and the hearts of the children to be like their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This was necessary before Messiah came the first time. Then John made his great call to national repentance: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). It was needful then that "my messenger prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3: 1).

So again in the Last Days, when Jewry is reduced to utter hopelessness and black despair amidst the ruins of their highest endeavour, "God will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4: 5).

It has often been argued, on the basis of Luke 1:17 that the Malachi prophecy has already had its fulfilment in John the Baptist, but this view can be conceded as supplying only an incomplete foreshadowing of a greater work. “If ye are willing to receive him, this is Elias” said Jesus—and the Jews were not. In any case the explicit: “Elias truly *shall come* first” (Matthew 17:11) ends all argument. That use of a future tense after the death of John, together with the context (“they have done unto John whatsoever they listed”) should remove all doubts.

This Elijah that is yet to appear in Israel need not be the original Elijah in person, risen from the dead. Since the Malachi prophecy could have been fulfilled by John “in the spirit and power of Elias”, the same prophecy may be fulfilled again through any other man whom God may raise up in like character for a similar work.

It has already been suggested that “the time of Jacob’s trouble” in the Last Days will be for a period of 1260 literal days—the unused 32 years of the Seventy Weeks prophecy. Since the ministry of the first Elijah lasted for precisely that period of time (Luke 4:25, James 5:17, 18)⁴ before God sent rain upon the earth, it seems highly probable that this final visitation of woe upon the people of Israel will also coincide with the ministry of repentance proclaimed by the Elijah “which is for to come”. Thus when the manifestation of their Messiah takes place at the end of that period there will be in the Land “a people prepared for the Lord”, a people chastened and humbled by the hammer blows of a benign Providence determined to save them from themselves.

In a later chapter it is proposed to shew how certain details in the Apocalypse reinforce the conclusions just reached. The present investigation may be rounded off by a re-consideration of two familiar parables of Jesus.

It has often been observed that the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:1-8) comes at the end of a long discourse about the second coming and that it also concludes with a further reference to the second coming. Here is strong presumptive evidence that the parable was intended to have special reference to the people of Israel in the Last Days. When also it is recognized that the parable has remarkable similarities, both verbally and in idea, to Jeremiah 15: 15, 18 this conclusion is reinforced. The details now fall into place thus:

The widow appropriately represents Israel during the centuries when the nation has been deprived of God—“thy Maker is thine husband”. During these years of persecution and hardship God has seemed to them as a harsh and unjust judge. Only when they turn to God with importunity not to be gainsaid will He turn again the captivity of His people: “And shall not God avenge his own elect (Israel), which cry day and night unto him, though (hitherto) he be long-suffering with regard to them. I tell you that (when they do so turn to him in importunity) he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith (this faith which refuses to be said nay) in the Land?”

⁴ Where did Jesus and James get this *precise* period of drought in Ahab's reign? It is not to be found in, or even inferred from, 1 Kings 17, 18. Is each of these passages a direct additional revelation or an interpretative link with Daniel?

Also, “Learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is now *become tender*, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh”.

On countless occasions this parable has been “rightly” applied to Israel in the Last Days. But is it possible that the emphasis on the development of the *State* of Israel has been misplaced? On a former occasion Jesus came to the fig tree seeking fruit meet for repentance and found none, although such expectation at that time of the year was fully justified (see Song of Songs 2: 11, 13). From that day to this, that fig tree has been blasted and without fruit for God, but now in these Last Days the putting forth of leaves must be and will be accompanied by the signs of young, immature fruit which betoken an abundant harvest when the summer, which is now nigh, brings its encouraging warmth and blessing.

Chapter 8 - The Two Witnesses

It is with reluctance that the writer has to begin by an assertion of belief that the standard Christadelphian expositions of Revelation 11 are inadequate. “The second woe (about the two witnesses) is past; and behold, the third woe (which is explicitly about the resurrection and the kingdom) cometh quickly” (v. 14). Such language *requires* that the vision of the two witnesses have reference to the Last Days. Any other interpretation is at best only a partial or anticipatory fulfilment.

Here, as in all the rest of Revelation, the safest principle of interpretation to follow is to seek the guidance afforded by allowing Scripture to explain Scripture, rather than by exploring the byways of religious and political history for an adequate set of correspondences. Throughout this chapter the method will be that of *Biblical* exposition, although only in a sketchy fashion, for what Eureka II, chapter 11, spends half a million words on, the present allocation is two thousand.

The vision begins with instructions to measure the temple of God. It is a spiritual temple composed of men and women, as the words “even them that worship therein” plainly imply. “But the court which is without the temple leave out (i.e. excommunicate; see RVm) . . . for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot”. These words connect so directly with the familiar words of Jesus that the meaning is plain: “and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

There is here, then, a symbolic picture of Israel cast off and the new temple of Jesus Christ appointed in place of that which has been given over to destruction.

The “forty and two months”, which is the exact equivalent of the 3½ “times” mentioned elsewhere in Daniel and Revelation is now seen to represent “the times of the Gentiles”. Whatever chronological application may be assigned to these words through history, the present writer is persuaded (see chapter 5) that this “forty and two months” also indicates a literal period of 3½ years in the Last Days during which the great crises of human and divine purposes will be resolved.

It is during this period of 1260 days (v. 3) that the two witnesses do their prophesying. The identification of these witnesses as the *people of Israel* will be fully established from Biblical evidence as this study proceeds. For the present it will be sufficient to remind readers of the familiar words in Isaiah 43 “Bring . . . forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf people that have ears . . . Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant (Israel) whom I have chosen” (vv. 8, 10). Blind in reading their own Scriptures, and deaf to the claims of their own Messiah, through long centuries Israel has continued as God’s unmistakable testimony to the world.

Why two witnesses? To represent Law and Prophets surely — as the ensuing verses also require — so as to emphasize that the chief witness of this blind and deaf nation has been through the Word of Light and Truth of which they have been the custodians. Also, it is “at the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word (of God, as well as of man) shall be established”.

The reference in verse 4 to “two olive trees and candlesticks standing before the God of the Land” takes the reader back to Zechariah 4, where (in its primary meaning) the vision spoke of the beginnings of a new temple about to be raised in Jerusalem when Israel were returned from captivity. This pointedly suggests that the witnesses signify Israel returned to the Land from another captivity, soon to rise to the glory of God a new spiritual temple.

The signs, which accompany their witnessing, are designed to suggest Moses and Elijah. Fire out of their mouth,⁵ devouring their enemies and the restraining of the rain of heaven for 32 years both echo the ministry of Elijah (2 Kings 1:10, 12; James 5:16, 17). Turning water into blood, and smiting the earth with all its plagues was, of course, the work of Moses.

But it is not to be assumed that these signs and judgements are to be brought literally upon their enemies by the Jews in the Last Days (though indeed a good case could be made for taking this as representing Israel’s power over Arab enemies in recent wars). Preferably the words should be taken as indicating God’s judgements on the persecutors of Israel on the basis of the principle: “Him that curseth thee, I will curse”. Such passages as the following chime in with this view: “Therefore I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth” (Hosea 6:5); “See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down and to plant and to build” (Jeremiah 1 10); “Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them” (Jeremiah 5: 14).

The beast which makes war with the witnesses and kills them (v. 7) may safely be interpreted as the great enemy of Israel in the Last Days by whom the Land is invaded. Revelation 17:11-14 may suggest (but here one moves warily and without dogmatism) Arab confederacy with Russian leadership and inspiration. Certainly the rest of this vision harmonizes well with such a conclusion.

The dead body of the witnesses lying in the street of the great city for 3½ days must indicate the utter desolation, over a period of 3½ years, of the new National Home so laboriously re-established by Jewry.

Every detail here, by its Biblical associations, points to such a conclusion. The “great city where also their Lord was crucified” identifies Jerusalem. And an impressive array of Scriptures (Isaiah 1:9, 10 and 3: 8, 9; Jeremiah 23: 14; Deuteronomy 32:32; Ezekiel 23: 3, 4, 8, 19) connects both Sodom and Egypt with the spiritual character of God’s own people “called Sodom and Egypt”.

How appropriate is the close correspondence between the experiences of the witnesses, as described here, and the experience of Jesus whom the Jews still reject. Both have their witness ignored or rejected. For both there is violent death in Jerusalem, to the great rejoicing of their enemies. Both experience a resurrection at a time of earthquake and also ascension to heaven in the Shekinah Cloud of Glory.

⁵ The singular indicates a community and not two individuals. So also does the singular "carcase" (not carcasses) in the Greek text of v. 8.

As already suggested, the 32 days' exposure of the bodies probably represents a period of 3½ years—not so much because “a year for a day” is an established principle in Bible prophecy, though there are two clear-cut examples of it available: Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:5, 6; but because this 3½ year period has entered into the prophecy twice already (w. 2, 3), and also because to have said “they shall see their dead bodies three years and a half” would have been to import into the prophecy too big an element of unreality.

What dead bodies would lie exposed anywhere for 32 years?

To disallow the entombment of a dead body is the height of indignity and insult. Thus is suggested the contumely and wretchedness, which is to come upon Israel in what, more than at any period in their history, will be “the time of Jacob’s trouble”. “And they that dwell in the Land (i.e. their bitter Arab enemies) shall rejoice over them and make merry, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt in the Land”⁶ (v. 10).

Ishmael was ever a mocker of Isaac, especially in times of misfortune, and since recent history has made the Jews more than ever a smoke in the nose and a thorn in the side of every Arab in and around Palestine, this vindictiveness will know no limit when for the last time Arab gloats over Jew. It is now appropriate to bring together an astonishing series of allusions made in Revelation 11 to Psalm 79:

Psalm 79	Revelation 11
v. 1 The heathen (Gentiles) are come into thine inheritance, thy holy city have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.	v. 2 The court without the temple is given to the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread underfoot.
v. 2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of heaven.	v. 8 And their dead body shall lie in the street of the great city.
v. 2 the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.	v. 7 the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them.
v. 3 and there was none to bury them.	v. 9 and they shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.
v. 4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.	v. 10 And they that dwell in the Land shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts to one another.
v. 6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen. v. 12 Render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom.	v. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come . . . and shouldest destroy them that destroy the Land (by the Seven Vials— “all plagues” v. 6).

⁶ In both Old Testament and New Testament the word for "earth" also means "land"; and vice versa.

v. 13 So we thy people the sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever.	v. 17 We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty . . . because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned.
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From a correspondence so plainly established, certain conclusions follow:

- a. The two witnesses represent the nation of Israel in the Land (yet more confirmatory evidence for this conclusion is available).
- b. The death of the witnesses represents (temporary) extinction of Israel as an organized nation, but not an utter end of all the Jews in the Land: “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee”—and compare verse 4. Readers may care to trace the half-dozen resemblances between Lamentations 2 and Revelation 11 and find the above conclusions reinforced.

The most striking point of all now follows: “And after three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet” (v. 11). What is this but a repetition of the familiar “Valley of Dry Bones” prophecy? — “So I prophesied as he commanded me and the breath (v. 5: breath of Life: LXX⁷) came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezekiel 37 :10). The verbal coincidences with the Septuagint text are very striking. And since there is no argument about the reference of Ezekiel 37 to the people of Israel (see v. 11 there), ought not the same conclusion to be equally secure in Revelation 11?

The ascension of the witnesses is, of course, not to be understood literally. It probably symbolizes the repentance of Israel, as shattered by the destruction of all their hopes centred in their national home, they respond in desperation to the appeals and exhortations of Messiah’s forerunner, the “Elijah” of Malachi 4:5.

At different times much study of the Book of Revelation has been befogged by a mistaken insistence that “heaven” means “political ascendancy”, whereas the constant testimony of Revelation itself is that what is seen or described as taking place in “heaven” concerns those who hold covenant-relation with God, and are associated with the heavenly sanctuary described in chapters 4, 5. Events concerning those not in the divine covenant appear as taking place on the earth. Such passages as 15: 1, 2 and 19:1 and 7:15 and 6:4, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 become very luminous when studied from this point of view. There are many other examples.

⁷ LXX=Septuagint version.

Appropriately, then, in Revelation 11 the witnesses represent at first the Jews in their condition of unbelief and therefore on the “earth”. The inbreathing of the spirit or breath of God means their spiritual re-awakening and therefore, again appropriately, they are now transferred to the heavenly sphere.

“What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead” wrote Paul. Accordingly the third woe — a woe to their enemies — “cometh quickly”. This seventh trumpet is the last trump, which announces resurrection and the transfer of the kingdoms of men to our Lord and his Christ. When, and only when, Israel say: “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”, will they see him whom they pierced.

Thus the entire vision, when interpreted by the Bible rather than by history, is seen to harmonize with—and indeed to summarize—the main conclusion reached in earlier chapters in the present series.

Chapter 9 - The Sign Of The Son Of Man In Heaven

Jesus plainly asserted that at the time of his coming again there will be “signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations”. The words in the first part of this quotation are usually (and rightly) given a figurative application, but the conjunction with words, which are starkly literal, is somewhat startling. And when it is considered how the element of literality has so often obtruded itself in the fulfilment of figurative prophecies (see for example, 2 Peter 3:10), the student can hardly refrain from wondering if there will not be a literal as well as figurative fulfilment here also. Modern developments in rocket science make sensational phenomena in the sky not so much a possibility as a probability.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 24 continue: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (v. 30).

This sign of the Son of man in heaven has provoked many widely differing speculations. The one, which has most recommended itself, is the idea that this sign is the return of the Jews to Palestine. The parable of the fig tree coming two verses later is doubtless a recommendation in this direction. But why should this sign in particular be labelled the sign of the Son of man? For could it not be argued that every sign which heralds his coming is a sign of the Son of man? Again, how is the return of the Jew to Zion a sign *in heaven*? To explain this figurative element has to be imported once again, and somewhat awkwardly here. The rest of the verse is literal enough. Also it may be asked: Where or what is the connection with the rest of the passage if it is the Jewish sign which is alluded to?

These are not insuperable obstacles, but it must be granted that an interpretation which avoids these snags, and which takes the words as meaning just what they say, and which ties all the phrases of the context together has much more to recommend it.

It is worthwhile, then, to recall that when Jesus came the first time there was a sign of the Son of man in heaven—the star seen by the wise men. It was a literal sign in the literal sky. This immediately suggests a similar appearance in the day (or night) when he comes again.

It is useful also to observe that whilst that first sign is called a “star” it was not literally a star but was so called because of the similarity to a star and because “star” afforded the best brief description of it. The fact may have eluded the notice of readers that since this “star” came and “stood over where the young child was” (Matthew 2:9) it could not possibly have been any normal heavenly body. The star, which appears to be directly over my chimney-pot at 9 p.m., also appears to be directly over my friend’s chimneypot five miles away, at the same moment.

This “star”, then, must have been quite low in the sky—as low, probably lower, than the altitude of a modern aeroplane. The guess may be hazarded that it was a manifestation of the cherubim of glory, “the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof”.

Yet when the angels announced the royal birth to the shepherds their word was: “And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger”. To them the sign was to be Christ himself—but, let it be noted—not a Christ in royal splendour but one wrapped and surrounded by all the signs of human weakness and destitution —swaddling clothes, appropriate to the nature which he then bore.

The two ideas, combined together, are readily transferable back to Matthew 24:30. The sign of the Son of man will be a literal sight in the sky. The sign will be the Son of man himself as he comes to the earth. But whereas he came before with all the symbols of our pathetic fallen nature, he will come this second time “in power and great glory” appropriate to his royal dignity. He will come “on the clouds of heaven”—not ordinary nimbus or cumulus clouds, but in the Cloud of the Shekinah Glory which shepherded Israel out of Egypt, the Cloud which was transferred from Moses and Elijah to himself and his disciples on the mount of Transfiguration, the Cloud which received him when he ascended to the Father’s right hand. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that there is *no* Biblical warrant for taking “clouds of heaven” to mean “clouds of people”. Hebrews 12:1 uses a different Greek word. And in any case Jesus does not come with his glorified ones, but to them.

In short, then, the sign will be Jesus himself coming in the vivid visible Glory of God, and seen in the sky by all the world as he comes to his inheritance.

This topic of the actual coming of Christ has been much befogged by strange nebulous ideas of a two-fold manifestation—first, in secret to his saints, and then in full power and majesty to his enemies. This is another notion, which can hardly be too strongly reprobated. The only Bible evidence one ever hears cited in support of it is: “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Yet the very next words make it plain that to those who are prepared and watchful the second advent will be in no sense thief-like. The same figure of the thief in the Letter to Sardis makes it clear that it will only be the unprepared who find the Lord’s coming a nasty shock.

The Lord’s own words elsewhere refute utterly and completely the idea of a stealthy or secret advent: “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert (of Sinai!?!); go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:26, 27). It would be difficult to find more explicit words than these. Lightning is unmistakably lightning; it has never been mistaken for a house on fire or even for a photo flash bulb. The coming of Christ will be clear, impressive, majestic, seen by all, but understood only by a few.

“The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels” (Matthew 16: 27). “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God . . .” (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8).

Such passages speak for themselves. They are reinforced by Matthew 24:30 “Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they (the tribes of the earth) shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”.

Yet another phenomenon will add to the awe-inspiring grandeur of this majestic visitation. Some prophecies suggest that the day of the Lord's coming will be a time of unnatural darkness comparable with that, which was experienced on the day of crucifixion.

The preceding words, if to be taken literally have this very idea: "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven . . ."

In strange mysterious language Zechariah 14 hints at the same thing: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light" (w. 4, 6, 7).

Joel describes the day of the Lord as "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (2:2).

Zephaniah has almost identical language: "The great day of the Lord is near . . . a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (1:14, 15). Passages in Amos and Isaiah carry the same idea.

If this comes to pass literally the effect on the nations of the world will be electric. Imagine the entire globe wrapped in gloom. As Jesus approaches the earth in radiant splendour, the visible manifestation of the Shekinah Glory, all—literally all—the peoples of the world will witness this unique mysterious, startling spectacle. Only a few will know the meaning of this, which they behold. To them it is "the sign of the Son of man in heaven". The rest will stare in amazement and terror: "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the Clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

Chapter 10 - Judgement At Sinai ?

It is probably correct to say that the big majority of readers of these words think of mount Sinai as the place where the Judgement will take place when the Lord comes again “to judge the quick and the dead”. Over the years this has become almost an integral part of Christadelphian thinking on eschatology.

The idea is usually based upon three Old Testament passages. These—it is now submitted—do not actually contain the idea which has often been confidently derived from them. It is proposed to re-examine them in the light of other Scriptures.

“The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of his saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deuteronomy 33: 2).

“The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan . . . this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea the Lord will dwell in it for ever. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as m Sinai, in the holy place (or as RVm, Sinai is in the sanctuary)” (Psalm

“God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise”. (Habakkuk 3: 3).

This, so far as can be ascertained, is *all* the evidence for Sinai being the place of judgement.

Deuteronomy 33, it is claimed, has never been fulfilled (e.g. vv. 8, 12); therefore its reference is to an event yet future.

Psalm 68 is certainly Messianic and the verses quoted require the inclusion of Sinai in the “programme”.

Habakkuk 3 is certainly a prophecy; the Hebrew text includes a future tense: “God *will come* from Teman”. Therefore the words have reference to some theophany not yet known in the days of the prophet.

Over against these arguments the following points are worthy of note:

1. To say that Deuteronomy 33 has never yet had fulfilment is a sweeping assertion calling for much more pointed evidence than is usually cited. Indeed the context of the verse quoted above is quite clearly that of *Israel in the wilderness*: “Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob” (v. 4). Do these words also refer to the gathering of the saints in Christ at Sinai? It is hard to believe that they do. From the beginning to the end of this long chapter the reference

is plainly to natural Israel. Until the rest of it has received full and detailed interpretation on other lines, the application of verse 2 to a future judgement must be regarded as precarious.

2. The mention of “ten thousand of saints” has been misleading to many. Yet these “saints” or “holy ones” (RV) are clearly angels, as the parallel passage in Psalms 68 plainly asserts; compare also Eureka II 551.
3. The “hill of God” spoken of in Psalm 68 is not Sinai but Zion. Several considerations put this conclusion beyond dispute. The next verse speaks of it as “the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in *it for ever*”; and a later passage celebrates “thy temple at Jerusalem” (v. 29). The historical background to the Psalm points the same way. This (like 24 and 30) is one of the Psalms, which celebrate David’s triumphal inauguration of the tabernacle on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (see especially vv. 24-29). Here historical perspective is specially emphasized. The bringing of the ark to Zion is seen as the culmination of an important phase of the divine purpose, which began with Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and continued with their wilderness experiences and their struggle up to a consolidated nationhood in the Land of Promise. Thus, if Psalm 68 refers to the day and place of Judgement at all, it points to Jerusalem and not to Sinai.
4. In Habakkuk 3, once again, the historical element, embedded in the prophecy has not been adequately appreciated. The first 15 verses of this Psalm are shot through with historical allusions to God’s mighty acts on behalf of His people in former days. The whole point of this prayer of the prophet is to insist with an importunity not to be gainsaid: “Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known”, i.e. what You did, Lord, so majestically for Your people in times past, deign to repeat now in the time of their affliction. Hence the immediate allusion to Sinai and the wilderness journey: “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran”.
5. It is easy to overlook that the future tense of verse 3: “ God will come . . . ” — a phrase which is made to bear the entire weight of the argument at this point—can also be read as a Hebrew Jussive: “Let God come . . .” And since this is the *prayer* of Habakkuk: “cause thy work to live”, this reading is almost certainly the correct one.
6. The idea of a Last-Day repeat of the wilderness journey and conquest of the Land under Jesus-Joshua has surely been pressed further than Scripture warrants. The familiar words of Micah 7:15 should read: “As in the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things” (RV). This certainly suggests that the wonders of the days of Moses will be matched by equal marvels in the time of Christ’s glory. But neither this language nor any other prophecy seems to require a direct and detailed fulfilment of those experiences as a type of the promised blessing of the saints. (The note by Bro. C. C. Walker on page 449 of *Elpis Israel* 1924 edition should by

all means be consulted.) Indeed such Scriptures as Revelation 7:15-17 seem quite definite in taking the wilderness history as foreshadowing of the saints during their *mortal* probation.

7. The last and most important observation of all to be made on this question is this: Even if it were conceded altogether that the three Scriptures under review are definitely prophecies of the Last Days, one is still constrained to enquire: *Where do they say one single word about the judgement of the saints? So far as can be seen that is an element of the prophecy which is there only by implication, if that; perhaps intuition might be a more appropriate word, or maybe even, conjecture. Is such considerable uncertainty a fit and proper ground for a precise belief (amounting to conviction in the minds of many) concerning so solemn and awful an occasion as the Day of Judgement?*

By contrast, it may be asked whether Paul would have written as he did in his allegory of the two mountains and the two women, if he had held any such belief that Sinai would be the place of judgement and immortalisation of the saints: "The one (covenant) from mount Sinai, *which gendereth to bondage*, which is (i.e. corresponds to) Hagar. For this Hagar is (i.e. symbolizes the same as) mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is (i.e. in Paul's day wedded to a slavish adherence to the Law of Moses), and is in bondage with her children".

Paul's exposition on the one hand and the glory of the saints at Sinai on the other appear as two incompatibles.

There is one very plain and familiar Scripture which, perhaps by its very familiarity, has been continually by-passed in the study of this subject, and this in itself appears to be decisive that *the judgement will take place in Jerusalem*: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31, 32).

Attempts have been made (on the strength of the phrase "all nations") to give this parabolic picture of judgement a *national*, as distinct from an *individual*, application. Indeed, going further than that, the very results of Messiah's judgement have sometimes been announced beforehand, with Protestant countries on the right hand, and Papal and Communist countries on the left!

Whether this is a right dividing of the nations may be left to the Messiah himself. Whether this is a right dividing of the Word of God may be safely left to the reader. Even if the words: "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" were not decisive enough in themselves, it would only be necessary to consider whether at any time, even with the Chosen Race itself, God's eternal salvation has ever been offered on any basis save that of *individual* faith and repentance.

It is to be noted, then, that this judgement—*the* Judgement—is to take place when the King sits “on the throne of his glory”. That throne, as all readers are already aware, is to be in Jerusalem, not in Sinai.

Further, when the force of certain other prophetic Scriptures is appreciated, it would seem that Sinai is excluded altogether from this programme of the future.

When the Shekinah Glory departed from the first temple, the prophet Ezekiel chronicled its removal in a series of deliberate stages. In vision he saw the Glory remove from the Sanctuary to “the threshold of the House” thence to “the east gate”, thence to “the mountain (the mount of Olives), which is on the east side of the city”, and thence to heaven—“the vision went up from me” (Ezekiel 10:4, 19 and 11:23, 24). With the new Temple completed, the Glory is to return by the same route—first descending to the Mount of Olives, and then entering the Temple by the east gate (43: 2, 4).

All this, it has often been observed, is accurately typical of Jesus, the Glory of Jehovah. In the temple he declared: “Your House is left unto you desolate, until . . .” Thence he went to the Mount of Olives, and looking across the glen he foretold destruction and desolation. Later, from the Mount of Olives he ascended to heaven and in the time of his manifestation “his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”, from which spot he will enter the City of the Great King.

Is there here any possible room for a judgement at Sinai and for the ensuing complicated manoeuvres, which a rigid and almost literal adherence to the wilderness type would require?

Whatever element of doubt may still exist in the minds of readers concerning Sinai and judgement, there is one related consideration of even higher importance about which Scripture speaks with such clarity as hardly to allow of any possible doubt or alternative: *the saints will receive their immortality at Jerusalem.*⁸

The evidence for this⁹ is remarkably copious and explicit. It needs no explanation; it can be left to speak for itself:

1. “And he will destroy in *this mountain* the face of the covering that is cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isaiah 25: 7, 8). The New Testament quotes these words with reference to the resurrection and the ultimate blessing of the saints (1 Corinthians 15:54; Revelation 7:17; and 21:4). “In this mountain” can only be “mount Zion and Jerusalem” (24:23).
2. In Psalm 133 “brethren dwelling together in unity” (saints of God united with their great High Priest) are compared to “the dew (symbol of the Holy Spirit) that cometh down on

⁸ Eureka II 553 is surely in error in placing the immortalisation of the saints at Sinai.

⁹ For which the present writer remains deeply indebted to the late beloved and esteemed brother Will Watkins.

the mountains of Zion: for *there* the Lord commanded the blessing, even *life for evermore*".

3. Psalm 87: 5, 6: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her, and the Most High himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there". When, it may be asked, has God reckoned natural birth in Jerusalem an outstanding blessing? The words must surely speak of the day when "His foundation is in the holy mountains".
4. Isaiah 4: 2, 3: "In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious . . . And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written unto life (RVm) in Jerusalem".
5. Joel 2: 28, 32: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh . . . in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance . . ." The fact that the primary fulfilment of these words was appointed for Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) is in itself more than a hint as to its greater fulfilment yet to come.
6. Psalm 102:18-21: "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem".
7. Matthew 27: 52, 53: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, *and went into the holy city*, and appeared unto many". The significance of the details of this typical resurrection will not be lost on the observant reader.

It may, then, be fairly safely concluded that probably the Judgement of the Saints will take place at Jerusalem, not at Sinai, and that almost certainly they will receive their great blessing, "even life for evermore", in the Holy City.

The actual duration of the Judgement has often been a matter for speculation, as also has the actual nature of that "Great Assize". On the basis of Daniel's 1260 and 1335 "days" (Daniel 12:7, 12) the idea is hinted at in *Elpis Israel* (1st edition pp. 322-5, but excluded by later editors) of a Judgement period of 75 years.¹⁰

¹⁰ But Dr. Thomas's ambiguous wording here might possibly mean a 75-year period of judgement on the nations.

The language of Matthew 25 seems to exclude all possibility of such a long drawn-out procedure. The Judgement will be “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats”. Even though sheep and goats are zoologically remarkably alike¹¹ the fact still remains that an eastern shepherd (and even a western townee!) can distinguish the two at a glance. There is no need to examine the animal this way and that in an attempt to ascertain its species accurately!

So also, one may be fairly confident, there will be no prolonged investigation necessary in the Day to decide whether this or that is “sheep” or “goat”. In fact the phrase “Great Assize” is a hopeless misnomer, because of its implications of slow patient cross-examination and weighing of pros and cons concerning the prisoner in the dock.

Jesus will know at a glance which are his and which are not. And even without a glance, for both sheep and goats betray their true character as soon as they open their mouths. It is even thus in the Lord’s parable: “When saw we thee . . .?”

¹¹ Perhaps the Lord, not unaware of this fact, intended it to carry added significance in his parable!

Chapter 11 - The Call Of The Saints

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31).

This gathering of the saints to meet their Lord at his coming is familiar enough in idea to all readers. Not a little speculation has gone into various attempts to fill out the details of this experience which is to mean so much to those who are concerned in it. Such sanctified surmises are not to be discouraged, provided the overall restraint of basic principles of Scripture is not thrust aside. The more these wonderful experiences of the future can be clothed with practical reality, the greater the aid to faith. But in such matters, let it be remembered there is little or no room for dogmatism. Possibly, probably, certainly—of these qualifying adverbs the first two are always more appropriate than the other.

There is one element in this doctrine of the “rapture” of the saints which seems to be hinted at in most of the Bible passages concerning it but which does not seem to have received the degree of attention it deserves. In its simplest form it meets the student of prophecy in the parable of the ten virgins.

That this parable was spoken specially for the warning of saints alive at the Lord’s return can hardly be questioned. “*Then* (in the day when ‘the lord of that servant cometh’—Matthew 24:50) shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins”. The interpretation of the details of the parable is not without its difficulties. The words “they all slumbered and slept” cannot possibly refer to the sleep of death, but is rather to be taken as a picture of the ecclesias in the Last Day—all, without exception, being caught unawares by the Lord’s appearing. It may be taken as certain that no matter how careful and rigorous one’s scrutiny of Scripture in an attempt to know clearly beforehand the precise details of the divine “programme”, all—repeat, all—will be startled and shocked by the actual event and its accompanying cry: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him”.

An integral part of the ensuing story is that the foolish ones, knowing themselves to be utterly unprepared, did not immediately respond to this call, but instead went off in a frantic and none-to-easy attempt to buy oil in the middle of the night.

When the Lord comes and calls his own, none will feel worthy to meet him; nor will there be, in that sudden flash of honest self-awareness, which the experience will bring, even a willingness to meet him. All, without exception, will know themselves to be unworthy. But the essential difference between the two classes will be that some will have “oil in their vessels”—a solid unshakeable faith in the grace of Christ, rather than in their own achievements in godliness—whereas the others will have neither.

Thus it transpires that some “go in with him to the marriage”, whilst the others with lamps alight, truly, but themselves untidy and flustered, arrive too late. They have come with their lamps, intent on shewing their devotion, and yet more intent on having a share in the universal joy and gladness, only to find the door shut in their faces, and a peremptory disowning word of rebuke spoken from the other side of it. What can their poor flickering lamps add to the blaze of light within the wedding feast? Their very coming in such circumstances is a futility and impertinence.

Behind all these vivid parabolic details, which become the more impressive as the mind dwells upon them, must lie a solemn reality. Is it possible to avoid the idea that when the call goes out bidding the saints come to meet their Lord, a not inconsiderable class will all at once realize their utter unpreparedness and react instinctively with a “Not now, but later. Give me time. I am not quite ready yet”?

All experience of human nature suggests that something of this sort is bound to happen. And if this is not the very situation envisaged by the parable, then what *do* the details mean? To say that they are meaningless— just part of the drapery to fill out an arresting story—is in effect to throw more than half of the parable away and comes near to accusing Jesus of telling stories for the benefit of itching ears. All experience of the gospels informs the reverent student that Jesus of Nazareth was no waster of words.

It would seem, then, from this parable of the virgins that there is a distinct possibility that the call of the saints will be backed by moral but not physical sanctions. The disciple when bidden “Go ye out to meet him” will not be whisked away willy-nilly by a lock of his head, nor in the latest jet air-liner, but will be taken if he is willing to respond to the call.

There are very few Scriptures, which speak of this call of the saints to judgement, yet it is remarkable how many of them carry some hint of this idea, which the parable of the virgins seems to require.

The Last Day was compared by Jesus in detail with “the days of Noah” and “the days of Lot”. It is noteworthy that in both instances, when the time came for the faithful to be taken away they were *invited* and *constrained* but not compelled, to come to safety: “Come thou into the ark”; “Arise . . . lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city . . . Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither”.

The exhortation of Jesus carried with it the same implication: “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.¹² Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:30-32).

The question is not to be evaded: if the gathering of the saints to Christ is to be by physical compulsion, what point is there here in the reference to Lot’s wife? The parallel between her experience and that of the foolish virgins is remarkably close.

It is possible that the familiar passage which follows may have had a different intention from the interpretation usually put upon it: “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:36, 37).

¹² The fact that Matthew 24:17 appears to apply these words to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 in no way invalidates their reference to the coming of the Lord — see the context in Luke.

Strange and unsatisfactory interpretations have been assigned to this short parable. The idea of Roman “eagles” gathering around the dead body of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 is superficially attractive, but is hopelessly out of context in both Matthew 24:28 and Luke 17:37.

The idea that Jesus likened the saints, soon to be glorified with him, to a carcass, and the angels to ravenous vultures gorging themselves, is both grotesque and utterly repugnant to all sense of the fitness of things. Any who have seen these sinister loathsome birds tearing at a dead beast, and even wheeling around in ghoulish expectation before the animal is quite dead, will firmly refuse to credit their Lord with such an unseemly similitude.

The context in Matthew 24 steers the student to a different idea. There Jesus was warning against false prophets teaching error concerning his coming: “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not . . . For wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together” —i.e. if you shew yourselves to be spiritually a carcass, you will certainly find yourselves the prey of these “vultures”, the false teachers.

In Luke 17 the same interpretation appears to be perfectly valid. “One shall be taken, and the other left -- Where, Lord?” is usually taken to mean, “Taken where, Lord?” but the meaning could just as easily be: “Left where, Lord?” Grammatically this has more to recommend it. It is also intrinsically more likely, for “Taken where” is surely a needless question with the very obvious answer: “To meet their Messiah, of course”. But “What shall be the fate of those left behind?” is a natural enough query. And to this Jesus gave answer: “Those who are spiritually dead will be left to the vultures”, i.e. the horrors and tribulation, which the world must endure at that time, will be the fate of unfaithful disciples also.

Thus all the details of this familiar Scripture either require or at least harmonize with the view that the saints’ response to the angelic call will be an optional one.

At this point it is perhaps desirable to re-emphasize the simple plain reiterated teaching of Scripture that “we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). But there is nothing in these passages, which requires the inclusion of the word “simultaneously”. Wise and foolish all came to the marriage but not all at the same time.

The idea now being explored serves to remove what would otherwise amount to a serious contradiction in Bible teaching concerning the Judgement. In that great Day Jesus himself is to be the Judge. Because Jesus is “the Son of man” of Daniel 7:13, 14 all judgement has been committed unto him.¹³ Both now and also hereafter “the Son quickeneth whomsoever *he* will” (John 5 :21). The judgement seat is “the judgement seat of Christ”.

Nevertheless the parables of tares and dragnet appear to speak differently: “The Son of man shall send forth *his* angels, and *they* shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do

¹³ The context (John 5:28, 29=Daniel 12:2) confirms the view of John 5:27.

iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:41, 42). “So shall it be in the end of the age: the *angels* shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just” (v. 49).

This difficulty is now seen to be resolved. When the angels come to summon to judgement, a separation will then take place, which will amount in its effects to a sorting-out of “sheep”, and “goats” even before the presence of Christ is reached. The response or lack of response to this call to judgement will in the main shew the worth of those who are called. The saints will, by and large, judge themselves before they meet their Judge.

This was foreshadowed, when Christ died. Judas betrayed his Lord, and on hearing of the resurrection went and hanged himself. Peter denied his Lord time after time, but on hearing of the resurrection he ran to the tomb. Yet both of these men were promised a throne over the tribes of Israel. One of them cancelled the promise by his lack of faith in his Lord’s power or willingness to forgive. The other made his title sure by simply believing that, because of his turning again to him, Jesus would forgive him seventy times seven in the day of Judgement (Matthew 18:22).

There are yet other Scriptures which hint at this idea of an optional response to the call of the Lord: “Be ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him *immediately*” (Luke 12:36).

The figure is similar to that of the parable of the virgins, but not just the same. What is the point behind this word “immediately”? It cannot be doubted that when the Lord comes, *all* servants must “open to him”. But there is here a clear implication of a readier response in some than in others. And Jesus pronounced a special blessing on such.

Perhaps there is here also an explanation of the singular omission in Paul’s famous passage about the “rapture” of the saints: “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the dead who have been raised) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). All mention of discrimination between “sheep” and “goats” is omitted here. Can it be that Paul had in mind the ready response of the truly faithful, so that those thus caught away to meet Christ would be those who would be “ever with the Lord”?

Again, it may be that Jesus himself was making some similar implication when he spoke the solemn words: “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, so that ye may be accounted worthy (RV may prevail) to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). There seems to be here (though the point cannot be insisted on) an implied contrast between those disciples who are removed from the great tribulation of the Last Days to “*stand* (i.e. approved) before the Son of man” and others who do not “escape all these things that shall come to pass”.

In conclusion, it is desirable to re-emphasize that what has been submitted here can hardly be considered proof, in the proper sense of the term, of what is an attractive and intrinsically probable idea, since in no single passage can it be found to be explicitly stated. Nevertheless when one considers that such ideas as a resurrection and a rebellion at the end of the millenium are each

confidently asserted on the strength of one much controverted passage in a highly symbolic Apocalypse, there is less hesitation about letting the foregoing see the light of day for the stimulation of prophetic enquiry in readers' minds.

Chapter 12 - The Rapture Of The Saints

The word is not well-chosen, for its normal usage denotes a burst of irrepressible joy, like the “first wild careless rapture” of the dawn chorus in early Spring. But there is also the idea, suggested by the Latin original, of being snatched away — that of sudden bodily transportation. In this sense the word has become part of the jargon of some of the sects with a strong eschatological bent, and inasmuch as there is no obvious alternative available, it must be put up with.¹⁴

The most commonly held idea is that Christ comes, gathers the saints together, and takes them away to heaven whence (by a most unscrupulous man-handling of a very plain Scripture) they are to be “kings and priests, and reign *over the earth*”¹⁵ (Revelation 5:10). A basis for this grossly mistaken notion is sought in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and John 14:3.

The first of these speaks of the saints as “caught up with them (the dead, now risen) in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord”.

But there is no mention of *heaven* here, only of the air. And since this extends, according to the scientists, a mere sixty miles or so above the earth’s surface, there is here at best only a possible suspension of Christ and the saints in orbit above the earth — a thing which no one has any intention of believing.

The verse calls for re-translation with the phrases in a different order: “caught away in clouds (for the purpose of meeting the Lord) into the air”. The meeting place is not specified in this passage, but it is clearly enough established elsewhere by the Scriptures which make it plain that Christ comes to sit on the throne of David and to reign in Jerusalem. If the saints are to be “ever with the Lord”, then they too must be on earth, and not in heaven.

“I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also” (John 14:3). Again the words are made to prove more than they say. The context: “I come again” and the abundant Bible evidence that Jesus is to come to the earth and is to reign on the earth should settle once and for all the destiny of those whom he blesses with his eternal presence and fellowship.

But having set aside the various wrong interpretations of the famous words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the question still remains: What exactly did Paul mean?

“Caught up in clouds into the air” has been taken to mean, “snatched away in groups” to be “exalted in the Aerial”.

Here the Greek verb is correctly translated, inasmuch as there is no suggestion of *upward* movement, but only that of being taken suddenly (and perhaps forcibly) away (e.g. Acts 8:39). Then the

¹⁴ The more readily, one hopes, since our own community has also shewn a flair for coining its own jargon. What about disfellowship, responsibility, immortal emergence?

¹⁵ It is perhaps worthwhile to point out that the same Greek phrase comes many times in Revelation (e.g. 6:10 and 11:10) always as “on the earth”.

interpretation moves into the realm of the figurative. “Clouds” are taken to be metaphorical “clouds of witnesses”, and “the air” is first replaced by a synonym (?) “heaven”, which is then also given a figurative meaning: “a condition of political exaltation or power” (equivalent to being “kings and priests reigning on the earth”).

There are several unsatisfactory features about an interpretation of this nature:

- a. There is nothing in the context to suggest a figurative meaning. Indeed when some verses further on, Paul does move into the realm of figure and type, he says so plainly: “as a thief in the night . . . as travail upon a woman with child”
- b. The only place where “clouds” is used as a metaphor, the Greek word is a different one (Hebrews 12:1). The word used here always means a literal cloud.
- c. The Bible evidence for “air” being taken as symbolic is, to put it mildly, hardly conclusive. To quote such a dubious passage as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) is in itself an open admission of a weak case. And Revelation 16:17 is no help at all, since no one can be sure that he has his finger on the precisely correct interpretation of the details of the Seventh Vial. The context of wickedness and divine wrath in both of these supporting passages is anything but helpful or appropriate to 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
- d. What special purpose is there, conceivably, behind the transportation of the saints in “clouds” or groups? If a first-Century preacher of the gospel can be thus transported individually (see Acts 8:39) why not a twentieth-Century preacher? And, further, what of those who may be isolated from their nearest brethren in the Faith by hundreds of miles?
- e. Lastly, this figurative interpretation is self-condemned by the length of time it takes to explain it, and by the dim comprehension of those who have had it thus explained to them. This is written out of experience of many personal discussions on the matter.

A better alternative, it is submitted, is to let the words mean precisely what they say, namely, that the saints will be literally caught up in literal clouds, into the literal air, to meet the Lord who has come to Jerusalem.

To adopt this simple and adequate point of view is to remove at a stroke many tortuosities of uneasy exegesis and to prepare the way for a quite delightful and wholly satisfactory extension of a familiar Biblical theme. The last paragraph carefully and deliberately used the words “literal clouds”. But these, it is now suggested, will not be *ordinary* clouds.

When Israel were delivered from Egypt, they were protected from their enemies by “a cloud and darkness” which came between the two hosts, and yet gave Israel light by night. This pillar of cloud was the sign of God’s Presence with them. By it He guided them through the wilderness, and brought them to the Land of Promise.

The same cloud of the Shekinah Glory is traceable through the history of Israel, and then becomes a feature of the New Testament narrative. This Cloud, called “The Glory”, appeared associated with Moses and Elijah on the mount of Transfiguration, but in the course of that incident it transferred itself from the Law and the Prophets and instead it overshadowed Jesus and the Apostles (Luke 9:30-34). It is demonstrable that this Fiery Cloud was also manifested at the crucifixion. It was this Cloud which “received Jesus out of their sight” above the mount of Olives, and it will be in this same Shekinah Glory that Jesus will return: “Behold, he cometh with clouds . . . coming on the clouds of heaven . . . in the glory of His Father” (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 26:64 and 16:27).

Then what more appropriate than that the saints who are to be heirs with Christ in his exaltation and majesty should have the same divine and royal entourage in their progress to the Holy City? Could anything be more fitting?

Chapter 13 - The Gog-Magog Rebellion

At the end of the millennial reign of Christ there will be a mighty rebellion against his authority.

Such a conclusion seems to be perfectly clear and obvious from either a casual or a careful reading of Revelation 20. And for that reason in the minds of many it has taken on something of the character of a “First Principle” of the Faith.

Nevertheless there are big difficulties about such a conception. For instance:

- a. The prophecies of lasting peace in the kingdom of Christ are quite explicit: “*they shall learn war no more*”.
- b. Also, there is to be *lasting* godliness: “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk *any more* after the imagination of their evil heart” (Jeremiah 3:17). “Violence shall *no more* be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders” (Isaiah 60: 18). “Of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be *no end*” (Isaiah 9: 7).
- c. Rebellion against *immortals* is so palpably silly. By comparison modern nuclear armament, which every Bible reader can see to be a lunatic policy, has calm reason on its side. For, armed with the big bombs, there is always a thin chance that you will devastate the other half of the world before it does the same to you. But for nations, who have had a thousand years’ experience of divine power and immortality, to calculate that their puny strength can win against God presupposes a mental deterioration to kindergarten level during the millenium.
- d. The practical problem insists on obtruding itself — where will these rebel nations get their weapons from? Swords will have all been turned into ploughshares.
- e. “He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15: 25). The words imply a steady progress towards complete godliness. The idea of a great boil-up of rebellion at the end is surely most difficult to reconcile with this.
- f. A massive rebellion at the end of the thousand years would stamp the reign of Christ as a failure. To think that the end of all his efforts in teaching, guidance, personal influence and benign rule (to say nothing of the immortal aid of men like Moses and Paul) is to be “We will not have this man to reign over us” —this is just incredible to any who settle down to consider it seriously.
- g. A rebellion such as is described in Revelation 20 does not arise in five minutes. Even a triviality like the Suez episode in 1957 called for weeks of detailed organization, which could not be kept secret from the rest of the world. Nevertheless one is asked to

believe that Christ and his immortals will know nothing at all of this mighty Gog-Magog uprising until it bursts upon the world. The only alternative seems to be that, knowing all that is being secretly concocted, they will pretend to ignore it, so that the rebels may be lured to their own destruction. Would any reader be happy about the morality of such a proceeding?

- h. It is sometimes postulated that if the visible authority of Christ were to be withdrawn for a time, then — human nature being what it is — rebellion would be almost certain to ensue within a short while. But does Scripture speak of any such withdrawal of the Messiah’s authority? This seems to have been invented specially to cope with a big difficulty. On the other hand Isaiah is explicit that “thy sun shall no *more* go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine *everlasting light*” (60:20).
- i. The coincidence of the names Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 with that of the leader of the great confederacy of Ezekiel 38 does not seem to have been given its proper weight. With any other Bible problem such a coincidence would shout for the two to be equated with each other. Then may it not be said that any interpretation which does line up these two prophecies as having the same fulfilment has a much stronger claim to acceptance than one which severs all connection between them and instead inserts a gap of a thousand years? Or is “Interpret Scripture by Scripture” to stand as a sound principle everywhere except in Revelation 20?
- j. Has the difficulty ever been properly faced that this amazing rising against all that is good and beneficent is spoken of in Scripture in *one place only*? Are Christadelphians to copy Mormons, “Jehovah’s Witnesses” and such, in their disreputable habit of confidently basing major beliefs on *one* passage of Scripture? Have we, the people of the Book, not yet learned the elementary lesson of mistrust in our own powers of Bible interpretation? We believe what we believe about our “First Principles” not because of *one* text of Scripture but because of the massive over-all testimony of many passages. Shall we then go back on this thoroughly sound attitude here, and this concerning verses in the Book of Revelation, of all places, the book about the interpretation of which there is less room for dogmatism than any other in the Bible?

To sum up so far, the position regarding the Gog-Magog rebellion of Revelation 20 is this:

On the one hand, the text is explicit that “when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations . . . Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle . . . and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city (Jerusalem)”. Apparently nothing could be plainer.

Nevertheless, on the other hand there are copious Scriptures (already quoted) and various associated problems and difficulties, which seem to rule out the possibility of such a rebellion.

Can it be then, that Scripture contradicts itself? God forbid!

The only alternative, therefore, is that a re-scrutiny of the evidence will reveal reconciliation between the two. A harmonization *must* be possible. No Bible student worth his salt should be content to affirm adherence to either view without being prepared to give fair consideration to the other. Such a synthesis, the present writer believes, is possible by a re-interpretation of certain details in Revelation 20.

Familiarity with the phrases of the beloved King James Version often has the effect of hiding from students of Scripture the fact that quite a number of words in the original text have perfectly valid alternatives. “Exhortation” is also “consolation”; “hell” is “the grave”; “spirit” is “breath”, “tribe” in the Old Testament is also “rod”; “boy” is also “servant” (like the French “garçon”). The list is a long one.

In this Gog-Magog passage no less than three of these ambiguities occur. “Earth” may also be “the Land (of Israel)”; this double meaning is common in both Old and New Testaments. And “saints” may be “angels” or “Israel the holy people”. Also—and most important of all—the word “expired” or “finished” in the phrase “when the thousand years are expired” may also carry the sense of “accomplished, achieved”, thus giving this key phrase the meaning: “when Christ’s millennial kingdom has become fully established”.

This last point is so important that it is not to be accepted without substantial evidence. Here, then, are examples of the use of the *same Greek word* elsewhere in the New Testament or in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament:

- a. Revelation 15: 1: “in the seven last plagues *is filled up* (i.e. accomplished) the wrath of God”. But the wrath of God is not finished when the seven vials are ended. The rest of Revelation goes on to tell of other manifestations of wrath.
- b. Galatians 5:16: “Walk ye in the Spirit, and ye shall *not fulfil* the lust of the flesh”. To read “finish” here is to make nonsense of the passage.
- c. James 2:8: “If ye *fulfil* the royal law . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye shall do well”. Again, the substitution of “finish” makes the meaning ludicrous.
- d. Romans 2:27: “And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it *fulfil* (finish?) the law, judge thee who . . . dost transgress the law?”
- e. Ruth 3:18: “the man (Boaz) will not be in rest until he *have finished* (i.e. accomplished, achieved) the thing this day”.

- f. Isaiah 55: 11: “My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall *accomplish* (but not “finish”) that which I please”.
- g. Daniel 4:30: “Is not this great Babylon that I have *built*”—here “achieved, fully established” are both appropriate; “finished” also is suitable in the sense of “finished building”, but certainly not in the sense of “ended”.

Coming back to Revelation 20, a possible meaning is now seen to be this: The power of Sin is restrained during the period (seven years? forty years?) of the establishment of the Kingdom. Then comes the great Gog-Magog rebellion. Here Revelation 20 is strictly parallel with Psalm 2: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (compare the “great chain” of Revelation 20:1) . . . Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion (the beloved city—Revelation 20:9)”.

Ezekiel 38 also can now be read as the precise equivalent of Revelation 20. In an earlier chapter Biblical reasons were advanced for applying the Gog-Magog invasion to a time *after* the enthronement of the Messiah. The details of Revelation 20:9 correspond exactly with those in Ezekiel: “And they went up on the breadth of the Land (Ezekiel 38:9) and compassed the camp of the saints about (‘my people of Israel dwelling safely’), and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them” (precisely as in Ezekiel 38:22).

This easy harmonization with other prophetic Scriptures provides additional confirmation of the validity of the interpretation proposed. Also, the picture now presented is entirely according to what might be expected. When a war-shattered world has licked its wounds and begins to realize that the Land of Israel is the headquarters of a new Power which now proclaims the hated Jews as the head of the nations and not the tail, there will be no great lapse of time before the authority of this King of the Jews is challenged. Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20 tell of the fate of this last attempt, early in Christ’s reign, to proclaim “Glory to Man in the highest”.

If the reconstruction attempted here and in earlier chapters proves to be well-founded the general sequence of events may well be as follows:

- a. Jew-Arab war.
- b. 31 year’s down-treading, Elijah’s mission, The repentance of Israel.
- c. The Sign of the Son of Man in heaven, unnatural darkness over all the earth.
- d. The visible Coming of the Lord (no secret coming!!).
- e. Jesus King in Jerusalem.
- f. The Resurrection and call of the saints.
- g. The Judgement.
- h. The saints made immortal in Jerusalem.
- i. Nuclear war.

- j. The world-wide Kingdom proclaimed and established.
- k. The Gog-Magog rebellion.
- l. The Millenium.

All in this series of studies is offered without dogmatism. Mistakes have doubtless been made. Important factors may have been overlooked. However —if a more thorough search of the prophetic Scriptures concerning Christ and his imminent Kingdom is provoked, the labour of writing has not been in vain. One thing is certain—there yet remains much to be elucidated concerning these things. The half has not been told us!