

Young's Literal Translation provides an insightful rendering of the words under consideration: "Till when are ye leaping on the two branches?". Elijah was likening them to an unsettled bird, one that continually hopped from one branch of doctrine to another but never found rest. The prophet Hosea compared Israel to "a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria" but "cried [not] unto [God] with their heart" (7:11,14). The prophet Isaiah similarly testified: "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (57:20). The children of Israel were now being called upon to determine, once and for all, where their allegiance lay.

The challenge to the people

Elijah proposed a reasonable challenge to Israel: "if the LORD [Yahweh] be God, follow [*yalak*] Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kgs. 18:21). The Hebrew word *yalak* can indicate following a manner of life. Their manner and conduct would have to change. Notice that Elijah uses a phrase which is the very meaning of his name, 'Yahweh is my God'. He was calling them to join and follow him in his worship of the true God of Israel.

What would the people's response be to such a fair proposal? They "answered him not a word" (v. 21). The effect of this bold suggestion was a

hush. They sought refuge in silence, unable to refute Elijah. They were utterly incapable of discerning any flaw or logic in his reasoning.

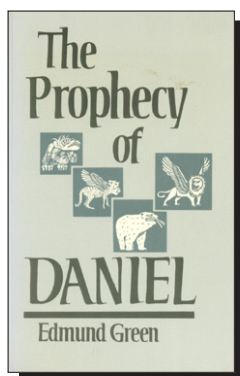
But what was on the mind of the prophet? "I, even I only, remain" (v. 22). He may well have presumed that all the righteous prophets had been slain by the hand of Jezebel (v. 4), that he was the only one who had been preserved. He could have felt that he was a "chosen vessel", one "to bear [God's] name before the Gentiles [the widow and her son], and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). But was this simply a false delusion of grandeur?—for we know that God would later declare to the prophet that He had "left Me seven thousand in Israel . . . which have not bowed unto Baal" (1 Kgs. 19:18). What is certain is that, though there were many devout followers of God in the land, they offered little, if any, support to Elijah during this challenge on Carmel.

Let us therefore take great heart from Elijah. Surely, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). It matters not who be against us, for the battle is His. The Truth can never be judged by numbers of supporters. Error has always enjoyed the majority and will continue to hold sway till Christ returns. Let us therefore have faith and confidence in our God, for if we are faithful He will bring us the victory.

(To be continued)

God rules in the kingdom of men

John Nicholls



The Prophecy of Daniel.

Edmund Green, 1988,
The Christadelphian.

166 pages.

Price £7 plus postage.

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Christadelphian,
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Brother Green was tutored in the prophecy by Brother John Thomas's *Exposition of Daniel*. No exposition can touch the latter's work, with its forthright, vigorous style showing such a masterly grasp of Scripture.

To those young in or new to the Truth, however, it is not an easy book to read; it has to be persevered with as terms such as "the Graeco-Roman Dragon" and "the Lion Phasis of the Kingdom of Babylon" flow from the writer's pen. Various brethren have written on Daniel since, and illustrations and charts have been produced to help in the understanding of the dreams and visions of the book.

Brother Green's book is far easier to read than Brother Thomas's, since it was written over a century on from the Victorian age when books were longer and arguments developed in more

DOING SOME STUDIES recently on Daniel, the reviewer became reacquainted with the late Brother Edmund Green's book on Daniel. Like most Christadelphians,

detail than they are in general today. Brother Green also had the benefit of more prophecy being fulfilled (much of it as Brother Thomas foresaw through his interpretation of prophecy).

Brother Green also takes account of the many archaeological discoveries that have been made since the mid-nineteenth century, and is able to deal with the objections of the nineteenth century to the treatment of Daniel as true prophecy. His book also contains several useful charts and helpful drawings of the image and the beasts. Most useful of all are the appendices, which deal in some depth with issues and topics in the prophecy without detracting from the flow of the book. It is not a long book, about 160 pages, and is divided into twelve chapters corresponding to the book of Daniel itself.

Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar

Unlike some other expositors, Brother Green believes that Daniel was about thirty before he was summoned before Nebuchadnezzar to explain the image dream, so that he would have had time to develop the faith and maturity which are his hallmark as he converses with the great Babylonian king. Information is given about the Chaldeans, from whom the modern Kurdish people (of northern Iraq and adjacent regions) have apparently descended. The historical truth of Daniel is discussed, and Brother Green quotes from Dr E. B. Pusey about this:

“The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battlefield between faith and unbelief. It admits of no half-measures. It is either Divine or an imposture . . . The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied, on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought. In a word, the whole book would be one lie in the Name of God” (p. 10).

Brother Green explains the image prophecy of chapter 2 clearly, and has a useful appendix on why the critics' view of the four empires does not make sense. He says: “the divided state which succeeded Alexander the Great [cannot] be represented as a Greek fourth power [as the critics do]. The details given in Daniel 7 of the parallel vision of Daniel, of the third and fourth beasts, exclude this interpretation. The stone falls upon the fourth metal's divided state, and that certainly did not happen in Greek times” (p. 26).

When he deals with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree we see how widely Brother Green is

able to interpret, with a lack of dogmatism that does not characterise all expositions of this prophecy. He gives an appendix to explain the Scriptural principle of a day for a year, but in the main text discusses the starting point for the seven times that pass over the banded tree stump of the Babylonian tree kingdom. He cites several expositors, including non-Christadelphian ones, and suggests that perhaps the times are not of 360 days (which was the length of years prior to the Flood) but solar years of 365 days, as they are today.

Chapter 5, on Belshazzar's impious feast, is excellent, and there is much useful material on the historical truth of Belshazzar and information from recent discoveries about the background to his reign. Chapter 6 has another useful appendix on the identity of Darius the Mede, with the conclusion that he was none other than Cyrus the Persian king.

The 'beast' chapters

The exposition of the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast (Daniel 7) is not the most straightforward, since there is quite a lot of history to take on board, but we are taken along at a leisurely pace. There is a useful discussion of the identity of “the Ancient of days”, and a good treatment of the main theme of this chapter, which is the warfare between the saints of God and the little horn.

The vision of the ram and the he-goat (Daniel 8) is treated in the measured and straightforward way that characterises this book, and it is worth citing a short piece from page 85:

“Are the 2300 evening-mornings literal days, or do they represent a long period? Antiochus Epiphanes reigned 11 years in all, part of the time as co-regent with an infant heir. The infant was assassinated in his absence, leaving him sole ruler from 170 to 164 B.C., that is 6 years. 2300 literal days equal 6 years and about 4½ months, so a literal application cannot be fitted in very well. On the other hand we have the statements, ‘At the time of the end shall be the vision’ (verse 17); ‘the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be’ (verse 19), associated with the symbolic death and resurrection of Daniel himself, all indicating that a long period is envisaged”.

The author goes on to consider the fulfilment of the 2,300 days of verse 14 on the day-for-a-year principle, using as the starting point

Alexander the Great's Persian campaigns, the fulfilment of the vision of the he goat with the notable horn rushing at the ram, and ending with the reunification of Jerusalem in the remarkable Six-Day War of 1967.

The final prophecies

Daniel 9 is very moving and dramatic, and our brother makes many good observations, as for example on "confirm the covenant" in verse 27. His analysis of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is very good, and he shows why he rejects the expositions of Sir Isaac Newton, and of Dr Bullinger in the *Companion Bible*. He also has a short appendix on the word "weeks", which seems to indicate his rejection of a longer fulfilment of the seventy weeks as seventy jubilee cycles, as proposed by Brother W. H. Carter.

His treatment of chapter 11 is splendid and has a very traditional and well-reasoned interpretation of the kings of the north and south at the time of the end. An appendix at the conclusion of this chapter is a well-reasoned discussion of "the abomination that maketh desolate". His verdict is that the words of our Master on the Mount of Olives indicating that the abomination is Roman and that the disciples would see it leave the identity in no doubt.

Regarding chapter 12, Brother Green is of the opinion that we should be consistent and regard Michael in verse 1 as the same angelic person referred to earlier in this vision in chapter 10. He weighs up the meaning of "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" in verse 4. His final words on this are:

"The Berkeley Bible's rendering of the verse

is as follows: 'But you Daniel, keep the message a secret; seal the book until the final period; many shall investigate and information shall advance'. The N.I.V. reads, 'Many will go here and there to increase knowledge'. If therefore we give the phrases of the A.V. a simple superficial interpretation, and regard them as general characteristics of the 'time of the end', they are transformed into a 'sign of the times' which has developed out of all proportion. 'Knowledge' in the technical sense outstrips men's ability to put it into service—and how they travel!" (p. 142).

On the time periods given in this chapter Brother Green has some sage observations that are commended to the interested reader, and in an appendix he compares the papal (solar) and Muslim (lunar) applications of these enigmatic time periods. A final appendix, on the work of Dr Grattan Guinness on lunar-solar cycles in the time periods of Daniel, brings this splendid book to its close. Only the Creator of the heavens could have ensured that all the time periods in the prophecy of Daniel were also lunar-solar cycles—periods of time which are exact numbers of both lunar and solar years. Five useful charts conclude the book.

This book can be dipped into for information about any section of Daniel. Above all, it is balanced and scholarly in its conclusions without being too wordy. It is the fruit of a lifelong study and love of this prophecy and the man who was greatly beloved by his God. It is commended anew to all who will heed the words of their Master, "whoso readeth [the book of Daniel], let him understand" (Mt. 24:15).

Selected further reading for "Rome versus Jerusalem (4)" (pp. 133-7)

- G. Gould, *Josephus: The Jewish War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- R. Horsley, "The zealots: Their Origin, Relationship and Importance in the Jewish Revolt", *Novum Testamentum*, XXVIII, 2 (1986), 160, 190-191.
- E. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 B.C.E.–66 C.E.* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992).
- J. Goldin, "The Period of the Talmud (135 B.C.E.–1035 C.E.)", in Finkelstein, L., *The Jews: Their History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970).
- D. Silver, *A History of Judaism: Volume One, From Abraham to Maimonides* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).
- M. Smith, "The Troublemakers", in W. Horbury, W. Davies and J. Sturdy, *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Three: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- R. Horsley and J. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (Cambridge: Harper and Row, 1988).
- M. Smith, "Zealots and Sicarii, Their Origins and Relation", *Harvard Theological Review*, 64, 1 (January 1971).
- Y. Yadin, *Masada, Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* (New York, 1966).
- J. Lightly, *Jewish Sects and Parties in the Time of Jesus* (London, 1925).