

“The Witness of the Stars,”

BY

DR. E. W. BULLINGER,

Refuted in a Letter

BY

EDWARD CROSSLEY.

Shewing also the unscripturalness of **THE YEAR-DAY THEORY, THE SECRET RAPTURE THEORY,** and **THE JEWISH THEORY IN REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH,** which are taught by Dr. Bullinger in the above work.

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THE REV. DR. E. W. BULLINGER.

DEAR SIR,

Those who have rightly read the history of the struggle for the maintenance of the integrity of the Word of God, in connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, must be convinced of the necessity of constant watchfulness and jealous care lest our priceless possession should be taken away from us, or that it should be corrupted in any manner by the wisdom of men.

Many are looking to the Trinitarian Bible Society, of which you are the Secretary, to take a foremost part in this conflict against the great Enemy of Truth, who often carries on the warfare within, as well as without, the camp. The question arises, can they continue to do so? The work which you have just published, entitled, "The Witness of the Stars," raises this question. In this book you claim to set forth another *Divinely Inspired Revelation of Prophetic Truth* in addition to that which is recorded in the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible ceases to contain the complete canon of Truth, and in future editions of the Bible published by the Trinitarian Bible Society, another book must be inserted, con-

taining the “ Witness of the Stars,” and entitled, say, “ The Book of Enoch ” ; for you state on page 122 that “ Enoch was doubtless used in arranging these prophetic signs,” or, perhaps you would prefer to place the “ Revelation of the Stars ” in the hands of a separate society, as being superior to that of the Bible ; for on pages 173, 174 you declare, “ The Devil may choose and use his servants and agents for corrupting the Scriptures written in the Book, but he cannot change the Revelation of the Stars.”

Is not your own book, in which you are constantly referring to the temples and records of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and other Gentile nations, for information as to the Stars, a complete answer to this astounding declaration ?

You state on page 1 that “ for more than two thousand five hundred years the world was without a written revelation from God,” and you ask the question, “ Did God leave Himself without a witness ? ” and you answer “ No, because for the whole of this period God gave to men the Witness of the Stars.” But you entirely overlook the fact that this question has been already answered by the *written* Word of God. In the book of Genesis we have the full and complete history of the whole of this period of two thousand five hundred years, as far as God’s purposes are concerned, generation by generation ; and by comparison with this book we have a

perfect and complete test of any other supposed Revelation, whatever inspiration or authority may be claimed for it. If it agrees with the book of Genesis, it will still be apochryphal, but if we cannot find in the book of Genesis a single syllable to sustain it, it will be vain and spurious and manifestly evil.

What are the true witnesses of God in the book of Genesis? Let us enumerate a few of them:—the Work of Creation, the Garden of Paradise, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Tree of Life, the Curse of God upon Satan and upon the Earth, and the Punishment of Man, the acceptance of Abel's Sacrifice, the curse of Cain, the Testimony of Enoch, Noah and the Flood, the Rainbow, the Confusion of Tongues, the Call of Abraham and his miraculous victory over his enemies, Melchisedeck, Isaac and Jacob, with all the promises and visions given to them.

But do we find anything about the Witness of the Stars to any single truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the book you have written? Not one syllable. Therefore we can only come to one conclusion, that your book is entirely apochryphal and in no sense contains a Revelation of God by means of the Stars.

Have you considered the words of Moses when he said, Deut. iv., 15—19, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of

similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure or likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto the heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the hosts of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven."

You say (page 17) that "there is nothing in the groups of the stars to even suggest the figures," and that they "must have been drawn around or connected with certain stars." Therefore there must have been some material thus drawn upon; and what would be the value of these drawings without the names of the stars being recorded along with the names of the figures and their meanings? These would then constitute and form a part of the Oracles of God. But we are told (Rom. iv.) that the Oracles of God were committed unto the Jews. How is it then that the Jew has preserved the Oracles of God given by the prophets, but has not kept these oracles of the stars? Simply because neither Moses nor

any other prophet was ever commanded to write down any one of them.

It is not necessary for me to refer in detail to the monstrosities with which you deal, such as the Centaur and Sagittarius, the union of a human body with the body of a horse, to represent the two-fold nature of Christ, &c.

You say that Castor and Pollux, the Twins, represent the dual nature of Christ. If so, which represents the divine and which the human? and what is the significance of the fact that Castor is a binary and not a single star? and which of the two natures of Christ do you further divide in consequence?

In enumerating the signs of the Zodiac, upon what principle do you include in each case three other constellations, and thus find your way up to the North Pole in Ursa Minor? Why do you not also find your way to the South Pole?

You say (page 63) that Sagittarius “precisely” foreshadows Rev. vi. 2, “And I saw and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.” But for the two to correspond, the white horse and his rider must have been united in one person; but who would ever think of such a thing but a heathen and an idolator.

You refer to Psalm xix. as proving the whole case,

but why do you not quote also Psalm viii., “ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; what is man that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man that thou visitest him ? ” It is evident from this passage that David was entirely ignorant of any such Revelation of the Stars as your book professes to contain. Therefore, in Psalm xix. David can only refer (verses 1—6) to the manifest glory and majesty of God which the heavens display ; but it is the law of the Lord which converts the soul, and the testimony of the Lord which makes wise the simple, and the statutes of the Lord which rejoice the heart, and the commandment of the Lord which enlightens the eyes, and not the Revelation of the Stars.

I must leave it to others to shew how great is the uncertainty attaching to the meaning of the Hebrew words in Scripture as applied to the heavens, such as Orion and Constellation both represented by the same word in the Hebrew, “ cesil ” or “ k’seel,” and which is only applied four times to the heavens, while it is used seventy times to indicate “ fool,” “ fools,” “ foolish ” ; or “ gahsh ” “ Arcturus,” once only, but seven times rendered “ moth.” It is indeed doubtful if the word Constellation is a correct rendering. True it is that “ He telleth the number of the stars ; and giveth them all their names ” (Ps. cxlvii. 4), as Adam gave names to every beast of the field, but it is just as uncertain

whether God has revealed any one of these names to man.

I will now leave the constellations to turn to another aspect of the subject with which you deal, namely, that of the supposed relation of periods marked out by the heavenly bodies to historical events upon this earth, or in other words, to the astrology of the heavens.

In the chapter headed "For Signs and for Seasons" (page 184) you deal at some length with the period of Gentile Dominion, summing up with the conclusion that this is to end in the year 1896-7. Like Dr. Grattan Guinness and other prophetic writers of the Historic school you take it for granted that the vision in Dan. iv. refers to the whole period of Gentile power, and that the "seven times," or seven years of 360 days, on the year-day theory, define this period as one of 2,520 years, and that this is confirmed by an astronomical cycle of very nearly the same period. First let me shew that the vision in Dan. iv. has nothing whatever to do with the period of Gentile domination. It has solely to do with the seven years of humiliation which came upon Nebuchadnezzar, for in verse 28 we are told "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar," and (verse 33) "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar." Not one syllable refers in any shape or form to the Gentile period. How,

indeed, can a period, during which the king was deprived of his throne and his reason, symbolise the period of Gentile power and dominion ?

The “seven times” refer explicitly to the time during which the tree was cut down, and the stump only was left in the ground, and not to the time during which the tree flourished and was great. To prevent the possibility of such a mistake we have the Gentile period fully symbolised and set forth in Dan. ii. by the great image “whose brightness was excellent, and whose form was terrible,” and in Dan. vii. by the four great beasts—the lion, the bear, and the leopard, and the fourth beast dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and in Dan. viii. the second and third kingdoms—Persia and Greece, the ram and the he goat, are represented as being almost invincible in their activity and strength.

Therefore, the period of Nebuchadnezzar’s degradation and weakness has nothing to do with the Gentile period of dominance and power unless it be, indeed, as a solemn warning to every nation that “the axe is laid at the root of the tree.”

Unless such a serious mistake as this is avoided it is useless to attempt to interpret the prophecies of Daniel. Therefore, also, the “seven times,” or years, have nothing to do with two thousand five hundred and twenty years, and the Astronomical Cycle is a mere coincidence, like many other such

numbers. No doubt, the adoption of the year-day theory has led the Historic school into this serious blunder.

Let, however, any person read, with an open mind, the able and masterly refutations of this theory given by the late Dr. S. P. Tregelles, in his work on Daniel, published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, and also by Mr. B. W. Newton in his "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry," pages 229—248, published by Houlston & Sons, and they will see that it is erroneous and entirely misleading.

It is easy to shew, from Dan. ix., that there is an *unmeasured* gap in prophetic chronology, which is nowhere else filled up in Scripture, and until this gap is filled up, or, in other words, until this portion of the Gentile Age has actually transpired, it will be impossible to measure its duration.

Confining our attention for a moment to the last four verses of Dan. ix., 24—27, we find in verse 24 the promise of the restoration of Israel, Daniel's people, both spiritually and nationally, the latter in addition to, and along with, the former, because this restoration is associated with that of Jerusalem, Daniel's Holy City. Now we know from the words of Christ in Luke xxi., 24, that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and also from the Apostle Paul, Rom. xi., 25—27, that blindness in part is happened

to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." We know that Jerusalem is still "trodden down of the Gentiles," and that the Jews are not yet converted as a nation, therefore the promise of blessing in verse 24 is still unfulfilled, and that it will not be fulfilled until the end of the Gentile Age. Therefore, the chronology connected with the fulfilment of the promises must be conterminous with the Gentile Age. One of the three periods into which the "seventy weeks," or rather, seventy sevens are divided, must extend to the end of the Gentile Age. Seeing that the first two periods of forty-nine and four hundred and thirty-four years linked together in the 25th verse have been already fulfilled in the period of four hundred and eighty-three years which elapsed from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the cutting off of the Messiah, it is certain that the last period of seven years is still future, and that therefore the length of time which extends from the Crucifixion to the commencement of the last seven years of this age is withheld from us in the divine message, and it is given to us nowhere else in Scripture. It cannot possibly be that the last seven years were fulfilled in

the times of John the Baptist and of Christ, as urged by the Historic school, for then the third period would be concurrent with the second period, and therefore it could not be said that seventy distinct and separate sevens were determined upon Daniel's people and his holy city; and then must also the blessed promises have been fulfilled at the end of the second period, *i.e.*, immediately upon the death of Christ upon the Cross. Then also why did the prophet Daniel refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans as taking place between the second and third periods, verse 26. Surely "the people" here referred to are the Roman people, and the coming prince must be a Roman prince. Who this coming prince is, is plainly indicated in the 27th verse, for it is he, and not Christ, who "shall confirm a covenant with the many for one seven, *i.e.*, for seven years, and at half the seven shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease, and upon the pinnacle of abominations shall be that which causeth desolation even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the causer of desolation." (I use Dr. Tregelles' version in his work on Daniel). Christ never made a covenant with the many for seven years. The covenant of Christ is the New Testament in His blood which was shed for us and this is the everlasting covenant, Heb. xii., 20. But Christ said (John v., 43). "I

am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name him ye will receive," plainly referring to the "foolish shepherd," Zech. xi., 15—17, who tears the flock in pieces, and who, claiming idolatrous worship, Rev. xiii., is called the idol shepherd, and the covenant he makes with the Jews is called the "covenant with death," "the agreement with hell," Isaiah xxviii., 15—18, in contrast to "the sure foundation" of God, verse 16.

That this Roman prince is the Antichrist is plain from Dan. viii., for here we are told of the same event, for (verses 11, 12) "by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down : and an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression and it (*i.e.*, the little horn, the same person) cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered," and in the next verses we are told how long the daily sacrifice (set up in unbelief by the Jews and under the protection of the covenant with Antichrist) and the desolation that follows continue, namely, two thousand three hundred literal days, showing that two hundred and twenty days elapse from the confirmation of the covenant to the commencement of the sacrifices, and the last half of the seven years is also plainly the time and times and dividing of times of Dan. vii., 25, the forty and two months of Rev. xiii.,

the thousand two hundred and three score days of Rev. xii. I need not explain that I have used the term "seven" in the same sense as "dozen," instead of "week," in reference to Dan. ix., it being generally admitted that this is here the correct rendering of the Hebrew septennial word, "shabua," commonly used in reference to days, but also in reference to months and years, according to the sense of the passage containing it. The first two periods of seven sevens and three score and two sevens manifestly apply to years, and therefore the last seven also applies to years. But I have plainly shewn that the last half of this last seven years is the period of the full domination of Antichrist, therefore it is impossible to apply the year-day theory either to Antichrist, or the Gentile Age, and such a theory has no foundation in the Word of God.

There are two other subjects to which I must refer before I conclude this letter. The first of these is the Secret Rapture theory, the second the Jewish theory in reference to the Church or exclusion of the Old Testament saints from the Church. I regret very much to see that you adopt both these theories, which have been persistently taught by the Brethren for half a century in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Word of God.

With regard to the first of these, on page 192,

after stating that the circumstances connected with the career of Antichrist “refer only to Jerusalem, the Gentiles, and the Jews,” you say that “These ‘times and seasons’ have nothing whatever to do with the Church of God” (1 Thess. v. 1). The mystical body of Christ, whenever its members are complete “will be taken up to meet the Lord—the Head of the Body—in the air, so as to be ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 15—17). “This glorious event has nothing to do with any earthly sign or circumstance, so far as the members of this mystical Body are concerned.” Such is your statement. But what saith the Scriptures? The Apostle Paul in 1 Thess. v. 1—11 exhorts the Thessalonians to watch and be sober; they had no need to be in darkness, for they already knew perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, therefore the Apostle had no need to write to them of the times and seasons. But does this mean that the Thessalonians had nothing to do with the signs and events which would precede the Coming of Christ? If so, the Apostle Paul would not have told the Thessalonians (2 Thess. ii. 2, &c.) that the day of the Lord would not come until the Apostasy had run its course, and the man of sin been manifested in all his fearful evil; that all these things must take place before the Coming of the Lord in glory, and the gathering of the saints unto Him. How is it that

the saints who pass through the great tribulation are expressly referred to in Rev. xx. 4 as being included amongst those who take part in the First Resurrection?

Are you prepared to contend, as the Brethren do, that the Coming of Christ referred to in 1 Thess. iv. 16 is secret? "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven *with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then (afterwards) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

When Christ says to His disciples (Matt. xxiv. 29—31, and through them to the Church—for what He says to them He says to all—Mark xiii. 37, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken: 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: 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 one end of heaven to the other," not even the Brethren dare to say that this is secret;

but as this passage would be fatal to the Secret Rapture theory if the elect here mentioned are the saints belonging to the Church, they have the hardihood to assert that these elect are the Jewish remnant who are saved *in the flesh* out of the great tribulation, and gathered from the four winds of heaven *by the Angels* !

Then the words of Isaiah are no longer the words of God when he says (Is. lx. 9), “ Surely the Isles (*i.e.*, the Gentiles) shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish (*i.e.*, of the Gentiles) first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel because he hath glorified thee ” (*i.e.*, Israel). Also (Is. lxvi. 20), “ And they (*i.e.*, the Gentiles) shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.” Therefore it is the spared Gentiles, and not the angels, who will gather the scattered of Israel from all the nations, using all the ordinary means of locomotion for this purpose. But when Gentile Christendom is judged at the Coming of the Son of Man, as indicated in Matt. xxv., and also in the parable of the Tares, in Matt. xiii., then it is that the angels are the reapers, for as

soon as all the true believers then living upon the earth have been changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the angels are sent forth at the very end of the age, not seven years before, or even seven days before, and they “gather together *first* the tares in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” But perchance some “Brother,” not yet convinced, will turn to the vision of the elders and living creatures in Rev. iv. 5, and ask if we have not here all we need to shew that the saints are gathered in heaven before the closing scenes of this evil age, but according to this method of reasoning the saints were in heaven when the seals were opened 1800 years ago, which is, of course, impossible. They were represented symbolically in that position of glory which they will occupy when the Advent of Christ, in power and great glory, has taken place, and they have been gathered unto Him. There is only one personal Coming of Christ yet to take place, according to the Scriptures, and there is only one First Resurrection, and they both take place on the *same* day.

I now pass on to the second subject ; the Jewish theory, excluding the Old Testament Saints from the New Testament Church.

You say (page 98) that the heavenly calling of the Old Testament Saints is quite distinct from the calling of the Church, and the former constitute the

Bride of Christ, and the latter the Body of Christ, and that these distinctions are eternal. But what saith the Scriptures? 1 Cor. xv., 22. As in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive: but every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming. If the Old Testament Saints are not made alive in Christ, seeing that they have died in Adam, they must be lost. If they are made alive in Christ, then are they Christ's at His Coming. Therefore the Old Testament Saints are raised along with the New Testament Saints at the Coming of Christ.

You say (page 110) Eph. v. 25, "there is not a word here about the Church of Christ being his wife," but what does the Apostle Paul say in 2 Cor. xi., 2, "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Again, you say (pages 98, 99) "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, is the heavenly portion of the Old Testament Saints, the Bride of Christ; but the Church will have a still better portion." But when I find that the twelve apostles are the twelve foundations thereof, must I exclude for ever the twelve apostles from the still better portion of the Church, and must I deny the words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (ii. 19, 20), "now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and

foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon *the foundation of the apostles* and prophets. Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone? ” Certainly not.

Therefore the Heavenly City is the portion of all the Saints who are built upon the common foundation of the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New; and the Bride and the Body are symbolic terms of the same thing, namely, the Church, just as the Lamb of God and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah are different symbolic titles belonging to the same person, even the Lord Jesus Christ. On page 94 you say “that the Church, which is the body of Christ, was a subject that was never revealed to man until it was made known to the Apostle Paul; how is it then that the Church was in existence before the Apostle Paul was converted, for he tells us (1 Cor. xv. 9) that he “persecuted the Church of God.” Again we are told (Gal. iii. 1) that the Gospel was preached before unto Abraham, and that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham, and that they are blessed with Abraham through Christ, the seed of Abraham, and if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. The “better thing” (see page 98) which God has provided for us (Heb. xi., 40) is not something which is intended to separate us for ever from the Saints of the Old Testament in

glory, but that they without (*i.e.*, apart from) us should not be made perfect, *i.e.*, that we may be made more completely perfect *together*, even through the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace now revealed in Christ Jesus. Again, it is very important to notice that the saints at the coming of Christ are designated (Heb. xii., 23) the church of the first-born ones, plainly indicating that there will be those who will be born, or raised afterwards, who will also belong to the Church, and as there is no resurrection after the first resurrection until the thousand years are ended (Rev. xx., 5), these plainly are the saints of the millennial age. Then, and not till then, will the Church be finally complete and dwell for ever in the new heavens and the new earth.

On page 95 you speak of the king and the kingdom as though they had no connection with this dispensation in which we are now living, but the gospel of the kingdom is now being preached in every country. Christ went about all Galilee teaching and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. The apostle Paul preached the things concerning the kingdom of God (see Acts xix. 8, xx. 25, xxviii. 23, 31). Christ said (Matt. xxiv. 14) that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness among all nations, then should the end come. Every saint is an heir of the Kingdom (James ii. 5), and the terms, Kingdom of God, King-

dom of Heaven, Kingdom of Christ are synonymous. Until the restoration of Israel the Kingdom of God will not be manifested in outward governmental power and blessing on this earth; the saints will then possess the Kingdom in power and glory with Christ, and on earth the prophecy of Micah iv. 8 will be fulfilled: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: and the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

I remain, DEAR SIR,

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD CROSSLEY.