

A WATERSHED DOCTRINE FOR THE AGE TO COME BELIEVERS AND THE MILLERITES¹

ARLEN F. RANKIN, B.TH.

As we approach this study we emphasize that it is merely a preliminary study of the issues at hand — historically and theologically. It is put forward as a challenge to dig deeper in these areas to increase our understanding both of our past and our present. As my research has broadened, former opinions as to “what was” have likewise broadened and changed. As we analyze both the period writings on biblical matters and the historical developments we see interesting and critical interpretive principles and practices.

A Watershed

There was a hermeneutical and therefore theological watershed which became apparent and separative in the thirty years between 1850 and 1880 within the Millerite movement. Doctrinal forces were stirring both within and around the Millerite camp. The early thinkers and writers of the Church of God were at the core of the discussions in those years. The advancement of the age-to-come doctrine as well as the earlier literalist teachings promoted the millennial restoration of the literal nation of Israel and with it the concept of a *probation* of living mortals and the *progression* of “the times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

Julia Neuffer writes about the “Age-to-Come Controversy”:

Where did the age-to-come doctrine of the 1850s come from?
Possibly it stemmed chiefly from the British Literalist publications that had been circulated among the Millerites.
However, the name seems to have come from the title of the

¹ Presented at the fourth annual Church of God History Conference, Springfield, Ohio, October 23-25, 2008.

1850 editorials and the 1851 book by Joseph Marsh. Certainly his paper, *The Advent Harbinger* (Rochester, NY), became the sounding board for the doctrine, although other individuals had taught it before him.²

As we look at the divisions of thought and organizational movements following the Millerite disappointment, we can see that the understanding of Israel's future remains the watershed. The divergent views are the result of the differing hermeneutics on each side of the discussion — the literal or the allegorical-typological.³ One side sees a restoration of literal, national Israel as the fulfilling of prophecies and promises; the other holds a fulfilled or replacement theology which substitutes the Church as the inheritor of Israel's promised blessings.⁴ One sees the Church as becoming *sharers* in the promises by faith when Israel comes into her restoration and fullness (Eph. 3:6; Rom. 11:11-12); the other sees the covenant promises as fulfilled or conditional; therefore, completed in Israel historically or removed from Israel as they failed to comply and had them taken away and given to the Church. It is notable that the latter applies the blessings of Israel to the Church, but not the curses. One sees the millennial age as one of continued probation *preliminary* to the new heaven and earth; the other sees the termination of all probation at the return of Jesus and all kingdom prophecies being fulfilled in the new heaven and earth which starts at that time (Advent Christians) or 1000 years later at the termination of earth's desolation and the judgment when the new heaven and earth come (Seventh-Day Adventists).

² Julia Neuffer, "The Gathering of Israel: A Historical Study of Early Writings." The entire text of her study can be viewed at <http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/gather.html>

³ The Church of God follows what is called the grammatical-historical or literal hermeneutic. The heirs of the Millerite tradition follow what is known as the allegorical-typological hermeneutic. One might note a similar comparative distinction in hermeneutic between the dispensational-premillennial school which has a future literality for national Israel and the amillennial-preterist perspective which denies any future for Israel. The Millerite hermeneutic is explained thoroughly by Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978.

⁴ Those who deny the literality of the restoration of Israel approach it with one or more of the following propositions: promises of restoration or inheritance are historically fulfilled; promises were conditional and when conditions were not met they were nullified; promises are to be spiritualized as applying to the Church who is the true "Israel of God"; promises will be realized through individual future resurrection.

We note that as time progressed there were (and are) various ways of understanding the concept of future probation in the millennial frame of reference. The Church of God and the Christadelphians generally see the probation being applied only to the “remnant” of Israel (Isa. 10:20-22; 11:11-12) and the “left” of the nations (Zech. 14:16; Acts 15:17) which *continue on into* the millennium in a mortal state where they “learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9; 54:13-14) and “learn His ways...laws” (Isa. 2:2-5) or refuse to do so. The followers of C.T. Russell see a resurrection to mortality of all those “who have never heard” to an “opportunity” or “fair chance” for hearing, acceptance and reconciliation, and some among them believe in an ultimate and universal salvation for all. The Church of God generally believes that those who have never heard will remain among “the rest of the dead” to be raised in the final judgment to receive an *appropriate* judgment at the hands of a *righteous* God (Gen. 18:25). Some, however, within the General Conference and its precursors have held to variations of the “wider hope.” Christadelphians hold to a limited or partial resurrection which would leave those who have never heard or cannot believe as dead without further judgment. There was much discussion of these matters in our early periodicals.

The three-tiered nature and sequence of this historical-theological watershed is first hermeneutic, then doctrinal, and finally organizational.

Change and Development

For some of our early leaders who had been active in the Millerite movement, change in belief was both a necessity and a reality as they renewed their efforts and immersed themselves in their study of the Scripture. Change did not come in an instant, but was rather a development in the thinking of our early leaders — a growth in understanding as they reconsidered the biblical text. Not that the truth was unknown before then, but these men were in flux in their studies at that time.

Marsh was an example of such change. His book of 1849 presents his then views regarding the restoration of literal Israel — a denial of their actual restoration.⁵ He changes his position regarding this and more

⁵ Joseph Marsh, *The Bible Doctrine or True Gospel Faith concerning the gathering of Israel, the millennium, personal coming of Christ, resurrection, renovation of the earth, kingdom of God, and time of the second advent of Christ*, Rochester, NY: The Advent Harbinger & Bible Advocate Office, 1849. N. M. Catlin, who was affiliated with the Church of God, puts forth the Church as subjects of the millennial reign in *The Kingdom of God: or, The Restoration of David's Throne*, 1850.

fully and precisely develops his theology in 1851 to affirm Israel's literal restoration and the attendant ideas.⁶

Julia Neuffer states:

As late as November 1849, Marsh had restated essentially the standard Millerite position on the millennium, except for the omission of the renovation of the earth at the Advent. Yet he declared that he had never been settled on the nature of the millennium. In December, in introducing extracts from a Literalist author, he still professed disagreement with him on the literal return of the Jews to Palestine and on probation after the Second Advent.⁷

Mark Mattison has written at length on the connections between Joseph Marsh and John Thomas in regard to Marsh's new views and I believe he has drawn some correct conclusions.⁸ Thomas apparently did have at least some influence on Marsh in these things, but as Stilson points out, "Marsh had first heard of the Age to Come from Elias Smith of the Christian Connection, who published the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* which he began in 1808."⁹ Twenty years ago I pondered the possibility that the early seeds of Marsh's belief in the restoration of Israel were in his previous participation in the Christian Connexion, since Elias Smith's *Sermons on the Prophecies* strongly emphasized the restoration of literal, natural Israel.¹⁰ Neuffer suggests that Marsh may also have been influenced by the writings of O.R.L. Crosier who wrote of "The Age to Come" in his *Day-Star* (1846) and who in 1847 was on the staff of *The Advent Harbinger*. Neuffer goes on to say, "Other possible sources of influence on Marsh's age-to-come doctrine of 1850 might be two others who set forth Literalist views in 1846 and 1848: J. B. Cook, of New

⁶ Joseph Marsh, *The Age to Come, or Glorious Restitution of all things spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began*, Rochester, NY: The Advent Harbinger Office, 1851.

⁷ Neuffer, "The Gathering of Israel: A Historical Study of Early Writings"; cf. *The Advent Harbinger*, 1:172, 220, Nov. 17 and Dec. 29, 1849.

⁸ Mark Mattison, "Joseph Marsh's Doctrinal Development and Conflicts with Christadelphianism," *A Journal from the Radical Reformation*, 2:2, Winter 1993, 41-50.

⁹ Jan Stilson, "An Overview of the Leadership and Development of the Age to Come in the United States: 1832-1871," *A Journal from the Radical Reformation*, 10:1, Fall 2001, 20.

¹⁰ Elias Smith, *Sermons Containing an Illustration of the Prophecies to be accomplished from the present time, until the new heavens and earth are created, when all the prophecies will be fulfilled*, Portsmouth, NH: Elias Smith; printed by Norris & Sawyer, 1808.

England...and Henry Grew, of Philadelphia.”¹¹ In *The Advent Harbinger* of 1850 appeared an extended discussion series on “The Age to Come” between a Literalist, J. B. Cook and a Millerite, L. D. Mansfield.¹²

Elias Smith writes of Elhanan Winchester’s *Lectures*¹³ in the introduction to his *Sermons*:

Mr. Winchester had the greatest knowledge of the prophecies, of any writer I have ever seen, and there is no doubt in my mind of his being a good man, though I think he was in error concerning the salvation of all men. His arrangement of the things which are to take place until the last judgment is, in general, according to the scriptures, and had he gone through as he set out, he would have outdone all who have written before him; but when he came to the last part of his book, his plan carried him away from the scriptures, and to make it out, he was obliged to leave what he first laid down as a rule to understand the prophecies; that is, the plain literal meaning of the scriptures.¹⁴

During the years 1857-59, Marsh published Winchester’s *Lectures* numbers 9-18 in the pages of *The Expositor & Advocate*. In the introduction to this series Marsh says that he was indebted to one I. K. Lombard of Exeter for sending the second volume of Winchester’s work:

...which we have long desired to obtain...On reading this Lecture, it will be seen that William Miller was indebted to Dr. Gill for his theory of the millennium, &c., which Mr. Winchester most effectually explodes. It will also be discovered

¹¹ Neuffer, “The Gathering of Israel.”

¹² *The Advent Harbinger*, vol. 2, nos. 8, 10, 11 (August 10, 24, 31, 1850). The propositions under discussion were four: 1. There are promises of special blessings to the Jews as a people, which remain unfulfilled but are to be fulfilled in “The Age to Come” or the Great Sabbath; 2. At the establishment of God’s Kingdom, all the wicked of the earth will be destroyed, and the Kingdom will be from its establishment both universal in extent and eternal in duration; 3. There will be probation in the age to come, and men will repent and obtain pardon. The age to come, it is agreed, begins at the Advent; 4) The new heavens and earth, and the new Jerusalem from heaven, will be developed at the commencement of the millennial reign. Cook affirmed propositions 1 and 3; Mansfield affirmed propositions 2 and 4.

¹³ Elhanan Winchester, *A Course of Lectures on the Prophecies that Remain to be Fulfilled: Delivered in the Borough of Southwark — as also, at the Chapel in Glass House Yard in the years MDCCLXXXVIII, IX, XC*, London: Philadelphia Society, 1789-1790, 4 vols. Each lecture (9-18) consisted of brief statements of introduction followed by a recitation of the Scripture texts.

¹⁴ Smith, *Sermons Containing an Illustration of the Prophecies*, 3.

why this work has nearly become extinct: It is too literal to harmonize with the mystical theories of the popular sects of the day of fables. God has had his witnesses in every age, and judging by what we have read of this work before us, none have shone more brilliantly on the millennial reign of Christ than Elhanan Winchester.¹⁵

We note that after having obtained on microfilm the entirety of these lectures (1740 pages in 4 volumes) we concur with Smith that Winchester moves on from the biblical view of the millennium to espouse the error of universal salvation.

In 1857 there was a report of a conference held in Danville submitted by Richard Corbaley and published in *The Expositor and Advocate* of June. It speaks to the importance of our literal hermeneutic:

In the evening, elder J. Marsh gave to an attentive audience, an exposition of the correct principle of scripture interpretation, by which Christians may come into the one faith and hope of the Gospel, and all speak, think, act and judge alike: 1 Cor. 1:10. He also showed that the different conceptions of the same doctrine, arise not from the Bible itself, nor from differing degrees of intellect, but from mystical or allegorical interpretation, — and that a oneness of faith cannot be attained by any degree of scientific or classical education, or even by a pious, sincere and prayerful study of the Scriptures, — that the desired oneness can only be attained by making the literal element of the Bible, the basis of faith, which figurative serves to explain. Several practical rules were given, by which to be guided in Biblical investigation. The first was that, — *Whenever a person, place, or thing is made the direct subject of discourse, it is always used in a literal sense.* The popular error in transferring the terms, Zion, Judah, and Jerusalem to the Church, was shown, with the groundlessness and even absurdity of supposing the predicted future glory of these is to be fulfilled in the Church.¹⁶

Also in 1857 there was a two-part rebuttal by Marsh in *The Expositor and Advocate* of George Storrs' spiritualizing of the

¹⁵ Joseph Marsh, *The Expositor and Advocate*, 1857-1859. H.V. Reed later published at least one article by Elhanan Winchester in *The Millenarian*, Vol. 1, Nos. 8-9, Sept., 1874, entitled "Christ's Universal Kingdom."

¹⁶ Cited by Greg Demmitt in "One Way or One Faith?" a paper presented at the second annual Church of God History Conference, Springfield, Ohio, November, 2007, 8, emphasis mine.

prophecies regarding Israel.¹⁷ In the articles, “Literal Interpretations — The Bible Examiner,” Marsh points out that the use of the terms “Zion” and “Jerusalem” as figurative of the church is an erroneous interpretation that cannot be sustained by the scrutiny of a candid mind. These articles were published after the Danville conference and no doubt reflect the same thesis as his presentation there.

No doubt the “Great Disappointment,” among other things, caused Marsh to rethink the prophetic scenario he held and provoked him to restudy the Scriptures relative to the reign of Christ, God’s plan concerning Israel as the seed of Abraham, and their part in the Abrahamic covenant. Marsh in the first portion of his *Age to Come, or Glorious Restitution*, disavows and refutes what he calls “William Miller’s Theory” or the order of prophetic events in a series of 18 “considerations.”¹⁸ William Miller likens the literal understanding of the future of the Jews to “one of the traditions of the elders” and writes:

So, also, with the return of the Jews. That question I saw could only be sustained by denying the positive declarations of the New Testament, which assert: “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek”; that “the promise that he shall be the heir of the world was not to Abraham and his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith”; that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female”; but that “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” I was, therefore, obliged to discard an objection which asserts there is a difference between the Jew and Greek; that the children of the flesh are accounted for the seed, etc.¹⁹

At the Albany conference of 1845 a series of statements of “important truths” were adopted. Among them was this:

7th. That the promise, that Abraham should be the heir of the world, was not to him, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:13. That they are not all Israel which are of Israel, Rom. 9:6. That there is no

¹⁷ Joseph Marsh, “Literal Interpretation — The Bible Examiner,” *The Expositor and Advocate*, August 15 and September 1, 1857.

¹⁸ Marsh, *Age to Come*, 12-18. A copy of this work is available from the Church of God General Conference, or online at <http://www.timberlandbiblechurch.org/AgeToCome/Age%20to%20Come.htm> or <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/jmarsh/ATC.HTM>

¹⁹ Cited by Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People*, Yarmouth, ME: I.C. Wellcome; Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1874, 53.

difference, under the Gospel dispensation, between Jew and Gentile, Rom. 10:12. That the middle wall of partition that was between them is broken down, no more to be rebuilt, Eph. 2:14, 15. That God will render to every man according to his deeds, Rom. 2:6. That if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, Gal. 3:29. And that *the only restoration of Israel, yet future, is the restoration of the saints to the earth, created anew, when God shall open the graves of those descendants of Abraham who died in faith*, without receiving the promise, with the believing Gentiles who have been grafted in with them into the same olive tree; and shall cause them to come up out of their graves, and bring them, with the living, who are changed, into the land of Israel, Ezek. 37:12, Heb. 11:12, 13, Rom. 11:17, John 5:28, 29.²⁰

The same document, signed by William Miller as Chairman, includes some resolutions, two of which I give here in part:

Resolved, That we consider the doctrine of the restoration of the natural Jews, as a nation, either *before* or *after* the second advent of Christ, as heirs and inheritors of the land of Canaan, as subversive of the whole Gospel system, by raising up what Christ has broken down, namely, the middle wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile....We feel bound, therefore, as we value the fundamental principles of the gospel, to enter our most solemn protest against all such teaching...

Resolved, That...we have no fellowship for Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth, or for any of the distinctive characteristics of modern Judaism....²¹

Opposition and Discussion

As Marsh began to promote the age to come in 1850, he faced strong and direct opposition. Joshua V. Himes labeled Marsh's view "Judaism" and considered it a defection incompatible with Adventism.²² Of this time Neuffer writes, "Indeed, the winds of doctrine developed hurricane force in 1850 among the Adventists — especially the majority group —

²⁰ Ibid., 417, emphasis mine.

²¹ Ibid., 422, 423.

²² Joseph Marsh, *The Age to Come*, part 1, *Advent Harbinger*, 1:228, Jan. 5, 1851, cited by Julia Neuffer, "The Gathering of Israel." She provides an extended discussion of Marsh's views and the "Age-to-Come Controversy" and "The Adventist Reply."

over the ‘age to come.’”²³

I.C. Wellcome observes that “Judaism” was taught earlier by the “Literalists” in 1842 and calls it a “distracting influence”:

The first question that produced a distracting influence among the hitherto united Adventists was “Judaism,” which taught the conversion and restoration of the natural Jews. A free and full discussion of this was permitted in the “Signs of the times”; but after a long and wordy debate, the advocates of the Jews finding that they could not convince their opponents, and that the paper was not made subservient to their purposes, commenced the publication of the *American Millenarian*, in Boston, in the summer of 1842.²⁴

These questions were much discussed and promoted in our age-to-come periodicals. The restoration of Israel or what was called “the Jew question” filled many pages of print. In addition to the J.B. Cook/L.D. Mansfield discussion in *The Advent Harbinger*, there are three other series that we are aware of: 1) H.V. Reed/Nathaniel Field in *The Prophetic Watchman & Herald of the Kingdom* and *The Gospel Banner & Millennial Advocate*; 2) George Moyer/Nathaniel Field in *The Millennial Harbinger & Bible Expositor*; and 3) James M. Stephenson, et al/G.B. Stacy in *The Gospel Banner & Millennial Advocate*.

The age to come was labeled by its opponents as “heresy.” One popular rebuttal to these charges was an article by H.V. Reed in an 1864 issue of *The Gospel Banner and Millennial Advocate* — “The Age-to-Come Not A Heresy.” This was later widely circulated in leaflet format.

In my possession is a photocopy of a 109page record of a debate on the restoration of Israel between John A. Cargile of Stevenson, Alabama (Advent Christian) and Dr. T.J. Daniels of Magazine, Arkansas (Church of God). The original is in the Atlanta Bible College archives.²⁵ The 1866 debate at the Old Union Church between J.M. Stephenson (Church of God) and P.T. Russell (Christian Church) covered these questions also.²⁶

²³ Neuffer, “The Gathering of Israel.”

²⁴ Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission*, 385.

²⁵ *The Cargile-Daniel Discussion Concerning the Question of the Literal Return of the Jews to Palestine*, Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, n.d.

²⁶ James M. Stephenson and P.T. Russell, *A Report of a Public Discussion Between J. M. Stephenson and P. T. Russell. Subject: Kingdom of God on Earth*, Indianapolis: Downing & Brouse, 1866. Stephenson also writes on this in his *God’s Plan of Salvation, or, His Purpose Concerning Man and Earth*, Canton, Ohio: A. D. Eshelman, 1877, and *The Herald of Messiah’s Reign; or The Glad*

An address by Major J. Scott Phillips presented before the British Association of Science at Aberdeen appeared in the pages of *The Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, edited by Thomas Wilson.²⁷ It concerns the millennial land inheritance of literal Israel where Ezekiel describes the lot of each of the twelve tribes — a division of the land among them which has never occurred in all their history. The editor adds a note at the end that the entire text accompanied with maps and two articles he had published on “The Restoration of the Jews”²⁸ would be published together.²⁹ An extract from Philips’ lecture appeared in G.M. Myers’ book on the covenants.³⁰ T. Wilson, after he moved to California, wrote and published a small 24-page booklet titled *A Review of Adventist Teaching on the Jew Question*. It was subtitled, “Proving that the Return from Babylon was not a fulfillment of the Prophecies relating to their final return to the Holy Land.” He advertised this in his periodical *The Last Days* as “A Review of Miles Grant, showing that the Restoration of Israel is still future.” Wilson also advertised another booklet he wrote, “The Blindness of Adventists as to the Restoration of Israel” (16 pp.). Miles Grant was an Advent Christian and author of *Positive Theology* (1895) and *Two Resurrections and the Intervening Millennium* (1886).

In addition to Marsh, Stephenson, Myers and T. Wilson, other early age-to-come writers of the Church of God who produced books addressing the subject of the kingdom of God, which included the prophecies of the restoration of Israel, were R.V. Lyon, Wiley Jones, and H.V. Reed.³¹ Among the Christadelphians were John Thomas, L.C.

Tidings of the kingdom of God, as taught in the sacred oracles, Chicago: The Office of The Herald of the Coming Kingdom, 1868.

²⁷ Vol. 1, No. 23, Dec. 1, 1868, 558-565.

²⁸ *The Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, vol. 1, no. 20, Oct. 15, 1868 and vol. 1, no. 21, Nov. 1, 1868.

²⁹ Thomas Wilson, *Curious and Original Discoveries, Concerning the Re-Settlement of the Seed of Abraham in Syria and Arabia, with Mathematical and Geographical Proofs*, Chicago, 1879. Nathaniel West in a footnote refers to an edition of this as being published by Thos. Wilson, Chicago in 1879. West was discussing “the redistribution and division of the Holy Land being made according to the 12 tribes of Israel” in his book *The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, Fincastle, Virginia: Scripture Truth Book Company, 1889.

³⁰ G.M. Myers, *The Covenants and Their Relationship*, Lanark, IL: Gazette Publishing House, 1882, 28-33.

³¹ Ralph Vinton Lyon, *The Glorious Future! The Kingdom of God! Or The Reign of Christ and His Cabinet*, Suspension Bridge, NY: R.V. Lyon, 186?; *The Scattering and Restoration of Israel*, Seneca Falls, NY: Office of the Millennial Harbinger, 1861; *The Sanctuary*, Seneca Falls, NY: Office of the Millennial

Thomas, Thos. Williams and R.C. Bingley.³²

In addition to Joshua V. Himes, Dr. Nathaniel Field and L.D. Mansfield, two writers who specifically addressed what they called “Judaism” were Josiah Litch, whose works were published by Joshua V. Himes, and Joseph Harvey Waggoner, whose works were published by *The Review & Herald*.³³ Later works putting forth the Millerite position, in addition to Hans K. LaRondelle and Don and Julia Neuffer, Seventh Day Adventists, were Advent Christians, Miriam McKinstry, William N. Pile, Isaac C. Wellcome & Clarkson Goud and Clarence Hewitt & Orrin Roe Jenks.³⁴

The opposition endeavored to overcome the growing age-to-come movement not only in print and pulpit, but also through organizational maneuvering and proselytizing they tried to get control of the minds and

Harbinger, 1863; Wiley Jones, *The Gospel of the Kingdom, advocated in a series of ten discourses*, Norfolk, VA.: Virginian Steam Presses, 1879; *Evangelism Concerning the Reign of Christ over Israel and the Nations*, Chicago: printed at The Restitution Office, 1872; Hiram Vaughn Reed, *The Kingdom of God or, The Reign of Christ on Earth, as Revealed in the Holy Scriptures*, Seneca Falls, NY: Office of the Millennial Harbinger, 1861.

³² John Thomas, *Elpis Israel: An Exposition of the Kingdom of God*, Birmingham: The Christadelphian, 1958 (originally written 1848-1850); L.C. Thomas, *The law, the Covenants, and the Sabbath; also, An Epitome of the Great Salvation*, Dover, DE: The Author, 1883; Thomas Williams, *The World's Redemption According to the Eternal Plan*, Richmond, VA: The Advocate Committee, 1953, fourth edition (written 1898); *Seven Nights Discussion Between Mr. Clark Braden and Mr. Thos. Williams*, Englewood, IL: Advocate Publishing House, 1894; R.C. Bingley, *Index Rerum: A Ready Reference on Biblical Subjects*, Los Angeles: The Author, 1890.

³³ Josiah Litch, *Judaism Overthrown: or, The Kingdom Restored to the True Israel, with the Scripture Evidence of the Epoch of the Kingdom in 1843*, Boston: J.V. Himes, 1843 (38 p.); Joseph Harvey Waggoner, *The Kingdom of God: An Examination of the Prophecies Relative to the Time and Manner of its Establishment, or A Refutation of the Doctrine of the Age to Come*, Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Review and Herald Office, 1859 (167 p.)

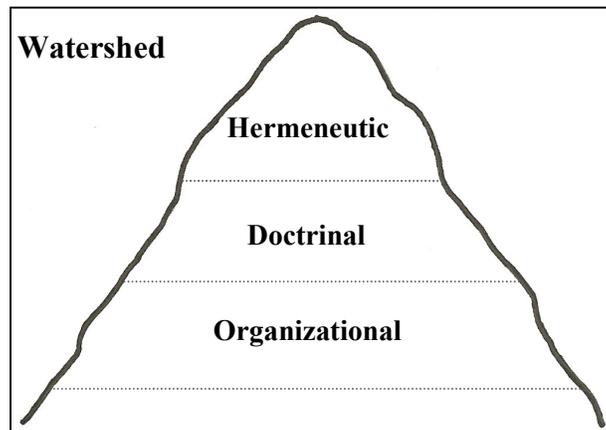
³⁴ Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*, Washington, D.C., 1962; Miriam McKinstry, *Fallacies of Future Probation*, Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, n.d.; William N. Pile, *Israel in Prophecy, or Will the Jews be Restored as a Nation*, Boston: The Advent Christian Publication Society, 1902; Isaac C. Wellcome and Clarkson Goud, *The Plan of Redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ*, Philadelphia: Bible Banner Office, 1879; Clarence Hewitt & Orrin Roe Jenks, *The Two Israels* (a syllabus of 21 lessons), Aurora, IL: The Advent Christian General Conference, n.d.

devotions of men. Terry Ferrell records that “At the annual conference at ‘Old Antioch’ in 1875, the Advent Christian church under the leadership of Joshua Himes, made an attempt to capture the Indiana conference. Brother [Richard] Corbaley is credited with preventing the merger. One of the main points of difference was the restoration of Israel.”³⁵

The variant systems of hermeneutics and the resulting beliefs remain the watershed which defines organizational ties and associations. Each generation has to grapple with these issues as to how we should interpret the Scriptures and what things we should consequently believe. Our early leaders studied the biblical text thoroughly and took a stand to promote the Gospel of the Kingdom as comprehending the truths of the age to come, including the restoration of Israel.

Looking Back to Understand the Present

As we look at all of these things we see a watershed of three levels, each a result of the preceding one — the first effecting the second and the second effecting the third. These three are: first, the hermeneutics which are both brought to and derive from the biblical text; second, the resultant doctrinal or theological understandings; and third, the organizational runoff of the preceding two. We illustrate it thus:



Now each of these three levels is a watershed in itself. The divide of the hermeneutic is seen in the adoption of either a predominantly allegorical or a predominantly literal system of interpretation. The

³⁵ Terry Ferrell, “A Brief History of the Church of God in America,” a series of lessons presented at the National Berean Youth Conference at Camp Reynoldswood, Dixon, Illinois, August, 1960, 6.

resultant doctrinal positions relative to the issues of the restoration of Israel and future probation are a denying or affirming of both — the allegorical denying; the literal affirming. The organizational is seen in the historical development of religious bodies or fellowships in which the points of separation can be broadly categorized within the advent movement as the Millerite versus the age-to-come positions. The extant groups which follow the Millerite view in a general way are the Advent Christians who are the closest to the original teachings of William Miller; the Seventh Day Adventists who additionally and adaptively follow the word of Ellen G. White; and the Jehovah's Witnesses who, following Rutherford, departed by 1929 from Russell's views on the age-to-come and aligned more closely to the views of Miller regarding Israel, though they are in many ways radically different in the general prophetic scenario espoused. Those extant groups which hold age-to-come positions regarding Israel, with variations relative to future probation, are the Church of God Abrahamic Faith (General Conference and some independent congregations); the Christadelphians and those Abrahamic Faith brethren who are in close fellowship with them; the Church of God 7th Day (and its splinter groups — Salem, VA, Meridian, ID, Jerusalem); and those who maintain C. T. Russell's views (Dawn Bible Students, Laymen's Home Missionary Movement, Pastoral Bible Institute, etc.). These are broad and general connections, but have similar if not common origins. We illustrate each of these three watersheds thus:

