Chapter 3: Edward Irving (1792-1834)
The Rapture and the Catholic Apostolic Church

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1. The Revival of 19th Century Premillennialism

The revival of premillennialism in the nineteenth century, and the revolution in prophetic and apocalyptic speculation concerning the 'rapture', the Jewish restoration to Palestine and the return of Christ can be largely attributed to the Scottish, Edward Irving[1], also the forerunner of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.[2]

Having accepted a call in 1822 to pastor the Church of Scotland congregation at the Caledonian Chapel, in London, Irving soon became a popular if controversial speaker. So much so that the Chapel proved too small for the large numbers who wanted to hear him, and a larger church was built in Regent Square in 1827.[3]

Given his growing popularity Irving was invited to preach at the annual service of the *London Missionary Society* in 1824, and a year later in 1825 to the *Continental Society*, in which Henry Drummond was influential. On both occasions, Irving provoked a furore.[4]

Irving's address in 1825 was provocatively entitled, '*Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed*'. In reaction to the prevailing optimistic postmillennialism and drive toward missionary expansion, Irving predicted that the world was about to experience a *'series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities'* before the imminent return of Jesus Christ.[5] Irving insisted that missionary work, especially in Southern Europe where the *Continental Society* concentrated its ministry, was futile because God's judgement was about to fall on the lands of the former Roman Empire. Some walked out of the meeting in protest while the leaders of the Society accused Irving of undermining their ministry.[6] Undaunted by his unpopularity, Irving published the address acknowledging in the foreword, his indebtedness to Hatley Frere, who held similarly outspoken premillennialist views.[7]

In 1828 the *Christian Observer* summarised the increasingly polarised positions held by Evangelicals and highlighted the consequences of postmillennial and premillennial approaches to mission.

> *A question has of late been much agitated, in connexion with the millennial reign of Christ..., namely whether the latter-day glory shall be ushered in with judgements or with mercy. The advocates for the former opinion, among whom are Mr Irving and Mr M'Neile, speak in the strongest terms of the deteriorated and deteriorating state of the world; they view Christendom as verging to its downfall; they consider our Bible and missionary societies, not as instruments for ushering in the latter day glory, not as harbingers of mercy to*

the wide world, but only as messengers to gather out a few elect vessels, and to fill up the measure of the wicked, till God in his wrath shall consume the world of the ungodly, and bring in a whole new dispensation, even the Millennium of Christ's personal reign with his saints. We differ widely in opinion from this dejecting sentiment; we view our Bible and Missionary societies as ministers of mercy, and not of wrath; we hail with joy the extension of education; we consider the world, by the blessing of God, and the influences of his Holy Spirit, not as becoming worse but better; and we look, not for a new dispensation, a fifth monarchy, but for the consummation of the present dispensation, the dispensation of the Gospel in the glory of the Messiah, and the extension of his kingdom upon earth, in the merciful arrangement of his providence, under the powerful manifestations of his Holy Spirit.[8]

Irving was undeterred by such criticism, becoming increasingly preoccupied with the interpretation of the apocalyptic writings of Daniel and Revelation. He predicted, for example, that the Church had suffered under Papal rule from 533 when Justinian recognised the Bishop of Rome as head of the Church until 1793. He saw the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution together with the renewed interest in missionary expansion as evidence of the *"signs of the end".* The first six vials referred to in the Book of Revelation had been poured out while the seventh vial referred to the 1820's. This final era would see the final battle of Armageddon, the Second Advent and the beginning of the Millennium.[9]

In 1828 Irving wrote a work of over 500 pages entitled, *The Last Days: A Discourse on the Evil Character of These Our Times, Proving Them to be The 'Perilous Times' and the 'Last Days.'* The first chapter is entitled*, 'Introductory, to prove that the Last Times and Last Days of Holy Scripture are the Conclusion of the Jewish Captivity and the Gentile Dispersion.'* Irving was clearly convinced that the Lord would return in his generation,

I conclude, therefore, that the last days... will begin to run from the time of God's appearing for his ancient people, and gathering them together to the work of destroying all Antichristian nations, of evangelising the world, and of governing it during the Millennium...
The times and fulness of the times, so often mentioned in the New Testament, I consider as referring to the great period numbered by times... Now if this reasoning be correct, as there can be little doubt that the one thousand two hundred and sixty days concluded in the year 1792, and the thirty additional days in the year 1823, we are already entered upon the last days, and the ordinary life of a man will carry many of us to the end of them. If this be so, it gives to the subject with which we have introduced this year's ministry a very great importance indeed.[10]

Unlike later dispensationalists such as Hal Lindsey, however, Irving believed the reference to 'Gog' in Ezekiel 38 to be,

...a confederacy of all the nations of the East, which are left from the destruction of the Roman apostasy, which procedeth this great congregation of nations against Jerusalem spoken of in all the prophets.[11]

According to Drummond, a little later, Irving was convinced the Second Coming would occur in 1868 being fixed seventy-five years after 1793.[12]

Despite his convictions that the return of Christ was imminent, in 1828 he nevertheless wrote to Thomas Chalmers, who had just been appointed Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh, to ask whether he might be examined for a doctorate in divinity. He also asked for a further opportunity to preach in Edinburgh on the theme of the Kingdom. In that letter he gave some indication of his theological emphasis at that time,

> *The second coming of the Lord is the 'point de vue', the vantage ground, as one of my friends is won't to word it, from which, and from which alone, the whole purpose of God can be contemplated and understood.*[13]

2. A Failing Gentile Church and Restored Jewish People

In 1826 Irving was introduced to the views of Manuel Lacunza a Spanish Jesuit who wrote a book under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra. Claiming to be the work of a converted Jew, the book was entitled, *'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty'.* In it Lacunza interpreted all but the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation as describing apocalyptic events about to happen.

Irving was so excited by Lacunza's futurist speculations, he mastered Spanish in order to translate and publish the work in English.[14] Irving added a 203 page preface to the translation in which he presented with great conviction his own unique prophetic speculations about the end of the world, predicting the apostasy of Christendom, the subsequent restoration of the Jews and finally the imminent return of Christ.

> *When the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles... he will begin to prepare another ark of testimony... and to that end will turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people, the Jews, and bring them unto those days of refreshing... This outpouring of the Spirit is known in Scripture by 'the latter rain'.*[15]

> *These three points of doctrine concerning the Gentile church, the future Jewish and universal church, and the personal advent of the Lord to destroy the one and to build up the other, I opened and defended out of the scriptures from Sabbath to Sabbath, with all boldness, yet with fear and trembling... at that time I did not know of one brother in the ministry who held with me in these matters, and of those to whom I broke the subject, I could not get the ear, even for preliminaries. So novel and strange a doctrine... such uncivil and implacable language, concerning overwhelming judgments upon the very eve of the millennial blessedness... such low and derogatory of the risen and exalted Saviour, as that he should ever again come to visit earth, and be visibly present in it for any length of time, could not fail, and certainly did not fail, to call down upon my head all possibly forms and degrees of angry and intemperate abuse... But the more I examined, the more I was convinced, and resolved, though alone and single-handed, to maintain these three great heads of doctrine from the holy scriptures, against all who should undertake to uphold the commonly-received notion, that the present Gentile dispensation*

was about to burst forth with the millennial blessedness, after which, to wind up and consume all, the Lord would come in the latter end.[16]

Irving's pessimism concerning Christendom predated and very likely influenced Darby's similar denunciation of a 'failing church' and hope in a future 'dispensation'.[17] On this issue, Irving increasingly showed what Dallimore describes as both *'sectarian bitterness and reckless dogmatism.'* [18]

The Reformed Church hath set aside faith in the Scriptures, and builds upon the common sense of mankind and were better to acknowledge Paine's 'Age of Reason' than the Gospel. The whole philosophy of Europe serveth infidelity... There is nothing but rationalism in religion and liberalism in politics... Even among such as are spiritual there is a constant appeal to the useful. The intellect hath become all sufficient... The Church is in the Laodicean state.[19]

O ye niggardly spiritualisers, ye pharisaical contemners of the material creation! For my part I expect to see the Lord eye to eye, in bodily form, not in spiritual drapery. I do expect to look upon, and to rule over this world purified and redeemed, and possessed by living creatures in flesh and blood.[20]

Drummond concludes,

Napoleon's lurid words, "I have always followed fortune and the god of war," seemed but portents of what was to follow. As 1830 approached, strikes and unrest became chronic in Britain, and on the Continent Revolution shook the thrones that had been re-established in 1815. Irving was merely obsessed with a question with which everyone was concerned.[21]

3. Irving and the Prophetic Conference Movement

Irving's premillennial and prophetic views concerning Israel came to have a profound influence over many Christian leaders and politicians not least John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Brethren as well as Henry Drummond, a city banker and politician, who founded the Catholic Apostolic Church with Irving.

On the first day of Advent in 1826, the same year Irving was translating Lacunza's work, Henry Drummond opened his home at Albury Park to a select group of some twenty invited guests to discuss matters of prophecy. These included the Revd. Lewis Way and Joseph Wolff of the *London Jews Society*, Hatley Frere and Hugh M'Neile, another Anglican who, in 1830, published '*The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation*.[22] Like Irving and Darby, M'Neile advocated a separate status for the Jews from the Church, within different dispensations, the future repentance and then restoration of the Jews, and finally their pre-eminence on earth, a blessing to the other nations.[23]

Some twenty men attended the first conference and over forty attended one or more of those held at Albury between 1826 and 1830 including Lady Powerscourt. The majority were like Lewis Way and Hugh M'Neile, Anglicans, although others were Moravian, Church of Scotland and Nonconformist ministers.[24] Irving was to write of the first such conference,

...the six days we spent under the holy and hospitable roof of Albury House, within the chime of the church bell, and surrounded by the most picturesque and beautiful forms of nature... of which I can say is this, that no council, from that first which we convened at Jerusalem until this time, seemed more governed, and conducted, and inspired by a spirit of holy communion.[25]

No appeal was allowed but to the Scriptures, of which the originals lay before us; in the interpretation of which, if any question arose, we had the most learned Eastern scholar perhaps in the world to appeal to, and a native Hebrew. I mean Joseph Wolff.[26]

Edward Miller quotes Irving's notes of the first Albury conference.

...perfect unanimity on the following points:- (I) That the Christian Dispensation was to be terminated, ending in the destruction of the visible Church, like the Jewish; during which 'judgements' the Jews were to be restored to Palestine. (II) 'The judgements' were to fall principally, if not exclusively, upon Christendom. (III) That 'the 1,260 years' commenced with Justinian and terminated in 1793, and that the vials of the Apocalypse then began to be poured out; that our blessed Lord will then appear, and that therefore it is the duty of all to press these considerations on the attention of all men.[27]

The conference of 1828 focussed on speculation concerning the imminent restoration of the Jews. Irving, for example, records the momentous news which Drummond shared.

...the [ten lost Hebrew] tribes have been discovered, twenty millions in number, inhabiting the region north of Cashmere and towards Bohara, in the great central plain of Asia. It would seem that there came men from them to Leipsig fair... they were trading in Cashmere shawls.[28]

It is possible that Wolff's lifelong search for the lost 'Ten Tribes' which began in 1828 may have been sparked off by this 'discovery'.[29] In his *'Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation'* written in 1830, M'Neile includes an Appendix entitled, *'The Ten Lost Tribes'*. which elaborates on this claim.[30]

The following paragraph, which appeared in a German paper under the head of Leipsic, is calculated to lead to some interesting inquiries:-
"After having seen, for some years past, merchants from Tiflis, Persia, and Armenia, among the visitors at our fair, we have had, for the first time, two traders from Bucharia with shawls, which are there manufactured of the finest wool of the goats of Thibet and Cashmere, BY THE JEWISH FAMILIES, who form a third part of the population. In Bucharia (formerly the capital of Sogdiana) the Jews have been very numerous ever since the Babylonian captivity, and are there as remarkable for their industry and manufactured as they are in England for their money transactions. It was not until the Russian Government succeeded in extending its diplomatic missions far into Bucharia..."
Much interest has been excited by this information which this paragraph conveys, and which is equally novel and important. In none of the geographical works we have consulted, do we find the least hint as to the existence in Bu-

charia of such a body of Jews as that here mentioned, amounting to one third of the whole population: but as the fact can no longer be doubted, the next point of inquiry which presents itself is, Whence have they proceeded, and how have they come to establish themselves in a region so remote from their original country? This question, we think, can only be answered by supposing that these persons are the descendants of the long-lost Ten Tribes, concerning the fate of which theologians, historians, and antiquaries have been alike puzzled; and, however wild this hypothesis may at first sight appear, there are not wanting circumstances to render it far from improbable.[31]

M'Neile quotes from 2 Kings 17 and 2 Edras 13 to pinpoint the lost Tribes as exiled beyond the River Euphrates.

The country beyond Bucharia was unknown to the ancients; and it is, we believe, generally admitted that the river Gozan, mentioned in the book of Kings, is the same as the Ganges, which has its rise in those very countries in which the Jews reside., of whom the Leipsic account speaks.[32]

M'Neile also includes corroborating evidence provided in a report given by a Mr. Sargon to the *London Jews Society* in 1822 that the 'Lost Tribes' were resident in India and China.

...calling themselves Beni-Israel, and bearing, almost uniformly, Jewish names, but with Persian terminations... there is every probability that the Beni-Israel, resident on the west of the Indian peninsula, had originally proceeded from Bucharia... They circumcise their own children... They observe the Kippoor... They call themselves Gorah Jehudi, or White Jews... They speak of the Arabian Jews as their brethren... They expect the Messiah, and that they will one day return to Jerusalem. They think that the time of His appearance will soon arrive, at which they much rejoice, believing that at Jerusalem they will see their God, worship Him only, and be despised no more.[33]

M'Neile summarises the significance of this news and speculates on the impact of a future rise in Jewish nationalism.

These particulars, we should presume, can scarcely fail to prove interesting... The number of scattered members of the tribe of Judah and the half-tribe of Benjamin, rather exceeds than falls short of five millions. Now, if to this number be added the many other millions to be found in the different countries in the East, what an immense power would be brought into action were the spirit of the nationality once aroused, or any extraordinary event to occur, which should induce them to unite in claiming possession of that land which was given to them for an "heritage for ever." and to which in every other clime of the earth, their fondest hopes and their dearest aspirations never cease to turn! - Caledonian Mer.[34]

Joseph Wolff spent much of his life travelling in search of and ministering to oriental Jews. At the same time he maintained a close relationship with Irving, marrying Irving's friend, Lady Georgina Walpole in 1827. At Wolff's request, Irving rather rashly agreed to care for two Greek youths. Irving writes of it,

These two Greeks has Joseph Wolff wholly entrusted to me - so that I am to them as father, and guardian, and provider, and everything, which I am also right happy to be... till they return to their native Cyprus again.[35]

One of Irving's biographers describes Wolff as "*the eccentric Jewish Christian Missionary'*.[36] What Wolff thought of some of Irving's own eccentric colleagues is not known. Robert Baxter, for example, had asserted, as a result of prophetic revelation, that the North American Red Indians were the 'Lost Tribes' and that they would emigrate to Palestine within three and a half years.[37]

Further prophetic conferences were held at Albury each year until 1830 when Lady Powerscourt began to host similar gatherings under the leadership of J. N. Darby at Powerscourt Castle near Dublin. These continued until 1834.

The proceedings of the Albury Conferences from 1828 gained a wider audience through a short-lived quarterly journal on Prophecy published by Drummond, entitled The *Morning Watch*. Dallimore indicates that the *Morning Watch* was a *'high-quality production'* using the finest paper available combined with excellent editorship.[38] The journal came to an abrupt end in June 1833.

Andrew Drummond dates the emergence of the Catholic Apostolic Church out of Irving's loose circle of followers to the winding up of the *Morning Watch*, presumably because its benefactor, Henry Drummond as well as Tudor, its editor, became 'Apostles' in Irving's new sect. He writes, *'few editors have made such a valedictory statement as this'*.

The followers of Christ and the followers of Antichrist are now gathering. Christ is gathering His children into the true Church, to do Him service there, and, in so doing, to be prepared for His coming; Satan is gathering his hosts under the standard of Liberalism to become the pioneers of the man of perdition, the personal Antichrist.
In the progress of this work, Christ hath been calling for the personal services of nearly all the regular correspondents of this journal; and he hath at length called the editor to take the place of an elder in His Church, and hath claimed all his time for the special duties of feeding and overseeing a sixth part of the flock in London. To this higher calling the editor now resolves to devote himself wholly, and at the same time brings the Morning Watch to a close, as he will not transfer to any other person such a solemn responsibility.[39]

Tudor's final editorial could just as easily have described the views of Darby's Brethren who continued to organise further prophetic conferences in New York in 1868, London in 1873, Chicago in 1875, culminating in the Bible Conference Movement and the Niagara Conferences of 1883 to 1897.

Both the method of 'Bible readings' and the topics of the conferences strongly suggest that the gatherings were a result of J.N. Darby's travels in the United States and the influence of the Plymouth Brethren.[40]

Though already dead for fifty years, Irving is also attributed to have been the cause of the split that occurred at the 1884 Niagara Conference over what became known as the '*Rapture-Rupture*', over when, during the tribulation, the Church would be removed.[41]

4. The Origin of the 'Secret Pretribulational Rapture' Doctrine

Darby began publishing his prophetic speculations in 1831. Coincidentally both he and Edward Irving began to postulate two stages to Christ's imminent return about the same time. First, there would be an invisible 'appearing' when Christians would meet Christ in the air and be removed from the earth, a process which came to be known as *'the rapture of the saints'*. With the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit removed from the world, the Antichrist would arise and the seven year tribulation would begin. His rule would finally be crushed only by the public 'appearing' of Jesus Christ.

There is some speculation that this novel doctrine originated with the Powerscourt prophetic conference held near Dublin in 1831. '*Darby's prominence at the Powerscourt meetings has led to the supposition that he was responsible for it...*'[42] While dispensationalists have been most anxious to perpetuate this belief to ensure a measure of orthodoxy, there is much evidence to the contrary.[43] Several have attributed the notion of a secret, pretribulational Rapture to Edward Irving.[44] Dave MacPherson argues convincingly that the doctrine arose through a prophetic revelation given to Margaret MacDonald, one of Irving's disciples.[45]

Corroborating evidence can be found in the division which the doctrine caused among dispensationalists between pre-tribulationists and post-tribulationists at the Niagara Prophecy Conferences from about 1884.

> *The 'Rapture-Rupture' essentially had Robert Cameron, Nathaniel West, and later W. R. Erdman, holding for a 'Rapture' at the very end of the age. They were to be supported by W. G. Moorehead of Xenia Theological Seminary. An apparent majority of the Niagarans, including Brookes, Scofield, Gaebelein, Parson, Gordon and George Needham, were holding for what has become the traditional pretribulation view.*[46]

Gaebelein, writing some fifty years later about the Scofield Reference Bible, looked back at the Niagara Conferences and linked the controversy to Irving.

> *Toward the end of the Niagara meetings several of the teachers, influenced by one man, who was considered an outstanding biblical and ecclesiastical scholar (as he undoubtedly was), began to abandon this distinction and branded it as mere invention. One of them went so far as to say that the teaching that the Lord would remove His true Church before the predicted Great Tribulation judgment, and that so far as His coming for His saints is concerned that it might occur at any moment, originated in the days of Edward Irving and his spurious gift of tongues' revival. And so the blessed hope of the imminent coming of the Lord was more or less charged to the influence of subtle demons.*[47]

Gaebelein may have merely been repeating the position known to be held by Darby via Scofield concerning Irving's later eccentricities. Despite the obvious influence Darby and Irving had upon one another in the early days of the Prophecy Conferences at Albury and Powerscourt, Darby eventually disassociated himself from the fanciful prophecies of the Irvingites and the Catholic Apostolic Church. Scofield himself denied that Irving was the source of this doctrine. Responding to criticisms from a former colleague at the Niagara Conference, and following its demise over infighting over the 'rapture' he wrote an anonymous editorial in *Our Hope* in 1902,

> *We cannot, however, in the interests of truth, allow the statement to stand that 'until the days of Edward Irving, who was excluded from the Presbyterian Church for heresy, no one ever heard of this 'coming for' and 'coming with his saints.'' As a matter of fact, Irving was excluded, not for heresy in doctrine, but for his view on church order... If the editor of the Watchword and Truth will turn to Zechariah 14:4,5, he will learn of a statement concerning the coming with which considerably antedates Edward Irving... And if, further, he will turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, he will find a revelation concerning the 'coming for His saints' later indeed than Zechariah by six hundred years, but still about eighteen hundred years before Edward Irving.*[48]

As late as 1976 Walvoord was still anxious to distance the origin of the doctrine of the Rapture from Irving.

> *The often-repeated charge that Darby secured his pretribulationism from Edward Irving has never been actually documented. One can hardly account for the wide acceptance of pretribulationism by Plymouth Brethren, who are devoted students of the bible, to the offering of this view by a person who had no reputation for orthodoxy.*[49]

Canfield notes that Walvoord's position contradicts several British historians who were closer to the issue.

> *Neatby, writing in 1901, Howard Rowden in 1967, F. Roy Coad in 1968 and Iain Murray in 1971, all find direct and reasonable links between the ideas of Irving and the role of J. N. Darby. The link is so evident that a denial, using semantics on Walvoord's part, does not 'wash'.*[50]

5. Irving's Legacy: the Legitimisation of Christian Zionism within British Evangelicalism

John Nelson Darby had resigned his curacy in the Church of Ireland in 1827 to form a new church, the Brethren. Edward Irving was to do the same, leaving the Church of Scotland to form the Catholic Apostolic Church in 1832. The circumstances of his departure, like Darby's, had as much to do with his pessimistic eschatology and confidence in direct personal divine guidance as it did with the opposition to these views from others.

> *By the end of 1829 all the factors were present which were to cast such shadows over the closing years of Irving's ministry. His fascination for the curious and the speculative had led him to accept conjectures on Christ's humanity... To Irving, confident of the guidance of the Spirit and no longer bound by 're-*

ceived traditions', the opposition he provoked was proof of the decadence he had complained of in the churches since 1825. A further proof of the unspirituality of the religious world was now added. By 1829 he was convinced that the supernatural powers present in the first century should be possessed by the Church 'as surely and richly now as in the days of the Apostles' . The absence of miraculous gifts was the fruit of the Church's long unbelief.[51]

It is an indication of Irving's influence over Henry Drummond and the *Continental Society* that in 1830, the year Irving separated from the Church of Scotland amidst accusations of heresy concerning Christ's sinlessness, the Society nevertheless passed a resolution written by Henry Drummond to the effect,

That this Meeting, impressed with the thought that the day of labour is far spent, and must soon close... do recognise the great duty and privilege of raising the cry throughout apostate Christendom, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."[52]

Horatius Bonar was happy to write a 31 page preface to a second edition of Irving's *The Last Days*, published in 1850, 16 years after his death. In it Bonar made this assessment of Irvings life and ministry,

My sympathies are strongly with the author, and, in the main, with his sentiments and expositions; at least those bearing upon prophecy, and relating to the characteristics of the last days... It is a work of power, but not of effort, giving evidence of a gifted mind, and an observant eye... Thus, 'he being dead yet speaketh.' He speaks to the Church. He speaks to the kingdom. He speaks as a minister of the gospel. He speaks as an ambassador of Christ, and as a witness for his speedy coming. He speaks as a watchman, set by his commander on the tower of some beleaguered fortress, and he speaks as a soldier, cheering on his comrades in the day of sore and weary battle. He speaks as a patriot, in the fulness of his yearning heart, - a patriot of the ancient type and time, uncorrupted, undegenerated, single-eyed, and fearless, - a patriot of the truest stock, and noblest blood, that Scotland ever bore, or England reared.[53]

John Ellerton, an Anglican evangelical and young contemporary of Irving, wrote this assessment of his influence over many clergy and laity of the Established Church after his death,

I thought of him chiefly as an open-air preacher... But the favourite, the inexaustible subject of talk among serious people was unfulfilled prophecy. The Irvingite movement, (as people would call it) had popularized Millenarian speculations among many who resisted steadily all belief in the new 'Miracles' and 'Tongues'. Names now utterly forgotten of writers on prophecy formed the staple reading, I am afraid, for a good many of the religious folk among whom I lived; and their speculations turned chiefly on the chronology of the future - in what year the Jews were to be restored, Popery to be destroyed, and the Millennium to begin.[54]

The influence of the premillennial Zionist views of men like Irving, Way and M'Neile upon other Anglican ministers can be seen in the observation made by E. B. Elliott, who wrote his own four volume 2,500 page treaties on the Apocalypse, which was to go through five editions in 18 years,[55]

> *In the year 1844, the date of the first publication of my own work on the Apocalypse, so rapid has been the progress of these views in England, that instead of its appearing a thing strange and half-heretical to hold them, as when Irving published his translation of Ben Ezra, the leaven had evidently now deeply penetrated the religious mind; and from the ineffectiveness of the opposition hitherto formally made to them, they seemed gradually advancing toward to triumph.*[56]

By 1845 it is estimated that over 700 Anglican clergy held to a premillennial eschatology. Murray insists that in the second half of the 19th Century, that number increased significantly so that by 1873 a conference on Prophecy held in London had the support of senior Evangelical Anglicans such as the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Radstock and the Earl of Cavan.[57] Drummond, however, offers this sad assessment of Irving's abiding legacy.

> *It is one of the tragedies of Church History that one who had the ear of the public like Irving should have adopted the obscurantist views then so popular... Irving was carried along by the swirling torrent of impulse, undirected by logic or consistency.*[58]

Charles Simeon once said, *'I think it charity to account for Mr Irving's sentiments and conduct by tracing them to an aberration of mind*.'[59] David Brown was Irving's Assistant between 1830 - 1832. He reached similar conclusions about Irving's prophetic speculations.

> *When Irving entered on the study of prophecy, it turned out to be one for which his rich and surging imagination - never under sufficient control - ill fitted him, while the spell of the mysterious future, believed to be at the very door, laid him open to influences that could but warp his judgment.*[60]

Edward Irving's premature death in 1834 while on a preaching tour of Scotland left the reins of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Henry Drummond's hands, the hope of the restoration of Israel to men like Lewis Way and Hugh M'Neile and the cause of premillennialism to be shaped and forged by John Nelson Darby's nascent dispensationalism alone.

Revised Sunday, April 05, 2026
4360 words

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[1]Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p. 188.

[2] Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983); Gordon Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (Peabody, Massachusetts, 1973).
[3]J.D. Douglas, 'Edward Irving' *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. ed. J. D. Douglas. rev. edn. (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1978) p.517.
[4]Dallimore, *Life.,* p. 61.
[5]Iain H. Murray, *Puritan*., p. 189.
[6]Dallimore, *Life.,* p. 62.
[7]M. O. W. Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving*. 2 vols. (London, 1862), p. 96.
[8]*The Christian Observer*, June 1828, pp. 398-399. Cited in Michael Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets* (London, SPCK, 1979), p. 11.
[9]P. E. Shaw, *The Catholic Apostolic Church* (New York, King's Crown Press, 1946), p. 18, cited in Michael Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets*, *Evangelical Leaders of the Victorian Church* (London, SPCK, 1979), p. 11.
[10]Edward Irving, *The Last Days A Discourse on the Evil Character of These Our Times, Proving Them to be The 'Perilous Times' and the 'Last Days'* (London, James Nisbet, 1850), pp. 10-22.
[11]Irving, *Last*., p. 25.
[12]Andrew Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (London, James Clarke), p. 130.
[13] Oliphant, *The Life.*, p. 255.
[14]Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving, Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983), p. 62.
[15]Edward Irving, preliminary discourse, 'on Ben Ezra', *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra a converted Jew, Translated from the Spanish, with a Preliminary Discourse* (London, L.B. Seeley & Sons, 1827), pp. 5-6.
[16]Edward Irving, *The Rev. Edward Irving's Preliminary Discourse to the Work of Ben Ezra entitled the Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* 1859 reprint, pp. 7-8, quoted in Iain Murray, *Hope.*, p. 190.
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