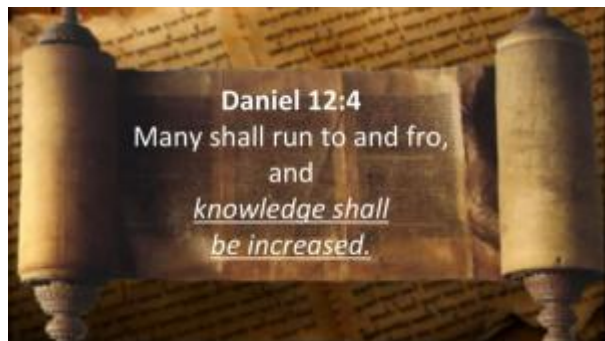


The Approaching End of the Age – Part IV. Section III. Chapter VI. Concluding Remarks. Part 1.



Continued from [Part IV. Section III. Chapter V. Soli-Lunar Measures of Our Lord's Earthly Lifetime, and of Human History as a Whole.](#)

WE have in the foregoing pages, traversed a considerable range of subjects; we have endeavoured to elucidate the fundamental principles of progressive revelation and progressive interpretation, and we have under their guidance traced the historic fulfilment of two of the main symbolic prophecies of Scripture. In this fourth part of the work we have directed attention to a variety of facts, in the realms of physiology and astronomy, and shown their connection with another series of facts, the facts of Biblical chronology. We have traced, very imperfectly, but still sufficiently to demonstrate its existence, a *system* of times and seasons running through nature—organic and inorganic,—and through Scripture —historic and prophetic:—a system which consequently we have ventured to call, a *Divine system* of times and seasons. We have shown that this system is characterized by soli-lunar dominion causal and chronological, and by a marked and peculiar septiformity; that a law of completion in weeks can be traced alike in Scripture, in physiology (normal and abnormal), in history, and in astronomy.

We have endeavoured to avoid mere hypothesis, and to build on the basis of solid unquestionable facts. It remains in conclusion to show the bearing of the facts of this Divine system of times and seasons,—

- I. On some of the main controverted points of prophetic interpretation dealt with in the earlier part of this volume;
- II. On the evidence of the inspiration of Scripture; and,
- III. On the profoundly interesting question of the chronological point now reached in human history, and the nearness of "the end of the age."

I. The Divine system of times and seasons, which we have traced, strongly discredits the *futurist* system of interpreting the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and St. John, and in the fullest and most remarkable manner confirms the *Protestant historic system*. We have shown that if the true meaning of the *chronologic* statements connected with these prophecies can be *determined*, it would of itself and without the aid of further argument, settle the question

at issue between these two schools of interpreters; inasmuch as the nature of the predicted Antichrist is decided by the duration of his existence. If the 1260 days of his dominion be (unlike all the other features of the prediction) *literal*, then the futurists are right in looking for a future division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms with a coincident future rise of an individual Antichrist, whose advent shall precede by three and a half years that of Christ; and in denying that these prophecies have already received their fulfilment. But if the 1260 days be (like the predictions in which the period occurs), symbolic, then the little horn and the ten horns, *having a duration of 1260 years attached to them*, and their rise immediately succeeding the break-up of the undivided Roman Empire, the fulfilment must be looked for *in the past*; and can only be found in the history of the Papacy, and its relations to the kingdoms of Christendom, and to the true Church of Christ, during the last twelve centuries. In consequence of this, its great importance, we dwelt at some length on the evidence in favour of the year-day system of interpretation, and we must now direct special attention to the *confirmation of its truth* afforded by the Divine plan of times and seasons, which we have been investigating.

The period which,—as marking the duration, and therefore the nature of the great Antichristian Apostasy,—*is the disputed period*, is seven times designated by expressions synonymous with *half a week of years*: “forty and two months,” 1260 days, etc. Now this alone would prove nothing, because weeks on an almost infinite variety of scale, are found, as we have shown, in the word and works of God. But *this half week leads up to a certain terminal point*, the establishment of the kingdom of the God of heaven, the overthrow of Antichrist and his armies, the cessation of the treading down of the holy city. These same events mark the termination of one of the weeks we have considered, the last of the three great dispensational weeks, the times of the Gentiles; this also ends in the establishment of the kingdom of God, the overthrow of Babylon and the beast, and the Second Advent of Christ. That is, we find a *whole* week of “seven times,” or 2520 years, leading up to THAT; and we find also a half-week of “time, times and a half,” leading up to THAT. How can we question that the latter is half of the former? that the half-week of years, is symbolic of a half-week of prophetic times, or years of years? that the predicted 1260 “days” represent the 1260 years which are the last half of the Gentile dispensation?

If this be so, if this period be the solemnly momentous and important last half of the last great dispensation, the twelve centuries which have rolled over Christendom since the rise of the Papacy, including the dark ages, the Reformation, and the modern revival of primitive Christian doctrine, and spread of missionary enterprise, with the coincident rise and spread of infidelity, then it is easy to understand the prominence assigned to it in the prophetic word. But if it be literally half a week of years, it is a brief half *without a corresponding half*, and no reason consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God can be assigned for the great importance which is attached to it in Scripture.

And when, further, TURNING TO THE SCROLL OF HISTORY, WE SEE THAT THE GREAT WEEK OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES WAS, AS A MATTER OF FACT, BISECTED BY THE

RISE OF AN ANTICHRISTIAN POWER, accurately fulfilling the conditions of the prophecy, and whose political existence demonstrably did endure 1260 years, or half a week on the year-day scale, it seems almost impossible to resist the conviction *that this is the scale employed, and this the Power foretold.*

It is a further argument in favour of the year-day system, that the periods of symbolic prophecy, interpreted in accordance with it, form parts of a great septenary system; the previous links in the chain being found in other portions of Scripture, and the subsequent ones in the movements of the universe. In the law, in the prophets, and in the Psalms, we found the week of days, the week of weeks, the week of months, the week of years, the week of weeks of years, the week of decades, and the week of weeks of decades. Now the dispensational "seven times," and its half, the 1260 years, are a week and a half-week of prophetic times, or *years of years*, the next step in advance; and they are followed by the week of millenaries, and by the higher and vaster weeks marked out by the revolutions of the solar system. But for the clue afforded by the prophetic times interpreted according to the year-day system, the true measures of the dispensational divisions of history, would probably never have been surmised. Is it likely that a key which has unlocked so much, should be a wrong key, that the period which has proved a clue to the entire labyrinth, should itself have been misapprehended?

But further, THE FACT THAT THESE PERIODS OF DANIEL, INTERPRETED ON THE YEAR-DAY SCALE, ARE FOUND TO BE NATURAL ASTRONOMIC CYCLES OF SINGULAR ACCURACY AND BEAUTY, UNKNOWN TO MANKIND UNTIL DISCOVERED BY MEANS OF THESE VERY PROPHECIES, SEEMS ALONE TO SETTLE THE QUESTION THAT THIS IS THE TRUE SCALE. Is it not most natural and suitable, that great events, deemed worthy of prediction by the Spirit of God ages before they occurred, *should* have had their fore-ordained duration marked off by the occult movements and coincidences of those orbs, which together constitute God's glorious chronometer? Taken literally, the periods of symbolic prophecy, are astronomically *nothing*. Interpreted on the year-day principle, they are natural cycles, as distinctly marked out as such, as our ordinary months or years. Would this be so, were the brief symbolic period, everything, and the antitypical, the year-day period, nothing? Taken literally, 2300 days are astronomically nothing; while 2300 *years* form precisely the largest secular soli-lunar cycle known.

When these dispensational, chronologic, and astronomic harmonies, are allowed their due weight in determining the true scale of prophetic chronology, only one conclusion seems possible. The system employed is that of denoting a year by a day; not brief, but long periods, are therefore predicted, not passing events occupying only a few years, but stupendous ones, enduring through centuries, and affecting many generations of men. And these events are not to be looked for in the future, they are already for the most part fulfilled. This conclusion overthrows the entire futurist system, and fixes the application of the main symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse to the past and present, rather than exclusively to the future.

We invite futurist expositors of the prophetic word, to consider all the arguments on this subject which we have adduced, and either to refute them, or to acknowledge their force. Prophetic discussion and controversy are often

feared and deprecated, because they have in other days degenerated into strife, and occasioned separation among brethren. These, however, are happily, not necessary results of searching the Scripture on this or any other topic, and they are evils from which humility and a real desire to discover the truth of God, will effectually preserve sincere inquirers and students.

We are strongly of opinion that the questions at issue between presentist and futurist interpreters of prophecy, *should* be both patiently studied, and fully discussed, both from the platform and by the press, with a view to their removal.

One system or other must be erroneous; surely it is not hopeless to discover which! No generation of Christians could ever have attempted the task with such a prospect of success as our own; not only is there a special promise to the wise in the time of the end, that they *shall* understand these things, but the very nature of the case makes it clear, that if the historic system be the true one, we are in a better position to prove it, than our predecessors could be, for every fresh fulfilment that can be indicated, strengthens the proof. That most notable event the downfall of the Temporal Power of the Papacy exactly 1260 years after the edict of Phocas, *ought* to provoke a calm and thorough re-examination of the subject, on the part of our futurist friends.

"The days are at hand," and the effect of every vision, and the testimony of the Church on this great subject *should be as dear and as unanimous as possible*, for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for the battle? The world will never give heed to the warnings of the prophetic word, while the ministers of that word differ diametrically among themselves as to its true meaning; nor will Christians be roused to any such deep and real conviction of the nearness of the end as will produce practical results, by the exposition of varying and inconsistent views. At this eleventh hour, if ever, the predictions of the Word of God ought to be clear to wise and humble students, nor should such rest content without an honest endeavour to compare and resolve their differences. We humbly hope that our own discoveries as to the exact measures of the prophetic times, may be helpful in the consideration of the question; and that, *the year-day system of interpreting the chronologic statements of symbolic prophecy*,— that main pillar of the Protestant historic view, may, in the light of the confirmatory evidence of its truth afforded by this investigation of the Divine system of times and seasons, be generally received among students of prophecy, as a truth which has been demonstrated.

II. The facts we have adduced have also an important bearing on the fundamental question of the inspiration of Scripture, and thus indirectly on the subject of Christian evidences. We have shown that nature is characterized by a septiform periodicity, and that many of its revolutions are regulated by a law of weeks; also that Scripture, in a great variety of ways, embodies the same septiform system. Now it must be borne in mind that the existence of this system in nature, has only been recognised of *late years*. Modern science,—with its careful and all-embracing scrutiny of investigation into natural phenomena, with its reverential attention to even

the minutest details of physical function, with its rich accumulations of tabulated records of observed facts, and its unprejudiced candour in submitting all its theories to the test of experiment, —has come to perceive, and for the first time, a law of septiform periodicity in nature. Mankind in all ages must of course have been practically familiar with certain obvious and universal instances of its prevalence; but the wide extent of its operation, its exactness, and the variety of the spheres in which it may be traced, is matter of very recent discovery. The papers contributed by Dr. Laycock to the *Lancet*, which we have quoted, were written less than forty years ago; and even now the subject is imperfectly understood.

It is thus abundantly evident that the writers of Scripture, in attributing to their Mosaic legislation, embodying in their historical narratives, and in concealing in their symbolic prophecies, *this same septiform system*, or law of completion in weeks, were *not* adopting a principle already acknowledged in the world at large, or even known to the men of science of their day. They were entirely ignorant of the recently discovered septiformity of nature, and the exact harmony of their writings with this widely operative, but to them utterly unknown principle, must, on their part, have been perfectly undesigned.

On the other hand, it is equally impossible that this harmony should be the result of chance: the use of the system in Scripture is too thorough and all-pervading to admit of such an explanation. It does not consist in a few minor arrangements enacted by a single legislator; it is the consistent and complex system underlying the law and ritual, which, for three thousand five hundred years have been obeyed by an entire nation; a system running unperceived through the historical records of the Old Testament, and lying hidden under mystic expressions, in its symbolic prophecies—prophecies understood at the time neither by those who gave, nor by those who received them, and whose true scale has only become apparent in these latter days, in the light of their own fulfilment. Creation, history, and Mosaic law, agree with the predictions of the prophets and apostles, and with the words of our Lord Himself, in recognising this system. It pervades Old and New Testaments, and harmonizes Jewish and Christian predictions. The actual events of redemption history, are found to be in chronological harmony with the octave or New Creation and Jubilee reckoning of the Law; the chronology of the types of Leviticus is the chronology of Christianity anticipated. Intentionally then, and of set purpose, and in the most consistent way, the septiform law so prevalent and controlling in nature, is employed by the writers of Scripture, though they cannot have derived it from nature. *Whence then did they derive it? How came they thus to employ it?* There is only one reply! Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Further; we have seen that the septiform divisions of time in the Old Testament, run on constantly to an octave, and give a glad and glorious prominence to the eighth day and the fiftieth day, in connection with observances intimating that a new and better economy was destined to succeed the Jewish; that in a New Creation, to follow the old, and in that alone, would full purity and peace, perfect joy and liberty be found. Would Jewish legislators and prophets have invented or conceived such an idea as this?

Would *they*, of their own accord, have embodied in their law, in their history, in their prophecies, a silent testimony that Judaism was destined to be succeeded and set aside by a better order of things? Would they who held themselves to be the sole and peculiar people of God, have incorporated in their sacred books, a chronologic system, which points with no obscurity to the passing away of Judaism? No! Such a system cannot have originated in the *Jewish* mind, and yet the books are, as regards their human source, unquestionably Jewish. The fact can be explained only by admitting, that these Jewish minds were inspired, and these Jewish pens guided, by Him who from the beginning foresaw and planned the end, who intended Christianity to succeed Judaism, the heavenly to follow the earthly, the substance to replace the shadow.

It may be urged, that though the law of septiform periodicity in vital function was unperceived by the ancients, that yet conspicuous celestial phenomena, such as the lunar quarters, may account for the Bible use of the week, without supposing inspiration. But the plea has no force, for the lunar quarter is not so near seven days as to make the observance of the week compulsory or inevitable, and as a matter of fact, it is *not* observed by two-thirds of mankind. China and, till quite recently, Japan, and all heathen nations, do not recognise the septiform division of time. Unlike the day, the month, and the year in this respect, the week is not marked out by an obvious and complete celestial revolution. Its observance evidently springs from a higher source, even the direct primitive mandate of the Most High: it has been imposed on man from Eden onwards (as well as indelibly impressed on his physical constitution), by the Creator Himself directly, and not indirectly, as the day, month, and year.

Again, what but inspiration of God can account for the fact that the prophetic periods of Daniel and St. John are found to be accurate soli-lunar cycles? and that their very epochs form a septiform series of periods as we have shown? Was Daniel acquainted with these facts? Could John have adapted his writings to the discoveries of modern science? Impossible! Candour must acknowledge that in the existence of such a system of times and seasons as we have traced, in the Bible, there is a proof of the Divine inspiration of the authors of that volume. Man never originated its holy and harmonious laws, with their wonderful septenary system of typical times and seasons, fulfilled, and still fulfilling, in the sacred events of Redemption Story. Man could not have invented its equally wonderful prophecies, unfolding as they do the whole plan and course of history, alike in its grand outline, and in its minor detail, and including even, in many cases, the accurate chronology of the things foretold, Man can never have been the author of a system of times and seasons which involves the co-ordination of things celestial and terrestrial; the mutual adaptation of the periodicity of vital phenomena, the sacred seasons of legal type, the periods of prophecy and the chronology of history, with the periods of the revolutions and cycles of sun and moon and planet, or those of the movements of the whole solar system. Man can neither foretell the future nor control it; man cannot order on a definite plan, the course of ages, or so direct the revolutions of the moral world, as that they shall harmonize with those of the material universe. Such operations can be accomplished only by Omnipotence, such acts can be

attributed to God alone. The sacred volume,— that unfolds the Divine world-system, including the course and chronology of the ages of history, of ages future at the time when it was written, as well as of ages past; foretelling periods since fulfilled, and found, 2000 years after their prediction, to be celestial cycles,—must be from God, and he who refuses to acknowledge this, is bound to find some other satisfactory explanation of facts which true science cannot deny, nor common honesty ignore. And this evidence may be adduced in favour of each portion of the sacred volume; the Pentateuch and the prophets, the historical books of the Old Testament and the Gospels of the New, the Psalms and the Epistles and the Apocalypse, all are more or less pervaded by the same system of times and seasons. A Divine unity pervades the volume in this as in other respects, and the chronology of the Bible, independently of any other line of evidence, proves it to be the Word of God.

III. And finally, the Divine system of times and seasons, which we have been investigating, has an evident bearing on the deeply important and profoundly interesting subject of the nearness of the end of the age,—of the close of these Times of the Gentiles, and the simultaneous inauguration of the “Times of restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

It bears on this question mainly by the evidence it affords of the existence of a definite and predetermined chronological system, in the providential dealings of God with man; in the proof it gives that this system is a system of weeks, and that the great week of this third or Gentile dispensation, has almost run its course. Further, by confirming as we have seen that it does, in the fullest way, the year-day system of interpreting the chronology of symbolic prophecy, it brings the celebrated half-week of the great Antichristian apostasy into perfect harmony with all the other weeks of Scripture and of nature, determining its *character* thus by its *duration*, and leaving no doubt as to the power intended. The fulfilments which this system enables us to trace in the past, are so many guides as to the future, so that by its help chronologic prophecy, instead of being a puzzling mystery, is felt to become emphatically a light shining in a dark place,—a light which throws its beams back over the complex mazes of history, and forwards over the transcendently interesting events of the rapidly approaching crisis, which is to usher in the sabbath of humanity.

We must therefore briefly review *the evidence of the nearness Of the end of the age* which is afforded by chronologic prophecy, and confirmed by non-chronologic predictions, and we must show, that while there is irresistible evidence to prove that the end is near, there are positively no data to enable us to fix on any exact year, as the probably predestined time of the consummation. According to the testimony of the sure word of prophecy, the end is *near*, but none can say *how* near, or determine its actual epoch.

First, then, in proof that it is *near*, let the measures of the three dispensations be remembered, and the wide and almost universal range of the law of completion in weeks. “Seven times” and seven times *only* are appointed as the period of Jewish degradation and dispersion. He who predicted the four hundred years affliction of the seed of Abraham at the beginning of their history, and who when those four hundred years were fulfilled, delivered

Israel from Egypt, and judged the nation which had held them in bondage, predicted later on, that for a great week of 2520 years, Gentiles should rule over and afflict the Jewish people, and that at the end of that time Gentile monarchy should be destroyed, and the kingdom restored again to Israel, in the person of their Messiah. Independent Jewish monarchy fell as we know in the Babylonish captivity, since which event the tribes of Israel have existed only in bondage or dispersion. In about forty-five years from the present time (1879 A.D.) the great week of the Times of the Gentiles will have run out, even measured from its latest possible commencing date, the final conquest of Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 598. The great image of Gentile monarchy has but a few years longer to exist; the period of Gentile supremacy is all but ended; the great but hidden dispensational prophecy of the "seven times" clearly teaches that we are *near* the end of the age.

And secondly, let the measures of the Antichristian apostasy, which is predicted under seven different aspects, be remembered. Half a week is assigned as its duration, half this great dispensational week of seven times—1260 years. Like all the other periods we have considered, this half-week may be dated, as we have seen, from a variety of starting-points;* either from the decree of the Emperor Justinian constituting the bishop of Rome head of all the Churches, and so delivering the saints into his hands, (A.D. 533),—when it ends in the French Revolution, A.D. 1793; or from the decree of the Emperor Phocas, conceding to Boniface the Third, not only the primacy of the Church of Rome and all the Western Churches, but that of Constantinople and all the Eastern Churches (A.D. 606), which makes it run out at the recent complete destruction of the Papal temporal power and dominion (1866-70); or the period may be dated from the year A.D. 663, when Vitalian, the bishop of Rome, enjoined the services of the Church to be read in Latin throughout all Christendom,—when the half-week would (like the whole week) expire, in A.D. 1923. We have seen the two first measures of this period expire, and we have seen the events predicted take place. The prophecy implies a brief succeeding period before the close, "they shall take away his kingdom, to consume and to destroy it to the end: and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." We have seen the kingdom taken away; we wait to see the full consumption and destruction, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Most High. The prophecy of the "time, times and a half," *by its fulfilment*, proves, that we are close upon the end of the age.

* This is the case even with the comparatively brief period of the Babylonish captivity, whose seventy years may be dated either from Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion, B.C. 606, to the edict of Cyrus, B.C. 536, or from the destruction of the temple, B.C. 587, to the temple restoration, B.C. 517.

And thirdly, the prediction relative to the cleansing of the sanctuary does the same. The Holy Land, the Holy City, and the site of the Temple or Sanctuary of God at Jerusalem, are to be finally "cleansed" 2300 years from some starting point which is not exactly defined, but which appears from the prophecy to be closely connected with the restoration of Judah from Babylon; that is, Jerusalem is, after that period, to cease to be trodden down of the

Gentiles, the times of the Gentiles having been fulfilled. Dated from the earliest possible starting point, the commission given by Artaxerxes to Ezra, B.C. 457, this period expired as we have seen in 1844, which was a marked epoch in the fall of that Mohammedan power which has long defiled the sanctuary and trodden down Jerusalem. But dated 145 years later, from the era of the Seleucidae, this period measured in *lunar* years expires, *seventy-five years later*, in A.D. 1919. We have noted various indications in the condition of Palestine and of Israel, and in the political events of our own day which seem to indicate that the cleansing of the sanctuary and the restoration of Israel are not distant. When these shall take place, when the Moslems, now driven out of Bulgaria, shall be driven also out of Syria, when the nations of Europe, actuated it may be merely by mutual distrust and political jealousy, or it may be by higher motives, shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers, then the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture as to events prior to the great crisis, will have received its accomplishment, then the second advent of Israel's rejected Messiah to reign in conjunction with his risen and glorified saints as King over all the earth, will be close at hand, then the mystery of God will be all but finished, and the manifestation of Christ immediate.* How long a time may be required to bring about this restoration of Israel—who shall say? Never within the last 1800 years has it seemed so likely as now, for never, since it first arose, has Moslem power lain so low as it does at the present moment. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE POWER AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, LIKE THE ANNIHILATION OF THE TEMPORAL DOMINION OF THE PAPACY, SHOULD BE AS A TRUMPET-BLAST TO CHRISTENDOM, PROCLAIMING THAT THE DAY OF CHRIST IS AT HAND.

* We say emphatically "manifestation," because Scripture does not seem absolutely to exclude the possibility that the rapture of the Church (1 Thess. iv.) may have taken place before.

The sanctuary cycle of 2300 years, equally with the two previous prophecies, indicates that the end is *near*.

Though differing as to many minor details, students of chronological prophecy with one consent agree in this conclusion, which is in itself a strong argument that it rests on a solid basis of revealed truth. The fact that many premature anticipations of the end, have by the event been proved mistaken, is sometimes adduced as a proof that all expectations based on chronologic prophecy, are of the nature of vain and foolish speculations, deserving only of ridicule and contempt from sober-minded practical Christian people. But when viewed in the light of the revealed purpose of God, to: make known the future *only by degrees*, and only as the Church was able to bear it, the fact alluded to, is merely a proof that the symbolic language in which these chronological predictions were expressed, has answered its divinely intended purpose, and disguised, till nearly the time of its accomplishment, the true meaning of the prophecy. To the early generations of the Church it was not given to understand these chronologic prophecies *at all*, later generations made a good guess at their general drift and scale; the Reformers obtained approximately true ideas of their scope and application; to many of the prophetic expositors and commentators of the last two centuries very clear light was granted, and (in spite of the obscurity which rash futurist speculations have cast over the subject) it may safely be said that in our

own day the light has become so strong, clear, and bright, that the historic and doctrinal portions of Scripture are scarcely more simple and comprehensible than are its main prophetic outlines, to those who carefully study them.

And further, though foolish speculators have brought ridicule on the study of prophecy, by carnal, presumptuous, and baseless attempts to fix the day and the hour of the Second Advent, and though even cautious and learned students have often erred in their anticipations, yet it must in all fairness be granted on the other hand, that no sooner was the historic system of interpreting the Apocalypse received, and the true scale of enlarging the miniature periods of symbolic prophecy adopted, than some remarkably correct anticipations of future events were made and published. Since then, expositors of chronologic prophecy have proved over and over again, that they are on the right track, even though they may have erred in the application of certain principles, or in selection of certain data, on which to base their calculations. And it is evident that even when they had rightly accepted the year-day system, and when they had correctly apprehended the meaning of the symbols employed, and duly applied them to the events intended, they were by no means secure from minor errors. The very fact that all the prophetic periods have double, and some of them triple and even fourfold eras of commencement and conclusion,—coincident with definite stages of development and decay in the Powers symbolised, leaves room for such errors, and accounts for them, without detracting from the value of the system employed. And if such false anticipations are noted, correct ones should in all fairness be remembered also.

One of the earliest and most remarkable of these is that of ROBERT FLEMING, who in his work on the "Rise and Fall of Rome Papal," *published in the year 1701* (a hundred and seventy-eight years ago), anticipated the years 1794 and 1848, as critical years in the downfall of the papacy; he added "yet we are not to imagine that these events will totally destroy the papacy, although they will exceedingly weaken it, for we find that it is still in being and alive, when the next vial is poured out." Is it not a proof that this expositor was working on right lines, and had seized the true clue, that he should thus have fixed *nearly a century beforehand*, on the close of the 18th century, as the commencement of the era of Divine vengeance on the Papal power, and have pointed out within a single year, the very central period of that signal judgment? The year 1793 was that of the Reign of Terror, and of the temporary suspension of the public profession of Christianity in France, the first of Papal kingdoms; and five years later the Papal government in Italy was overthrown, and the Pope carried captive to Sienna. There was not a sign in the political heavens when Fleming wrote, that such events were impending; he foresaw them solely in the light of chronologic prophecy, and had he weighed a little more maturely the relative importance of the various Pope-exalting decrees and acts, which form the starting-points of the prophetic 1260 years, he would have fixed on that of Phocas, as the *most* important, and have added to the above two accurate and correct anticipations, a *third*, that the years 1866-70, would be years of even more decided crisis in the history of the Papal apostasy, and would probably witness the entire and final overthrow of the temporal sovereignty of the

Popes. A very considerable number of expositors agreed, in indicating long before their arrival, the remarkable years A.D, 1848, and A.D, 1866-70, as years of crisis in the downfall of despotic power in Europe, and of Papal usurpation; while this half-century as the appointed period in which should be finished the long-continued exhaustion and decay of the Ottoman Empire, symbolised by the drying up of the Euphrates, has been indicated by an equally large number. Mr. Habershon, in his "Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures," published in 1834, pointed out that the year A.D, 1844 ought to be a year of crisis in this process, which, as we have seen it proved to be, the year in which the persecuting sword of Islam was by the power of the Christian nations of Europe, forced back finally into its sheath, since which Ottoman independence has never been a reality.

Let those who have justified themselves in turning from any deep or thorough study of the prophetic word, on the plea that interpreters differ among themselves, and that their prognostications have often proved false, remember that this must have been the case with regard to each one of the chronological prophecies that have now passed into the realms of history. Though each one has, as we can see, been fulfilled with marvellous exactitude, error would have been not only possible, but almost inevitable, in any attempt to fix beforehand the exact date of the predicted event. Had Israel in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, endeavoured to discover beforehand the precise year in which the 400 years of affliction and bondage predicted by God to Abram as to befall his seed, would terminate, they would have been sorely puzzled to select a commencing epoch. Was it to be dated from the call of Abram, or from the day the promise was given? or from the birth of Isaac, the promised seed? or from the descent into Egypt? or from the commencement of the cruel treatment of the children of Israel by the Egyptians, when there arose a king who knew not Joseph? There was a wide choice of possible commencing epochs, and it was easy to select a wrong one! The event proved that *none of these* was the real starting-point; that while the call of Abram was the *terminus a quo* of the main period, *modified by an addition of thirty years* (Exod. xii. 40-42; Gal. iii. 17), yet that the main period itself started from neither of the above-mentioned probable epochs, but *from the time when Isaac was five years old*; and to this day it is a matter of conjecture what the event was which marked that year, though there is little doubt that it was the casting out of the bondwoman and her son, on the occasion of the mocking of the heir of promise by the natural seed. This mocking, or "*persecuting*" (Gal. iv. 29) is the first *affliction* of Abraham's seed of which we have any record, and its result demonstrated that it was in Isaac the seed was to be called. The 430 years would thus start from the grant of the land to Abram's seed, and the 400 from the act showing *which* of the two seeds of Abram was to possess it. The important allegorical meaning attributed to this casting-out of Ishmael, confirms the impression that it was the starting-point; but the fact cannot be proved, and all we know is that the Exodus (which took place on the self-same day that the 430 years ran out—Exod. xii. 40) was 405 years after the birth of Isaac, *so that the 400 years dated from Isaac's fifth year*. How could Israel in Egypt possibly have guessed that? Their prophetic students (if they had any) would most likely base their calculations on the supposition, that the period started from the year the prediction was given,—twenty or twenty-two years before the true

point. And when the 400 years from that epoch expired, skeptics and objectors may have derided them, and they themselves may have had their faith in the Divine prediction and their long-cherished hope of deliverance sorely tried, by the fact that their expectation had failed! But God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it? When the appointed period ended, the promised deliverance came. Little as Pharaoh and all Egypt feared their degraded bondslaves, or the God they professed to serve; little as either tyrant or captives foresaw any impending crisis of judgment and deliverance, suddenly and unexpectedly it came. In the short space of a few weeks, or months, Egypt was covered with confusion and horror and death, The fruits of the earth were blasted and devoured by locusts, the waters of the Nile were turned to blood, the cattle were destroyed throughout the land, filthy insects and noisome diseases afflicted the Egyptians, vermin filled their houses and their fields, thunder and lightning and fire and hail devastated the land of Ham, a horror of great darkness prevailed for three days, death raised a great cry in Egypt, and at last its proud monarch and all his hosts perished in the Red Sea, while Israel sang unto the Lord, who had triumphed gloriously, and who, according to his faithful word, had brought forth the people whom He had redeemed.

A longer bondage is now drawing to a close, and a greater Exodus awaits both the natural and the spiritual seeds of Abraham; its date is similarly fixed in the purpose of God and similarly defined by chronologic prophecy, and though some students may mistake its exact era, and be discouraged by an apparent failure of their hope, and though the world may exult, and the mockers say, Where is the promise of his coming? yet the vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak and not lie, or be found false; therefore we will wait for it, *"for it will surely come, it will not tarry."*

It was the same, both with the chronological prophecy of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and with that of the four hundred and ninety years, from the restoration to Messiah the Prince; both were clear in their main tenor, but both obscure as regards their exact termini. As to the "seventy weeks," even when its true year-day scale was understood, it was impossible to fix its commencing date with any certainty, because there were several edicts of restoration issued by the Persian kings, any one of which might well have been supposed to mark the starting-point of the 490 years; and there was no deciding whether the terminal event was to be the birth, or the maturity and presentation to Israel, or the death, of Messiah. Even now, in the light of the historic fulfilment, it is not altogether easy to affix the exact limits of these 490 years, though it is plain that such was the interval, because several important termini seem to possess claims to be the intended ones.

IN SHORT IT IS CLEAR THAT A KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXACT YEAR OF ITS TERMINATION, IS NOT NEEDFUL TO AN INTELLIGENT AND CORRECT APPREHENSION OF THE FACT, THAT A GREAT CHRONOLOGIC PROPHECY IS NEAR ITS CLOSE. Daniel understood by the writings of Jeremiah that the seventy years' captivity had nearly expired, and set himself to pray for the promised restoration. Those who looked for redemption in Israel were right in conceiving that the time for Messiah's appearance had come, though neither they, nor Daniel, could in all

probability have assigned the correct chronological termini of the predictions on which their hopes were based.

This is exactly the position of the students of the prophetic word in our day; they *know* that they are living in the time of the end, but guided by the experience of these earlier saints, they see also, that the two great partially *fulfilled* chronological prophecies, that of the seven times, or 2520 years of Gentile dominion, and that of the 2300 years to the cleansing of the sanctuary, have several possible dates of rise and close. (The 1260 years of the duration of the Papal dynasty as a political power, must, since the events of 1870, be placed in the category of *fulfilled*, rather than unfulfilled predictions.) On this account alone, as well as other grounds, the wise among them refrain from any attempt to assign the precise date of the consummation. These "times" appear to run out first in A.D. 1844-48 and fully in A.D. 1919-23, but whether these are the final dates, and what the exact nature of the terminal event may be, it is impossible to ascertain and foolish to surmise.*

* It should be noticed in this connection, that from the year 606 B.C., the year in which "the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah," into the hand of NEBUCHADNEZZAR, "with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar" (Dan. i.), to the year A.D. 637, in which Jerusalem was providentially given into the hands of the CALIPH, there is a period of 1260 CALENDAR YEARS (1260 360-day years are 1248 solar years; and in adding B.C. to A.D. periods, *one* year has to be subtracted); and that from A.D. 637 to A.D. 1879 there is a similar period of 1260 calendar years, or together 2520 CALENDAR YEARS.

As to the first of these dates, B.C. 606, Clinton states that the fourth year of Jehoiakim is to be reckoned from Aug., B.C. 606, The deportation of Daniel was in the third year of Jehoiakim (Dan, i. 1) whence we may place the expedition of Nebuchadnezzar towards the end of the third, and beginning of the fourth year, in the summer of B.C. 606. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Baruch writes the book: Jer. xxxvi. 1, 2. (Fasti Hellenici, p. 328.) As to the second of these dates, A.D. 637, Clinton states in his Fasti Romani, that "Abu Obeidah having received orders at the close of 636 to besiege Jerusalem, sent Yezid hither first with 5000 men. At last the patriarch Sophronius consented that the city should be surrendered upon condition that the inhabitants should receive the articles from the Caliph himself. OMAR ENTERED THE CITY IN 637. Omar while at Jerusalem divided Syria into two parts, and committed all between the Hauran and Aleppo to Abu Obeidah. Yezid took charge of all Palestine and the seashore" (Ockley). How grave the crisis just reached in 1878, in the overthrow of the once mighty Ottoman empire in the east! THE MOSQUE OF Omar still stands on the site of the ancient temple of Jehovah, the temple which God of old filled with his glory. The Mohammedan is still the ruler of Palestine, but how soon we may see the mosque of Omar taken down, and Palestine delivered from its last oppressor!

(I wonder what the author would say now about false Israel's oppression of the Palestinians?)

We are in the position of travellers, approaching a large and to them unknown city, at the end of a long railway journey. They are aware of the distance to be traversed, of the stations to be passed on the way, and of the time required for the transit. The milestones have long shown them that they are rapidly nearing their goal; the time the journey was to occupy has elapsed, and they have observed that the station just passed was the last but one. Yet the terminus in the strange city may have several distinct platforms, separated from each other by short distances; the train may draw up at one or two before it comes to a final stand at the last: they are ignorant of the exact localities in the great metropolis, and hardly know at which station they will be met by their expectant friends. Still they have no hesitation in

making their preparations for leaving the carriage, and in congratulating each other with a glad "here we are at last!" They would smile at the man who should dispute their conviction, though they may be unable to decide whether it will be five minutes or ten, or only two or three, before they actually reach their destination. It is a mere question of minutes and miles; if one platform is not the right one, the next may be; at any rate, the long journey lies behind, the desired goal is all but reached. It is easy to be patient, and not difficult to bear a momentary disappointment, because the main result is certain, and the end in any case close at hand.

Let it also be noted that the conviction of the nearness of the end derived from chronologic prophecy, and from a study of the Divine system of times and seasons, is abundantly confirmed by a multitude of predictions, wholly destitute of the chronologic element, as is proved by the fact, that the futurist school of interpreters, who are deprived by their system of all the guidance afforded by chronologic prophecy, are convinced equally with their opponents, that these are the last days.

Space obliges us to select only one or two "signs of the times" of this nature. The angel mentions to the prophet Daniel two very peculiar and definite characteristics of the last days. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Now if any well informed and intelligent person were asked, What have been the leading and distinctive characteristic marks of the last half-century, as distinguished from any previous period in the world's history? he would at once reply, "steam locomotion, and the universality of education and spread of scientific knowledge." Where one person travelled formerly, ten thousand travel now; universally, incessantly, and in every corner of the earth, the wheels of locomotion are annihilating distance, and facilitating the running to and fro of millions, making the inhabitants of the most distant quarters of the globe almost like next-door neighbours. And never before in the history of mankind has this or anything like it been the case. Similarly, where one person could read and write in the olden time, ten thousand are fairly educated now; and where one secret of nature was known to the ancients, a thousand are known and turned to practical account by the men of our day. Knowledge is increased as it never was before; indeed, *the school and the locomotive* might be adopted as the devices of the nineteenth century,

Our Lord Himself gave another sign of the closing days of this age. He said, "This Gospel of the kingdom must first be preached among all nations, and *then* shall the end come."

It may safely be asserted that never since the words were spoken, has the Gospel been so widely preached among the nations as it has during the present century. Since the year 1801, when the Church Missionary Society was founded, almost all the Missionary Societies in existence have sprung up, as well as all the Bible Societies. Within the last fifty years, the Gospel story has been translated into between two and three hundred additional languages, spoken by six or eight hundred millions of mankind. Colporteurs are distributing it, and preachers expounding it in all lands; and though there are still alas! countless tribes and peoples in the heart of Africa, in the continent of South America, and in the isles of the sea who have never yet

heard the Gospel message, yet we may say there is no kingdom, no regularly organized civilized "nation" or community, in which it has not been proclaimed, and in which it has not won some trophies. When it has been preached in *all* nations, then shall the end come.

But perhaps there is no sign of the times more solemnly indicative to the humble student of Scripture, of the approach of the end, than the confident conviction that seems universally to prevail in the professing church, and in the world, that all things continue as they were, *and will so continue*. Not only is there no expectation of impending judgment, there is a bold assumption that no change in the existing order of things is probable, or even possible.

The very idea of a Divine interference in the affairs of this world is scouted as foolish and fanatical; the testimony of history to past interferences of the kind is superciliously explained away, or plainly pronounced to be myth, not real history, and any faith in the testimony of prophecy is regarded as antiquated folly. The reign of eternal law is proclaimed, while a Lawgiver is ignored, the theory of progressive development is advocated, and the evidences of supernatural interruptions in the past, neglected. The state of popular opinion in Christendom at this hour on this point is foretold with marvellous exactness by the Apostle Peter, and the true antidote to it prescribed. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, since the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing in the water, and out of the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished. But the heavens and earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night."

This peculiar form of scoffing unbelief foretold as to characterize the last days, and most conspicuously characterizing these days, has never before prevailed widely in Christendom. It is an offspring of advanced scientific knowledge, a result and accompaniment of nineteenth-century attainments. The ignorance of other ages made men superstitious. Far from denying the existence of an invisible and immaterial world, far from questioning the possibility of the supernatural, they were slaves to credulity, and groundless apprehensions, and fell easy victims to the false miracles and lying wonders of a cunning and covetous priesthood. Apprehensions of an approaching end of the world, were from time to time widely prevalent in the dark ages. Bold infidelity, general skepticism as to all that is supernatural, gross materialism and positive philosophy, the foolhardy presumption that dares to assert "all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation" and to argue "and will so continue for ever"—these

features are peculiar to the last 150 years, and were never before so marked as they are *now*.

Were it otherwise, were men willing to heed the testimony of the Word of God, were they observant of the fast thickening signs of the end, were they generally expecting the final crisis, we might be perfectly certain, *the end would not be near*. Such is not to be the tone and temper of the last generation. "In such an hour as ye *think not* the Son of Man cometh." Never was there a day when men were so firmly convinced, that no supernatural event is to be expected, as they are now. But "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

(To be continued.)