The Approaching End of the Age – Part IV. Section III. Soli-Lunar Cycles, And Their Relation to the Chronology of History. Chapter I.

Continued from Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 5.

SOLAR AND LUNAR SUPREMACY IN THE ORDERING OF TERRESTRIAL TIME.

WE have already called attention to the multiplied proofs afforded by every branch of science, of the universal dominion exercised by the sun and moon, both over the organic and inorganic creations.

We have shown that it is to its various relations, with these two vastly dissimilar, yet equally controlling bodies, that the earth owes its entire life and activity; that its rotation, revolution, heat, light, seasonal changes, magnetic impulses, and tidal phenomena, its winds, waves, currents, rains, snows, and frosts, all proceed directly or indirectly from the influence of the sun and moon, We have also shown that the distribution of vegetable and animal life, on the surface of the globe, and many of the laws by which both—including the development of the human race itself—are governed, are distinctly traceable to the same cause. Solar influence is simply *supreme* in the production of all terrestrial change and movement, and in the sustenance and regulation of all vegetable and animal life.

We now turn to the second phase of solar and lunar dominion, and show the place of paramount importance occupied by these two great luminaries, in the regulation of times and seasons.

The three great tasks assigned to the sun and moon in the first of Genesis are to rule, to give light, and *to divide*; to mark out the boundaries that separate day from night, month from month, year from year, “appointed time” from “appointed time.” The sun and moon are thus constituted not merely beneficent fountains of light to a dark world, and all-influential rulers over our globe, but also principal hands of the divinely constructed and divinely appointed chronometer, by which, in all its course, terrestrial time

is measured.

Nor does the record imply, that this chronometer is to be used by man alone! “Let them be for signs and for seasons,” or appointed times, is an expression which may legitimately include a fact, which it is our object in the present chapter to demonstrate. God, who assigned to these worlds their paths and their periods, has regulated all his majestic providential and dispensational dealings with mankind, by *the greater revolutions of the same chronometer*, whose lesser revolutions mark our days and months and years. That chronometer is adjusted to measure not only the blossoming of the day-lily and the life-time of the ephemera (hings that exist or are used or enjoyed for only a short time), but also periods which are incalculable by human intelligence, and which border on infinity.

It must be noted that the inspired narrative says “let *them* be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,” not “let the sun” be so, or the moon, or the sun and moon separately, but let *them* in their conjoint revolutions be such. So obvious and influential are the main revolutions of these “great lights” that in all ages men have as a matter of fact, divided time by their means. But this is not all, they have in addition less obvious cycles, which have been, as we shall see, divinely employed as chronological measures.

Though time like distance, may theoretically be measured by comparison with standards of any length, yet practically, none are so convenient as those afforded by the conspicuous movements of the heavenly bodies. These provide not only obvious and universal standards, but what is equally needful, *varied* standards. For the subdivision of comparatively brief periods of time, a short standard is evidently desirable,— for longer periods a longer standard is required, while to measure periods which embrace hundreds of thousands of years, a standard of immense proportions is evidently needful, An inch is a good standard by which to divide into equal portions a yard, but it would be tedious to have to measure by inches the circumference of our globe. The distance of the earth from the sun may be measured by millions of miles, but for the almost infinitely greater distance of the fixed stars, we need a longer unit or standard of measurement, and find one in the velocity of light.

Thus the revolution of the earth on its axis, giving rise to the day, is a good unit of measurement for the month or moon’s revolution in her orbit, and the month in its turn for the year, or earth’s revolution in its orbit. This last is a good measure for centuries, but when we rise to millenaries and still longer periods we need larger units of measurement. These are afforded by the revolutions of the sun and moon, as we shall presently show, not by their obvious conspicuous axial and orbital movements merely, but by the cycles of discrepancy between them, and by their recurring epochs of harmony, as well as by their grand secular revolutions. The soli-lunar chronometer is adapted to measure any period, from an hour to an age of all but infinite extent. It has its second hand, its minute hand, its hour hand—its diurnal bell, its monthly chime, its annual peal, its secular thunder, its millennial choral-harmony. Man uses its minor measures, God requires its major standards; man counts by its days, and months, and years; God’s providence employs all its “appointed times.”

“Let *them* be for times and for seasons,” The movements of the sun and moon are such that naturally in most lands and ages, those of *both*, and not those of either alone, have been employed as measures of time.

The solar *day* is of course a division of time which both the physical constitution of man, and his occupations, have in every part of the world, and in every state of society, forced upon him, and compelled him to adopt as his fundamental unit of time.

The solar *year* as comprising the complete revolution of the seasons, and thus the entire round of the operations of husbandry, forces itself similarly into observance as a larger unit of measurement.

But the days of a whole year are far too numerous to admit of each one being distinguished by a name, and separately remembered and recognised. All nations have felt the necessity of grouping the days into smaller parcels which might be named, and the days in each distinguished by numbers.

The remarkably conspicuous revolution of the moon, being intermediate in its period between the solar day and year, has been adopted for this purpose, and *the month* has been the principal measure universally recognised, between the year and the day.

The marked phases of the moon, new, first quarter, full, and third quarter, might at first sight be supposed to have given rise to the fourth commonly received measure of time—the week. But while in a general way these phases harmonize with the week, they do not do so with sufficient accuracy to account for the use of this period, and *the week* evidently owes its origin *not* to any astronomical movement, but to the Divine institution of the Sabbath in Eden. (Gen. ii.)

Continued in Part IV. Section III. Soli-Lunar Cycles, And Their Relation to the Chronology of History. Chapter II.