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could do no wrong, and even if he did, you did not tell him so. There was such a thing as later criticism of the kings, looking back to them when things had gone wrong. When measured by this sober standard, the Bible holds its own with any of the literatures of the ancient world.

De Kock also treats what he calls Christian mythology and the way in which prophetic interpretation has been bent to that end. It has been true in many instances that peoples of the ancient and modern world have considered their place in the sun to be the center of everything. The people of Babylon thought that their city and country were the center of the world. They have left us a map showing that. The Romans thought that Rome was the center of the world, and so it goes on down even to our day. Thus interpretations of prophecy could be made to support these egocentric ideas as well. May the warnings sounded in chapter two of this work serve as a precaution to prevent us from falling into the same trap.

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1 Two Thousand Years of Prophetic Interpretation

1.1 From Jesus to the Middle Ages

In the study of Bible prophecy, few things are as instructive as a journey down through the ages to see how our distant forebears and their many successors have sought to understand it.

Let us begin, as Christians always should, with Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. In his time on this planet, he was both a prophetic interpreter and our most important prophet. It is largely in these roles that he expressed his eschatology.

At the beginning of his ministry, our Lord announced, "The *time* is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14). What was he referring to? The seventy prophetic weeks, or 490 years, of Dan. 9. And so was Paul in his letter to the Galatians, where he stated, "when the fullness of the *time* was come, God sent forth his Son . . ." (Gal. 4:4). (Emphasis added in each case.) Here both the Master and the great apostle were acting as prophetic interpreters, setting a pattern for others who would succeed them.

After the resurrection, the Saviour almost immediately, when he walked with two of his disciples to Emmaus and at his first appearance to those who were gathered in the upper room, explained how the Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled by his life and ministry. This is also what the apostles did.

According to Peter, the Holy Spirit is needed for correct interpretation, as for the giving of prophecy: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:20-21)

This is not to say that a prophetic interpreter can be equated with a prophet or is infallible, but apostasy from truth in areas of doctrine also brings with it a loss of interpretive soundness. There is a correlation between obedience to what the Most High has taught in the Bible and the Holy Spirit's guidance of people's understanding. That this is not a fanciful or hair-splitting idea is clearly borne out by the

subsequent history of the Christian church. Two examples of this will here suffice.

As the great Mediterranean apostasy deepened during the early ages, the prophetic interpretation of Jesus and the apostles as well as of the New Testament church was abandoned and, with it, the biblical teaching about last things. The Protestant Reformation, by restoring—to a considerable extent—a more correct understanding of Bible doctrines also reinstated much of what the early church had taught about prophecy. But afterwards, in the nineteenth century, when wrong attitudes toward the Bible and its doctrines set in, sound prophetic interpretation was again increasingly given up. More and more Protestants apostatized, through skepticism about the Bible, under the impact of higher criticism and Darwin's ideas. They also refused new light, as represented by the Remnant Church. Instead, in the nineteenth century, they began and in the twentieth as well as the twenty-first continued their fateful walk along the path of ecumenism. And, at the same time, they increasingly adopted Futurism, which itself represents a return to Romanist ideas.

But we must also consider another, quite different factor: even to his most faithful followers, the Redeemer during his life on earth was not willing to give a full explanation of the prophecies. Right up to the ascension, there was something his followers especially wanted to know: just when he was going to set up his earthly throne. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:6, 7)

Note the two words *time* and *times*, and particularly that expression "the times or the seasons." It is a virtual quotation from Daniel's explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Of the Most High, he said, "He changeth *the times and the seasons*: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings . . ." (Dan. 2:21, emphasis added). Daniel, more than any other book in the Old Testament, is characterized by time prophecies: the 1260 days, the 1290 days, the 1335 days, and the 2300 days. But when that prophet, so beloved of heaven, wanted more information about these periods, especially the first one, his request was refused. He was told: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:9, 13). And to him those were heaven's last words, for with them he ends his book.

In both the Old Testament period and at the beginning of the Christian era, the Lord did not want the saints of the Most High to understand these time prophecies. Why not?

I believe the answer must be that such knowledge would have de-

moralized his faithful followers. The early church was not to know what a very long period of time would elapse between the Resurrection and the Second Coming, or the full truth about the Great Mediterranean Apostasy with its terrible sufferings for the Lord's elect in the centuries ahead. What they knew was a general outline, which included the great tribulation, but they were spared the details.

More than a thousand years were to pass before a prophetic expositor would be born who could unlock the secret to the great time prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, which we historicists now take for granted. That secret is the year-day principle. For instance, the 1260 prophetic days, which those books mention no fewer than seven times, were actually as many years.

The apostles were unable to grasp that principle. They did understand the 70 prophetic weeks of Dan. 9:24, but that text says nothing about days. The Hebrew word *shabua'* in the original text need not even be translated as *weeks*. It really means *sevens*, as Guthrie's *New Bible Commentary Revised* points out.¹

As demonstrated in the first volume of my *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*, this is how a scholarly Jew like L.L. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, understood it. He was a very gifted, polyglot Jew with a splendid knowledge of Hebrew. In his excellent 1912 version of the Old Testament, the "seventy sevens" in Dan. 9:24 are translated as *sepddek jarsepoj*.² This expression means "seventy year-sevens" or "seventy seven-year periods." In English, we have a similar word, *septennate* (from the Latin *septem* = "seven" + *annus* = "a year"). The dictionary defines a septennate as "a period of seven years."

Another word for this, though more ambiguous, is *hebdomad*, originally derived from Greek. It means "a period of seven days, a week," but sometimes also "of seven years, a septenary."³ Its plural, *ἑβδομάδες* (*hebdomádes*), occurs in the Septuagint of Dan. 9:24. Because so many early Christians read the Old Testament in this Greek translation rather than the original, some have wondered whether it is legitimate to explain that text by referring to the Hebrew *shabua'*. But the first men who preached the gospel, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the twelve apostles, were not Hellenistic Jews or converts but Palestinians. Their mother tongue was Aramaic, a language related to Hebrew, with which they were also well acquainted, hearing it in the synagogue every Sabbath. As for the scholarly apostle Paul, educated at Jerusalem, it is evident that though he quotes from the Septuagint, he often has in mind the original Hebrew text; for he sometimes makes his own translations from it.

So the year-day principle is not necessary for understanding the 70 weeks, as mentioned in chapter 9:24 of Daniel's book. But for correctly interpreting the complete 2300 days it is. The same applies to the other three time prophecies referred to. As we have noted, some

issues related to those periods would fully dawn on prophetic expositors only in the time of the end (Dan. 12:7-12).

But does understanding that 70 year weeks equal 490 years not at least hint at the year-day principle? In more than one place, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* by Le Roy Edwin Froom suggests as much. In retrospect, it seems so easy to recognize that the 490 years of Dan. 9 form a part of the 2300 days of Dan. 8:14 and to subtract these periods from each other. Nevertheless, in all his research, Froom found no instance of anybody following up on that "hint" for more than a millennium beyond apostolic times. In practice, solving the time riddle of the 2300 days required the year-day principle, the full import of which was not discovered before the High Middle Ages. This followed the application of that principle to the 1260 days by Joachim of Floris, to be born a thousand years after John the beloved apostle went to his rest.

This matter can also be tested by observing that present-day Dispensationalists clearly understand and apply the *shabua'* (year-week) principle to Dan. 9:24-27, while they fail to grasp—indeed, reject—the year-day principle. Therefore, they insist that the 1260 days are literal and actually try to fit them into the last septennate of Dan. 9:27. They can, moreover, not see the nexus between Dan. 8 and 9.

Let us now look at the prophetic and eschatological ideas of the earliest Christian writers in post-apostolic times. Lack of time forbids that we mention more than three, so we will be referring to the views of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. These men had one thing in common: they were all born in the second century, within thirty-five years of one another, and died in the third century. That is, before the era of Constantine, who consciously amalgamated Christianity and Mithraism and created his imperial church. With him, the union of church and state began, as well as persecution for dissenter Christians. What was also initiated then was a totally different way of interpreting prophecy.

Irenaeus (c. 130-c.202) was the bishop of Lyons in Gaul, which later became France. Concerning Dan. 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he refers to "the ten kings who shall arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned." He interprets the stone that strikes the feet and grinds up the image as Christ. On Dan. 7, he writes of the ten horns and the one "who is to come and shall slay three." He believed in (1) a literal resurrection, (2) the Second Advent, and (3) the millennium bounded by two resurrections. In these matters, Irenaeus sounds quite a bit like a nineteenth- or twentieth-century historicist—1800 years ago—except for some things he taught about the Antichrist and one important detail: he did not understand the year-day principle.

He believed the Second Coming would happen just after the breakup of the Roman Empire. Then it was, according to him, that the Antichrist would appear, immediately before the Lord's return. He identified this being, the one "sitting in the temple of God" (2 Thess.) with the beast of Rev. 13. To his mind, the time, times, and the dividing of times of Dan. 7:25 and the equivalent 1260 days mentioned in Revelation represented three and a half literal years.

In this respect, his teaching is very different from that of present-day historicists where it links the Antichrist with the final three and a half days of the last week described in Dan. 9. Froom points out, however, that Irenaeus "says nothing of the seventy weeks; we do not know whether he placed the one week at the end of the seventy or whether he had a gap. He mentions only the half week, which he gives to Antichrist."⁴

How did this interpretation arise? It centered in the word "temple" and the wording of Dan. 9:27 according to the Septuagint Greek translation, which Irenaeus would have used, because he was originally from Asia Minor. This is significantly different from our Bible, based on another Hebrew manuscript. Here the Septuagint, in Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton's text (with a parallel English version), reads as follows: "And one week shall establish the covenant with many: and in the midst of the week my sacrifice and drink-offering shall be taken away: and on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations; and at the end of the time an end shall be put to the desolation."⁵

The King James expresses it differently: "He shall confirm the covenant" and "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (emphases added), which makes it plain that these words refer to Christ's career and not that of Antichrist. We note that "the temple" in Dan. 9:27 is τὸ ἱερόν (to hieron), according to the Septuagint. This, too, is the word that appears throughout the Gospels, as in Matt. 24:1, to designate the sacred complex that Jesus used to visit. But the New Testament also uses another word, ὁ ναός (ho naos), which *inter alia* means "the dwelling of a god . . . the inmost part of a temple."⁶

Now where would the Antichrist, the Lawless one of 2 Thess. 2:4, install himself—in *to hieron* or *ho naos*? It is the latter. The full expression is εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ (eis ton naon tou theou, "in the inner sanctum of God").

Does this particular expression occur in any other part of the New Testament? Yes, it does. The same author, Paul, who wrote to the Thessalonians, informed the Corinthians that they were the ναός τοῦ Θεοῦ (naos tou theou), "the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16). Again using *naos*, he also said that their body was the temple of the Holy Spirit within them (1 Cor. 6:19). In both cases, he is referring to individuals as well as the church.

It is, however, especially the Apocalypse that copiously refers to the *naos*. Here a key text is Rev. 11:19: "and the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of the testament." In several other chapters, too, this sanctuary is mentioned—always in heaven, which is where God the Father dwells and Jesus our high priest intercedes for the human race.

The Antichrist has usurped the place of the Most High in the Christian church and also, through the mass, created a substitute sanctuary service. This, however, does not center in the "ark of the covenant" (RSV). Instead, the Lawless one has tampered with the Ten Commandments which that sacred chest contained; he has even tried to change both times and the Decalogue itself (Dan. 7:25).

From our very much later vantage point in history, the ideas of Irenaeus may sound like a mixture of Historicism and Futurism; yet this is an anachronistic perspective. With the knowledge of hindsight, we may think that people so early in our era had a greatly foreshortened view of what lay ahead. But, of course, that is not exactly how it was. Their future still had to happen, and there is no such thing as the history of coming events—except in the mind of God, and the prophecies. Irenaeus was a child of his age, who could and would not be allowed to know how many ages still lay ahead. Like us, he simply believed that the Lord Jesus was coming soon.

The same was true of Tertullian (c. 160-c. 240), who was born in Carthage, North Africa. His ideas about Dan. 2 were like those of Irenaeus. He also knew that the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented Christ, and thought that the breakup of Rome would precede "the very end of all things." He correctly stated that the resurrection would take place at the Second Coming, not at death, as some people were evidently beginning to believe. Furthermore, he maintained that Babylon, as depicted in the book of Revelation, was Rome.⁷

But he avoided the errors of his colleague in Gaul. "Unlike Irenaeus . . . Tertullian does not describe Antichrist as a Jew sitting in a Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Indeed, he says that the temple of God is the church."⁸ He also thought the seventy prophetic weeks were completed through the Saviour's ministry and death, as well as the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus.⁹

The last of our chosen three examples is Hippolytus (c. 165-c. 235). He lived and worked as a bishop at Portus Romanus, a harbor town just fifteen miles from Rome, and died a martyr's death. His prophetic ideas were very similar to those of Irenaeus and Tertullian. This is a quotation from Hippolytus' *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*:

"The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard,

meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ . . ."¹⁰

That sounds very much like Uriah Smith, but it was written 1800 years ago. Pagans were still ruling in Rome, and Constantine had not yet been born or accepted Christianity. It would be more than two hundred years before the Empire would begin to break up. Hippolytus did, however, live in a most unstable period, which modern historians call the Troubled Century. Many emperors were assassinated and barbarians kept on invading the Empire.

Actually, not all Hippolytus' prophetic ideas were kosher. His intellectual background included, in addition to what Jesus and the apostles had taught, more dubious elements. As William Shea, pointed out in a letter: when dealing with Dan. 8 and 11, Hippolytus identified the Little Horn and the king of the north as Antiochus Epiphanes, "under the influence of Porphyry," who was his contemporary in Rome.¹¹ The latter, a great opponent of Christianity, had at one time studied under Origen at Caesarea¹² but ended his days as a pagan disciple of the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus, whose works he edited and published.¹³

While Hippolytus on the whole reflects the eschatology of the earliest Christian church, his ideas about the seventy weeks resembled those of Irenaeus, with a dramatic addition: "Hippolytus places the period of the Antichrist's predicted domination of three and one-half 'times,' or 1260 days, in the last half of the 'last week' of Daniel's seventieth hebdomad, or week of years, which he *arbitrarily separates by a chronological gap from the preceding sixty-nine weeks, placing it just before the end of the world*, and dividing the seventieth week between the two sackcloth-robed witnesses (Enoch and Elijah) and the Antichrist. Hippolytus is believed to be the first to have projected such a theory."¹⁴ (Froom's italics)

By his time, syncretism—including the cult of Mithras—had begun to corrupt Mediterranean Christendom. We must therefore not be surprised if even the best prophetic expositors of the Western church were already, in such an early period, prone to error. Doctrinal apostasy offends the Comforter, so that he will no longer guide the student of the Bible into all truth, according to the Saviour's promise (John 16:13). For studying prophecy, a special preserve of the Holy Spirit, the result cannot fail to be intellectual confusion.

Meanwhile, in the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean, a very serious problem was developing for the church. In Alexandria,

the intellectual center of the ancient Greco-Roman world, Christian academics were undermining the exegetical foundations on which prophetic interpretation and even Bible doctrine rested. Imbued with an ecumenical spirit, these men sought common ground with pagan philosophy, especially that of Plato. This endeavor culminated in the career of Origen (c. 185-254), "an Egyptian who wrote in Greek"¹⁵ and headed the Catechetical School or Christian Seminary. Though subsequently many considered him a heretic, he became the most influential theologian of the early Mediterranean church.

Origen was not content to accept the Bible in a straightforward manner. Instead, he adopted a "spiritualizing, or *anagogical* principle (passing to a higher sense than literal, i.e. a 'more literal')," which "determined the whole pattern" of his exegesis.¹⁶ That is to say, he allegorized everything.

Froom gives an enlightening example of Origen's method. Through the ages, many Christians have read in Matthew's Gospel the story of how Jesus entered Jerusalem by riding a donkey. For the ordinary person, this passage is quite simple and uncomplicated, but note how Origen explains it. He begins by debunking its literal truth in an introduction entitled "Matthew's Story of the Entry Into Jerusalem. Difficulties Involved in It for Those Who Take It Literally." So, according to him, the Bible as it stands is not really believable. Then he comes up with a different approach; he says, "The Ass and the Colt Are the Old and the New Testament" and goes on to give the "Spiritual Meaning of the Various Features of the Story." For him, "the real truth of these matters," accepted by "true intelligence," is as follows: "Jesus is the word of God which goes into the soul that is called Jerusalem." Then he also in detail allegorizes the "branches," the "multitudes," etc. "Thus Origen's perpetual allegorizing muddled even the clearest and most explicit statements of Scripture."¹⁷

Some of his fellow Christians must have been amused at what nonsense the learned professor could write. We can imagine them guffawing, "The ass and the foal are the Old and the New Testaments, indeed!" But others were indignant, especially the Syrian church, with its center in Antioch. Like us, they insisted that wherever possible the Scriptures should be understood in their literal sense, and practiced historico-linguistic exegesis.

It was, however, Origen's threefold approach to the Bible that eventually prevailed in the Western world. It soon evolved into a fourfold system, the so-called *quadriga* (the "four-horse chariot") which dominated the preaching of the Roman Church for a thousand years.¹⁸ As William Shea aptly expressed it to me, such allegorizing is like a wax nose: one can twist it any way one likes.¹⁹ It can make anything mean anything.

Where did Origen's allegorical method come from? Partly from his old teacher, the former head of the Catechetical School, Clement

(c. 150-c. 215), who had taught in Alexandria for more than twenty years but fled in AD 202 when the Emperor Severus unleashed a persecution against the Christians.²⁰ Clement never returned but left behind him a troublesome—a mentally and spiritually baneful—heritage. Like dragon's teeth, his ideas would sprout and survive in the minds of leading thinkers that were to shape the church for generations to come.

Before his conversion, Clement, who may originally have been an Athenian,²¹ had been "a pagan philosopher"²² and probably also initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries,²³ a kind of ancient Freemasonry. It seems that he never shook off his early training as a philosopher, and his amazing immersion in pagan writers of the Hellenic world continued to shape his thinking throughout his life. It is true that his writings are full of Scriptural quotations on virtually every page he wrote, but he was not really intent on teaching what the Bible says.

While he attacked and ridiculed the stupidity and many practices of everyday, lowbrow paganism, especially in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, he kept on linking Christian theology to his Hellenic heritage, partly through allegorization. His chief concern is very evident in the *Stromateis* or *Stromata*, a miscellany of eight books and his greatest work.²⁴ "It is inspired by one idea, to show the use which devout Christians may make of Greek philosophy. 'All sects of philosophy,' says Clement, 'contain a germ of truth. Greek philosophy, as it were, purges the soul and prepares it beforehand for the reception of faith on which the Truth builds up the edifice of knowledge.'"²⁵

We, on the contrary, are convinced that a preoccupation with pagan ideas does not purify but muddies the soul. The god of those pagan philosophers was not the personal being—our heavenly Father—presented by the Bible, but a transcendent notion thought up by people like Pythagoras (c. 580-c. 500 BC) in southern Italy and his Athenian disciple Plato (c. 428-348/347 BC).

Clement's conceptions affected Origen. But both were also influenced by an earlier, Jewish professor, Philo (c. 30 BC-AD 40), who lived and taught at Alexandria two centuries earlier, a little before and during the time of Christ. Philo was in love with the Greek philosophers, especially Plato. He blended their ideas with those of the Old Testament. Now, intrinsically the Hebraic and the Hellenic accounts of origin and views of reality are worlds apart. Nothing can, for instance, be more different than the stories told in the Old Testament and the myths of Greece; as any clear-headed reader should be able to see. Yet Philo somehow managed to discover in the first five books of the Bible "everything which he had learned from the Greeks." These, according to him, "must in some way have drawn from Moses."²⁶

But how could Philo bridge the vast discrepancy between such differing texts? "These presuppositions were maintained by an allegorical interpretation of Scripture. With its aid he discovered indications of the

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profoundest doctrines of philosophy in the simplest stories of the Pentateuch. This method of allegory is borrowed from the Stoics."²⁷ He was twisting the wax nose.

Origen passed on this allegorizing method—learned from Philo and Clement—to his pupil Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 340). This man is best known for his *History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, which became "the founding document of medieval history"²⁸ and influenced all subsequent writers on the topic.²⁹ To a large extent, it still determines what most people think of the early church, especially in the West.

Unfortunately he was a very biased writer, and his view of church history was, according to Paul Johnson, "a reconstruction for ideological purposes. Eusebius represented the wing of the Church which had captured the main centres of power and established a firm tradition of monarchical bishops, and had recently allied itself with the Roman state. He wanted to show that the Church he represented had always constituted the mainstream of Christianity, both in organization and faith."³⁰ Eusebius centered his enthusiasm on the new Hellenic state that Constantine was creating by the Bosphorus, especially since "in theological matters he appears as his chief adviser. At the Council of Nicaea he sat on the Emperor's right hand."³¹

Much of what that bishop wrote was tainted with flattery, to which Constantine was susceptible.³² This is especially clear from Eusebius' *Praise of Constantine*. In the words of Michael Grant, he "falsified the emperor into a mere sanctimonious devotee, which he was not, and showed himself guilty of numerous contradictions and dishonest suppressions, and indeed erroneous statements of fact, or untruths."³³ About Eusebius' oration as well as his biography to celebrate Constantine, Andrew Louth declares that these "are works of flattery."³⁴

Eusebius also carried this preoccupation over into in his prophetic exegesis, by using the allegorizing method he had learned from Origen, for whom he "had intense admiration." He even collaborated with Pamphilus in writing a defense of their master.³⁵

In this way, a new line of prophetic interpretation was born. Eusebius asserts that Constantine fulfilled Rev. 12, by casting down the Dragon—Paganism. The Scripture about the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21, "he now applies to the glories of the church as established by Constantine." Therefore, by his time, "the anticipated millennium had arrived."³⁶ "At the close of Constantine's thirtieth year of imperial rule—one of his sons having been advanced to share his imperial power during each decade—he appoints a nephew to the same dignity. And Eusebius is moved to declare that by these arrangements Constantine fulfils the prediction of the prophet Daniel (7:18), 'the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.'"³⁷

Obviously this type of thing reflected the ad hoc enthusiasm and unctuousness of the courtier-bishop. But, strange as it may seem, it had a tremendous influence on Catholic thinking for many hundreds of years.

Let us see how this happened by skipping down another century to Augustine (354–430), bishop of Hippo in North Africa, writer of *De Civitate Dei* ("About the City of God."), a very famous book. His ideas have molded much of Catholic thinking for the past 1600 years.

He must have derived his approach to prophecy from Eusebius. Another powerful influence on Augustine was a Donatist and fellow African named Tichonius³⁸ (c. 379–c. 423), author of *Seven Rules of Interpretation* for understanding the Scriptures. This man "also explained the whole Apocalypse of John, understanding all of it in a spiritual sense, nothing carnally. In this exposition he said that the body of man is the dwelling-place of an angel."³⁹

According to Tichonius, the first resurrection is spiritual, i.e. *of the soul*, "as hinted by Origen." It takes place, he said, at baptism, which symbolizes the sinner's identification with Christ, who died but then also rose from the grave. Therefore, the first resurrection is a rising from the deadness of sin unto eternal life. The second resurrection, however, will be literal, of the flesh, and apply to all people. As for the millennium, it started with the birth of Christ. The New Jerusalem is the true church.⁴⁰

Despite his allegorization, Tichonius was on the verge of a great discovery. "He interprets the three and a half days of the slaying of the witnesses (Revelation 11:11) to be three and a half years."⁴¹ Here, in a limited context, he actually uses the year-day principle! Others follow him in this, like Bishop Bruno of Segni (c. 1049–1123), who lived seven centuries later and even related it to Eze. 4:6. But he also limits the application of that principle to their being killed and lying in the streets for three and a half years.⁴² Neither interpreter applies it more widely, to the longer time periods of Daniel and Revelation. What is so peculiar about Tichonius' and Bruno's failure to do this is that the 3½ days of Rev. 11:11 are embedded within the 42 months or 1260 days of verse 3 in the same chapter. That is how people can be blinded by a mindset resulting from their background, intellectual experience, and prejudices—often more learnedly referred to as hermeneutics.

In any case, "the revolutionary Augustinian philosophy of the thousand years, as the reign of the church in the present age, soon swept over the Roman Catholic Church and dominated the view of Christendom for a thousand years to come—until at last abandoned by the Protestants, but then only when the Reformation was well along."⁴³

For Augustine, the stone that smote the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and grew into a mountain represented the establishment of the Lord's kingdom on earth, but not as we understand it. This is how Froom explains the Augustinian view: "The camp of the saints [in Rev. 20] is the church of Christ extending over the whole world. The 144,000 are the church of saints, of the city of God; and the Jews are to be converted. The imperial Catholic Church is the stone shattering all earthly kingdoms, until it fills the entire earth. He assents to the four standard empires of Daniel, but makes Antichrist come, nevertheless, at the *end* of the thousand years,"⁴⁴ to reign for three and a half years.⁴⁵ The devil, too, is to be loosed for three and a half years⁴⁶ of literal time. Satan had already been bound from the time of Christ. (I personally think the devil was very much on the loose throughout the Middle Ages and still is.)

The next lecture will show how from the later medieval period onward the passage of time and other developments necessitated a return to the prophetic interpretation of the early Christian church.

1.2 From the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century

We have seen how the prophetic interpretation of the apostles and the earliest Christians—as represented by men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus—largely disappeared from the Constantinian era onward. It was replaced by allegorical ideas that had germinated in Philo's, Clement's, and Origen's Alexandria, grew in the work of Eusebius, blossomed in Augustine's exegesis, and firmly rooted themselves in the medieval mind.

History, however, has a way of sorting out error and truth. The Middle Ages did not look anything like the Millennium, which Augustine assured his readers had already begun; nor did the people who headed the Roman Church resemble the saints of the Most High. Obviously, too, the devil was not bound or even restrained but on the rampage.

Four hundred fifty years after Augustine, while the terrible Vikings were raiding northern Europe and Moslems kept threatening the South, the papacy experienced squalid, almost unbelievable decadence, which lasted over one hundred fifty years, from just after John VIII (872-82) to the time of Gregory VII (1073-85).¹

For several years during the first half of the tenth century, successive pontiffs owed their position to the family of Theophylactus, or rather his immoral wife, Theodora, and her equally profligate daughters Theodora junior and especially Marozia. Collectively they are known as

the pornocracy² or—in King's more pungent phrase—the Rule of Harlots. According to him, they appointed and then disposed of nine popes in thirteen years.³

Especially Marozia prospered amazingly, until in 928 she was "the unchallenged mistress of Rome," and named herself Patricia and Senatrix. She had her own son crowned as Pope John XI (931-36), who was a layman and possibly fathered by Pope Sergius. Thereupon she married king Hugh of Provence. Her career ended when Alberic, a son by her first husband, disapproved of this match and locked her up for the rest of her life.⁴

Not all the pontiffs of that time were cruel, immoral, or incompetent; but it is significant that they were so ephemeral. While only eleven popes had reigned during the preceding two hundred years, there were thirty-five between 882 and 998, that is, in little more than a century. In the eight years from 896 to 904, no fewer than ten were elevated and then replaced, "of whom at least one was strangled and two died or were murdered in prison."⁵

Europe wondered: Were these popes really God's appointees?

Many contemporaries, some in high places, did not think so. An outspoken critic was Arnulf, bishop of Orleans. During a council meeting arranged by the French king in 991, he attacked the degenerate popes who were then disgracing the Vatican. He said the reigning pontiff, "clad in purple and gold, was 'Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as God.'"⁶

The papacy then introduced reforms, recovering some of its lost prestige. In comparison with the previous centuries, Europe also underwent remarkable development. In his *Rise of Christian Europe*, H. Trevor-Roper speaks of a medieval Renaissance, with the century from about 1150 to 1250 as its most splendid period.⁷

This was the time when the universities, an invention of the Middle Ages, began to flourish. Especially famous was the one in Paris. Its greatest ornament was probably Peter Abelard. This period also saw, again according to Trevor-Roper, the first Reformation and later, alas, a most successful Counter Reformation, which introduced a "general stagnation,"⁸ the ill-effects of which would last for two hundred years. It would have "as much influence in retarding the development in Europe in the two centuries after 1300 as the Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century was to have in the two centuries after 1600."⁹

Medieval attempts at thorough reformation partly came from Christian dissenters like the Albigenses in southern France and the Waldensians in the alpine valleys of northern Italy. The latter thought the papacy was the Beast and Rome the Apocalyptic Babylon.¹⁰ The Albigenses had similar views.¹¹ Using the secular arm of rulers that supported it, the papacy set out to silence and destroy these people. The

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bloody crusade it launched against the Albigenses in 1209 was largely successful, eliminating a splendid civilization that had flourished in Southern France, producing amongst others the cultivated Troubadours. But the Waldensians in their mountain fastness survived. We cannot, however, here deal further with those wonderful people or their ideas; nor can we refer to other non-Catholic expositors, like the Jews.

Instead, we need to concentrate on dramatic developments within mainline Western Christendom and focus first on a most remarkable man: Joachim of Fiore or Floris (c. 1135-1202), one time abbot of the Cistercian Abbey at Corazzo. He appeared exactly halfway through the 1260 years predicted in prophecy, at a time when the papacy was nearing the zenith of its power. He was thirty years of age in 1168, that is to say exactly 630 years after 538. The career of Innocent III (1198-1216), the highest point of pontifical power, largely fell within Joachim's lifetime.

In 1182, he asked Pope Lucius III to relieve him of his duties as an abbot. With papal permission, he applied himself to full-time biblical research and writing. The result was his *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* ("Book of the Harmony of the New and Old Testament"), *Expositio . . . in Apocalipsis* ("Exposition of the Apocalypse"), and *Psalterium Decem Cordarum* ("Psaltery of Ten Strings").¹²

As a prophetic expositor, Joachim became tremendously famous.¹³ He mingled with and witnessed to the aristocracy of Europe. "Both Richard the Lion-hearted and Philip Augustus of France, on their way through the Mediterranean to the Holy Land for the Third Crusade, in 1190, are said to have held conferences with Joachim at Messina [Sicily], wherein Richard was greatly impressed by the prophecies of the Apocalypse." Joachim also "had close contact with three popes—as well as with the imperial court under Henry VI."¹⁴

This learned man was a good Catholic, and let us in passing note that the same was true, at first, of the sixteenth-century Reformers, including Martin Luther and John Calvin. The people of the high Middle Ages just could not know what effect Joachim's ideas were to have on future generations, or they would undoubtedly have burned him at the stake. As a "Biblical commentator and philosopher of history" he would prove "influential in the later middle ages and Renaissance in reformist circles . . ."¹⁵

The greatest of Joachim's contributions were to apply the year-day principle to the 1260 days and to revive the Historical School of prophetic interpretation, which had been eclipsed by Augustine and those who followed in his footsteps. The reader will recall that neither the apostles nor their successors in the early Christian church had grasped this key to unlock the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. So how did it happen that a medieval Catholic could find it?

The precise answer to this question is lost in the mist of a distant past, but we can try to reconstruct it. The earliest believers had simply assumed that only a modest number of years, or possibly a very few centuries, would pass before the Second Coming. And since they saw no problem, they also did not seek a solution. Besides, the Lord did not want them to understand "the times and seasons" prematurely. But by the late 1100s not a few centuries but almost twelve hundred years had elapsed. The Redeemer had not yet returned, and Joachim realised something was wrong. As he pondered the prophecies, he just could no longer believe that the three and a half years or 1260 days were a literal period. They had been rendered incredible by the sheer passage of time.

Led by the Spirit of God, Joachim read the Latin Bible, as medieval clerics were able to do. One day he must have come across Num. 14:34, and the crucial words leaped into his mind: "After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise" (emphasis added). Later he would also have found the same idea in Eze. 4:6: "I have appointed thee each day for a year."

In passing, let us note that Joachim may also have known about the application of this principle by Jewish scholars, some going back a long time before him. It is a fruitful topic for research, but we cannot and need not pursue it here. The day-year equivalence is, in any case, quite clearly stated by and was directly available from the Bible.

"Not only the 'Joachimites' and the Spiritual Franciscans, but also Dante, Wyclif [sic], Cusa, Huss, and some of the Reformers were definitely moulded by certain principles enunciated by Joachim."¹⁶ Some people, including Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), the greatest Italian poet, even thought Joachim was "endowed with the prophetic spirit." But Joachim himself contradicted this idea. He only claimed the ability to explain what the Scriptures had predicted, by "rightly interpreting the prophetic content of the Old and New Testaments, and of construing the course of events in the world and the church from the prophecies, types, and analogies of the Bible."¹⁷ Today we find a good deal of what he wrote rather quaint, but nothing can detract from his two tremendous achievements: discovering the year-day principle and refocusing on history as the fulfillment of prophecy.

Two hundred years after Joachim, an Englishman, Walter Brute, discovered that the 1290 and 1335 days of Dan. 12:11, 12 were also literal years. Later, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64), the amazing German scholar and polymath, became the first to state that the same applied to the 2300 days (Dan. 8:14).¹⁸ These developments, of vast prophetic and eschatological importance, owe much to Joachim. Once he had found the indispensable key of the year-day principle, others, too, could use it. He also had something to say about the great apostasy. According to

Bernard McGinn, "Joachim always identified God's temple not with a rebuilt Jerusalem structure, but with the temple of the Church, so in this passage he hints that the 'priestly' aspect of Antichrist implies that he will be a false pope (in reality a member of a heretical sect) who will deceive the faithful as well as the Jews. Joachim's thought thus seems to represent a step on the road to the full-blown conception of a papal Antichrist, though it must be stressed that he also emphasized the role of a true and holy pope of the time of crisis . . .".¹⁹

Unmasking the papacy as the Antichrist became more prominent in the generation after Joachim. This resulted from the conflict between Pope Gregory IX (c. 1170-1241) and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250), whom the papacy wanted to destroy because he had become too powerful. Those two men, in a heated exchange of invective, denounced each other as the Antichrist. We think the emperor got the better of the argument. At the Council of Regensburg in 1240 or 1241, he had a powerful ally: Eberhardt II, Archbishop of Salzburg (1200-46). This was one of Frederick's most important counsellors as well as the "chief spokesman for the emperor among the German bishops."²⁰

In support of his master, Eberhardt distanced himself from the Vatican and roundly declared that the papacy was the Little Horn, which was a new interpretation.²¹ Looking back over almost two centuries, the learned archbishop castigated the pontiffs of the high Middle Ages, declaring, "Hildebrand, one hundred and seventy years before, first laid the foundations of the empire of Antichrist under the appearance of religion."²²

For their pains, both Frederick and Eberhardt were excommunicated. The archbishop "died under the ban in 1246. Burial in consecrated ground being refused, he was buried in common ground in an annex of the parish church in Radstadt. Some forty years later, in 1288, his remains were transferred to the consecrated ground of the Salzburg Cathedral. In the *Annals of Convent Garsten* his obituary states that he was 'a man of great learning' who 'ruled his see most nobly forty-six years.'²³

It is surely more than a coincidence that almost three hundred years later the anti-papal Reformation led by Martin Luther would also arise in the imperial reaches north of the Alps and be led once more by German-speaking clerics. The seed of dissent from Rome, deposited in the European mind by their medieval compatriots through what these had said and written, did not die with them. It only lay dormant, ready to germinate again in the abundant harvest of a better season.

Criticism of the medieval church was not confined to monarchs and clerics. Several Catholic authors, including some of the most famous who have ever lived, portrayed specific popes as Antichrist. Among them were Jean de Meun (c. 1275), the Frenchman who finished the *Romance of the Rose*—a vastly popular work in those days—and two eminent Italian writers, Jacopone da Todi (c.1230-1306) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321),²⁴ the greatest Christian poet of the past seven hundred years.

In the nineteenth canto of his *Inferno* (the *Divine Comedy*), Dante commits a number of popes to hell for simony and lusting after worldly possessions. He clearly indicates that the church through the love of money had become the harlot woman of Rev. 17. He rages against several pontiffs: Nicholas III, Boniface VIII, and Clement V, consigning them to hell, "inverted in narrow holes with their feet tortured by flames, images of the false Simon Magus falling from heaven—himself a figure of the Antichrist who will bring down fire upon his followers in a parody of Pentecost (XIX.22-30)."²⁵

This impassioned criticism did not, however, at the time appear to achieve so much. The papacy prevailed by applying force. It created the dreadful Inquisition, largely eradicated the Albigenses, and through its allies defeated Frederick, after which it obliterated his line. It also clamped down on the universities, which it thought had too much freedom of discussion. And so, the "Renaissance of the twelfth century died away. The Reformation of the twelfth century was snuffed out. For another two centuries Europe, Christendom, seemed stagnant."²⁶

The terrible fourteenth century set in, with which we cannot now concern ourselves, except to remark that nemesis often overtakes those countries and organizations that persecute people for their faith. Among the calamities was the plague, the notorious Black Death that swept away a third of all the people in Europe. There were also famines, economic disaster, even climatic change, and an epidemic of conflict, including the hundred years' war between France and England.

But unlike people, ideas cannot die, and so the contributions of Joachim and other thinkers like Eberhardt II awaited future prophetic development. Two hundred years after Joachim, John Wycliffe (1330-84), the morning star of the Reformation, also abandoned Augustine's interpretation. He returned to the Historical School, alternatively known as the continuistic interpretation of prophecy, which Joachim had reinstated; and so did that noble martyr Jan Hus (1372/73-1415).²⁷ A century later, Martin Luther (1483-1546) also equated the Little Horn of Dan. 7 with the pontiffs. Indeed, as From points out, throughout Europe and Britain the Reformers were "unanimous in applying most of the prophecies of the Antichrist to the papa-

cy." They considered the pontiffs, in their succession, the Man of Sin; and "Christians were urged to obey the command, 'Come out of her, My People.'"²⁸

The Reformers were vigorous prophetic expositors. It is significant that "the first sermon ever preached by John Knox, in 1547, was on the four world powers of Daniel 7—with the ten divisions of the Roman fourth and the Little Horn as the Papacy."²⁹

For their interpretation, the Reformers owed much to their predecessors of the Middle Ages. Their spiritual ancestors included so-called heretics like the Albigenses and Waldensians, but also many good Catholics, to whom the Lord had spoken in years gone by. Let us not forget that Wycliffe, Luther, and Calvin (like many other Reformers) began their careers as clergymen of the Roman Church.

The Reformers did not, however, just unmask particular popes as the Antichrist, but went further than men like Joachim, by identifying Antichrist with the papacy itself. All the same, they were building on foundations laid by the earliest Christian expositors as well as medieval Catholic writers.

Eight hundred years have come and gone since the death of Joachim, who discovered the year-day principle and led generations back to the Historical School of prophetic interpretation. For more than half a millennium, Protestants persisted with this approach. They have, in the words of Michael De Semlyen, included the following: "Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer; in the seventeenth century, Bunyan, the translators of the King James Bible and the men who published the Westminster and Baptist Confessions of Faith; Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards; and more recently, Spurgeon, Bishop J.C. Ryle and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones; these men among countless others, all saw the office of the Papacy as the Antichrist, that is substituting for Christ the new face of the old paganism that is Mystery Babylon in the Bible."³⁰ Seventh-day Adventists, the main surviving bastion of the Historical School, should also have been in this list.

But how did Rome react? It was not to be expected that it would idly stand by and see its prophetic and eschatological concepts thrown onto the scrap heap of history, while entire countries denounced the papacy as the Antichrist. Therefore, during the Counter Reformation, which began in the later sixteenth century and continues to the present, two Jesuit scholars, Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) and Francisco Ribera (1537-91), revitalized two older lines of prophetic interpretation.

Known as Preterism, Alcazar's idea was that the Little Horn cannot refer to the papacy because Dan. 7 and 8 were fulfilled by Antiochus IV (c. 215-164 BC), nicknamed Epiphanes ("the illustrious one"). This was a rather insignificant Greco-Macedonian king of Syria, who lived 160 years before Christ and persecuted the Jews, until—under

the Maccabees—they drove him from Jerusalem.

Preterism was a transplant from the Jewish religion, apparently derived from Hayyim Galipapa (c. 1310-80),³¹ a medieval Jewish rabbi; but it really goes back to pre-Christian sources. Josephus refers to such an interpretation more than a thousand years earlier in his *Antiquities* (AD 93 or 94), where he comments on Daniel's vision.³² We cannot here deal further with Preterism, except to point out that this identification of Antiochus Epiphanes as the Little Horn is contradicted by Christ himself. In his Olivet discourse, the Saviour links the Little Horn with a power that would flourish during the Christian era, beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) . . ." (Matt. 24:15). Nevertheless, Preterism has influenced many rationalist and Protestant writers.

Futurism, the brainchild of Ribera, the other Spanish Jesuit, has been more influential. It was not, as some Protestants have thought, a completely new approach to prophecy. In a modified form, it continued the same deviation that had begun so many centuries before in the time of Origen, Eusebius, and Augustine. In the meantime, however, events had demonstrated the falsity of the medieval views about the Apocalypse. Therefore, some elements in them had to be abandoned.

But Ribera retained and emphasized the idea of an end-time Antichrist. From the pre-Augustinian period, he resurrected Hippolytus' ideas about the seventy weeks of Dan. 9, including his gap theory. (Augustine had still believed this time prophecy extended only to the death of Christ.³³) Most problematic in Ribera's reformulation is the vastness of the gap: so many centuries that had accumulated in the meantime, a further 1400 years, which by now have added up to more than 1800.

The gap theory is a most illogical idea. Except perhaps in quantum mechanics, on the subatomic level, there can be no such thing as a gap in time. A specified period can be shortened or lengthened, days being added to or subtracted from it, but no gap can be inserted into it. So what did Hippolytus and Ribera really mean? They were just lengthening the seventy prophetic weeks, and by the sixteenth century, Ribera's time, it would no longer consist of 483 years plus a little extra; it would now be 483 plus fifteen centuries! Which blatantly contradicts both common sense and the Bible.

There are, besides, significant differences between the ideas of Hippolytus and those of Ribera. The early Christian expositor had imagined a short future and therefore a small gap. For him, the Second Coming was just around the corner. The intervening years would be filled up by the events predicted in Dan. 2 and 7. First the Roman Empire would fall apart and then, immediately afterwards,

would come "the kingdoms that are to rise" with "the Antichrist in their midst."

By Ribera's time, every bit of this had already happened. The Roman Empire did break up and its successors—the kingdoms of a divided Europe—become a reality, together with the papacy, which the Protestants were now unmasking as the Antichrist. For Catholicism this was all so inconvenient. Therefore, Ribera tried to excise a massive chunk of history from prophetic consideration. He wanted to drop the evidence out of sight into a gigantic gap of non-events. To make this possible, his readers were required to take a mental leap across a veritable Grand Canyon of credulity. How all this would have astounded and dismayed Hippolytus! Nevertheless, Futurism, a fine example of Jesuitical doubletalk, became an important Catholic school of prophetic interpretation.

Earlier Protestants just ignored this strange explanation. It was so obviously an attempt to provide an alibi for the papacy, hugely embarrassed by the fact that medieval history closely met the specifications of Bible prophecy about the Antichrist. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, Dispensationalists and others would embrace Ribera's ideas—and add a few peculiar views of their own, including the Secret Rapture and the doctrine that even Jews who reject the Saviour as the Messiah remain the Lord's elect. Today, in Evangelical circles, Futurism has become the prevalent prophetic school. That is, these folk have now largely adopted a Catholic eschatology, going all the way back to Augustine and his predecessors at the very beginning of the great Mediterranean apostasy.

This development has again obscured the Bible's predictions about what lies ahead for humanity, just as misinterpretations had done throughout the Middle Ages. In the next section, we shall further examine the Futurist view, which relates not only to Dispensationalism, but also to the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement and the ecumenical attitudes that it engendered.

For several hundred years, from the time of Wycliffe onward, the prophetic interpretation of the Reformers largely harmonized with what the apostles had taught and passed on to men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus—and was rediscovered by medieval interpreters like Joachim and Eberhardt II. But we need to note that an umbrella name like "Protestantism" is sometimes awkward. For all their agreement about some prophetic interpretations, the Reformers and their spiritual progeny have also differed from one another.

Since we cannot here do justice to their variety, let us just refer to an example from Luther and a single, rather special English Puritan a century later.

The German reformer was dramatically explicit. "An illustration

to the first edition of his New Testament had shown 'the whore of Babylon' (featured in the last book of the New Testament), wearing a triple crown—clearly it was the papal tiara. Old Frederick the Wise had received such a blast of complaint from Duke George [his staunchly Catholic cousin] that in the next edition the headpiece had to be cut down to a single crown. But later again, Luther had the triple tiara reinstated."³⁴

John Milton (1608-74), the greatest English poet after Shakespeare, was more than a literary genius. He not only wrote *Paradise Lost* (1667), the most celebrated epic in the language, and others poems (some in Italian, Classical Greek, and Latin—which he knew like his mother tongue). He was also a deep theologian.

Originally he had been destined for the ministry. But for this he had to take an oath, by which he would have subjected his conscience to what he called the "tyranny" that "had invaded the church"; so he "thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and foreswearing."³⁵

But what interesting ideas this conscientious layman had! Somewhat like a latter-day Adventist, Milton favored the seventh-day Sabbath and believed in conditionalism (including the unconsciousness of the dead) as well as the Second Coming.

To the first-mentioned doctrine, we find a beautiful monument in *Paradise Lost*, where he portrays the Lord as returning to heaven after he had made the earth. The hosts of accompanying angels are represented as singing:

"Open, ye Heavens, your living doors; let in
The great Creator, from His work returned
Magnificent, His Six Day's Work, a World!"³⁶

Milton also warned against Sunday laws, arguing that if Sabbath legislation were contemplated, it would "surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first."³⁷

Against the existence of the soul divorced from the body, he used not only the most common arguments known to conditionalists of our day, but also interesting additional ones. For these, the reader is referred to *De Doctrina Christiana*, or its English translation by Charles R. Sumner, published in 1825. Extracts appear in the SDA Source Book.³⁸

About the Second Coming, Milton exclaimed: "Come forth out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth; put on the visible robes of Thy imperial majesty; take up that unlimited scepter which Thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee. For now the voice

of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."³⁹

From what sources did this seventeenth-century author derive these ideas?

Regarding the Sabbath, he would probably have been at least aware of "the Seventh-day Men," whom Bryan W. Ball describes in his scholarly work on Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800. This branch of Puritanism that gave birth to the Seventh Day Baptists eventually established themselves "in over sixty identifiable discrete or mixed-community congregations, and probably in many others which cannot now be positively identified."⁴⁰

Yet Milton does not mention the Sabbatarians. He may therefore have discovered those ideas through his own devotions and study of the Scriptures in the original languages. According to Elliot Rosenberg, a Jewish writer, Milton read the Hebrew Bible "each morning until his vision failed, and, as he aged, turned more and more to the precepts of Mosaic law."⁴¹

After he went blind at 43, his paid assistants, relatives, and friends are known to have read to him in foreign languages, apart from recording the epic verse he had created in his head the night before. Therefore, he would surely not have given up his contact with the Hebrew text. He may even have committed much (if not all) of it to memory, which in his case was extraordinarily retentive. He is "said to have known the Homeric poems by heart."⁴² In A.T. Murray's bilingual edition, the *Iliad*⁴³ and *Odyssey*⁴⁴ comprise no fewer than 543 pages of pre-Classical, ancient Greek! So imprinting Hebrew on his mind should not, for Milton, have been burdensome, especially since he would have delighted in its beautiful poetry.

In religion, he "had moved from the low-church Anglicanism of his parents to Presbyterianism to Independency to independence. In the latter part of his life, according to his early biographer John Toland, 'he was not a professed member of any particular sect among Christians, he frequented none of their assemblies, nor made use of their peculiar rites in his family.' But, as Samuel Johnson observed, 'his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer.'"⁴⁵

His theological individualism was not, however, absolute. Apart from the beliefs already mentioned and his Armenian refusal to accept the doctrine of predestination, "most of Milton's essential beliefs are those of traditional Christianity."⁴⁶ This certainly applies to his thoroughly Protestant views on prophecy.

Several of these are mirrored in his sonnet "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont." It indignantly protests the slaughter of the Waldensians on 24 April 1653, as ordered by the Duke of Savoy. Milton was the Latin or foreign secretary working for Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of republican England after Parliament had executed

King Charles I. Diplomatic pressure was exerted against the Duke in several countries. England even sent "a special ambassador to Savoy to protest the persecution and to indicate that Cromwell was willing to go to war if necessary."⁴⁷

According to Marjorie Hope Nicolson, an eminent critic as well as an authority on seventeenth-century literature and thought,⁴⁸ that poem is "in structure, style and intensity of feeling" Milton's greatest sonnet.⁴⁹ It contains a number of expressions from the Protestant eschatology of his day, e.g. "triple Tyrant" [triple-crowned], "Babylonian woe" [the destruction foretold in the Apocalypse], and especially the idea "vengeance is mine" as well as the words "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth" [the opening of the fifth seal].⁵⁰

Is all this not familiar terrain, for us who live some three hundred years after Milton? Such or similar views were also later taught by Seventh-day Adventists like Uriah Smith, as well as their immediate British and American predecessors in other denominations toward the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This is the topic to which we now must turn our attention.

1.3 The End of the Eighteenth and the Early Nineteenth Century

Martin Luther, after finishing his translation of the Bible and shortly before he died, is reported to have said, "I am persuaded that the judgment is not far off; yea, that the Lord himself will not be absent above *three hundred years* longer"; and several generations later John Wesley (1703-1791) "thought the millennium might commence in about *one hundred years*."¹ Within the lifetime of the latter, a startled planet witnessed the fulfillment of an Apocalyptic prophecy: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake [Lisbon, 1755]; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood [1780]; And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth [1833], even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind" (Rev. 6:12, 13).

In that period, an arresting announcement began to be heard all over the world. It was the voice of the first angel depicted in Rev. 14: "Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7). Symbolically flying in mid-heaven, he spoke to many different countries, through the voices and writings of dedicated messengers. As John N. Loughborough points out, "at about the same time, men were raised up, who, without a knowledge of one another's work, went forth to sound this message to all parts of the earth."²

Adventists largely equate this with the Millerite story, and this movement was indeed important; the denomination of this writer rose in its aftermath, first establishing itself within the United States of America. But this tale has often been told, so it is not necessary to dwell on it here. Let us instead, rather more than is usually the case, consider the first angel's message as it manifested itself in other countries.

We begin with one way in which it revealed itself at the southern tip of Africa. During the 1830s, William Miller's time, dissatisfied Afrikaner Boers, who called themselves Voortrekkers (the word *trek* originated with them), were migrating northward from the Cape Province to establish an independent country, outside the hated British Empire. One of these groups was known as the "Jerusalem-gangers" (the Jerusalem goers).

Convinced the Lord was coming soon, they believed that, according to Zech. 14:4-9, Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives—from which he had ascended—and establish his kingdom in Jerusalem. So these people with their ox wagons wanted to go there and join their Saviour.

Africa, however, is huge, much bigger than they imagined. But much of it was in those days still unmapped. Eventually, in northern South Africa, they came to a very large river, swollen by recent floods. Believing they had reached the headwaters of the Nile, they named it Nylstroom (Nile Stream). And that is where they settled down.

A few years later, practically at the antipodes, in Sweden, an amazing phenomenon characterized the proclamation of the first angel's message during 1843.

The law did not allow adults to preach, unless they had been authorized to do so by the established Lutheran Church. And so the Second Advent was heralded by child preachers, supernaturally inspired. For instance, "a little girl, only five years of age, who had never learned to read or sing, one day, in a most solemn manner, sang correctly a long Lutheran hymn, and with great power proclaimed 'the hour of his judgment is come,' and exhorted the family to get ready to meet the Lord; for he was soon coming." Another illiterate child, a boy of eight, confounded a priest by quoting numerous scriptures and telling him, "I know where there is a text that has the word *and* in it fourteen times." The cleric contradicted him but, when compelled to read Rev. 18:13, saw his error, whereupon he left the lad and his audience, discomfited. Such events occurred in many towns. "The same movement among children was manifest to some extent in Norway and Germany."³

But the earliest Advent heralds of that time arose in neither South Africa nor the Nordic countries, but in Latin America, Western Europe, and Britain. This is where, before William Miller, the story of the first angel's message first became prominent. As its powerful precursor, the Almighty chose a person even more improbable than inspired children: a Jesuit, Manuel de Lacunza (1731-1801), who thought he had settled into a comfortable if humdrum career as a Latin professor in Chile.

During 1767, the thirty-six-year-old academic suddenly suffered banishment from his country. Charles III, the Spanish king, had decreed the expulsion of all Jesuits,⁴ for meddling in politics. Whether they were guilty or innocent, they all had to leave the empire.

Only exiles, emigrants, and God can know the heart of a stranger. Far from home and his loved ones, Manuel first went to Cádiz in Spain, but later settled in Imola near Bologna, Italy, for the rest of his life. In 1801, "he was found dead on the bank of the river which flows near Imola."⁵ The seventy-year-old man had apparently died by accident.

But he left behind the manuscript of a book that was destined to make a remarkable impact on many countries: *La Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Magestad* ("The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty"). From his home in Imola, he had been able to visit important libraries in Venice, Bologna, and Rome. The providence of God could not have brought him to a better place. "For thirty years, Lacunza profoundly studied the Holy Book, the writings of the Fathers, and theological interpreters. He compassed the entire Patrology—1,000 large volumes." In 1770, however, he gave up his trips to the libraries; they no longer benefited him. Now he devoted himself solely to the Scriptures. From 1772 onward, he was a recluse, shutting himself up with his books, his Bible study, and his writing.⁶

The actual composition of *La Venida*, written under the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, took up twenty years, from 1771 to 1791. It was a work of remarkable scholarship; Lacunza was "never charged with inaccuracy, misquotation of authorities, or distortion." Though not printed in his lifetime, it was copied by hand and had an amazing circulation, especially in Latin America, "from Havana to Cape Horn." In 1799, just one year after the Time of the End had begun, the Jesuit Father Maneiro took with him to Mexico "an elegant Latin translation," a smuggled book—in the Soviet Union dissidents would have called it a samizdat, an underground manuscript. It had obviously been prepared for use among the clergy, who "read it avidly."⁷

The first edition of *La Venida* was printed secretly near Cádiz, on the Isle of Leon, or San Fernando. This was made possible because Napoleon's army had overrun Spain and taken King Ferdinand VII (1784-

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1833) prisoner. But the French were unable to capture Cádiz, which now became the capital. It remained under siege from February 1810 to August 1812, and then was relieved by Wellington. In that time, the Cortes acted as the interim government. Two of its actions were to abolish the Inquisition and allow some press freedom. Within this brief period, Lacunza's book appeared. In 1814, Ferdinand VII was restored to power (and he promptly reinstated the Inquisition).⁸ But *La Venida* had taken off and was now unstoppable.

In 1816, a four-volume London edition appeared. It was very popular in Mexico by 1818. Within that same year, it jumped an important language barrier: A French compendium, running to one hundred twenty pages, was published. In 1821-1822 an edition appeared in Mexico,⁹ during its struggle for independence. Great controversy surrounded *La Venida*: in 1824, it was placed on the Catholic Index of Forbidden Books.¹⁰

But what did it teach? Lacunza's "key to the prophecies was his discovery of the two comings of Christ. He separated the confusing parts, and emphasized the second advent at the beginning of the millennium."¹¹ Setting aside the views of the early church Fathers from the time of Jerome and Augustine, he returned to earlier Christian interpretations.¹² He stressed Scripture over tradition.¹³

Concerning the ten toes and the stone that struck them and the feet, Lacunza had an essentially "Protestant" view. He insisted the stone was not the medieval church, as taught in the Middle Ages. According to him, the Antichrist was not an individual but a body. "Lacunza analyzes and exposes the absurdity of the usual Romanist view of an individual Jew, of the tribe of Dan, born in Babylon, received of the Jews as the Messiah, and conquering Jerusalem"—though in some ways he was a Futurist. According to him, the Antichrist existed from Paul's time alongside "the mystical body of Christ."¹⁴

He saw the harlot Babylon of Rev. 17 as papal Rome, which may well "at some time or other incur the guilt, and before God be held guilty of fornication with the kings of the earth, and amenable to all its consequences."¹⁵

La Venida had a wonderful career in Latin America. Amongst others, it fell into the hands of one who would study it avidly: the most remarkable Francisco Hermogenes Ramos Mexía (1773-1825) in Argentina. A great patriot, and a man with good connections, he was a subdelegate of finance as well as a delegate to the Argentinian legislature. He was, moreover, a man of considerable wealth, including his large estate at Miraflores, near Kaquel, south of Buenos Aires.

According to Froom, Don Francisco was considered "a man of genius,"¹⁶ but was also known as the Protestant or, as Catholics called him, the great "Heretic of the South."¹⁷ What did he do to earn this epithet? "Ramos Mexía's purely Protestant theology is on record through

his marginal notations on Lacunza (Vol. VI, p. 387), 'The just lives by faith, before Jesus'—virtually the same words as used by Luther. . . He calls transubstantiation crude 'idolatry' . . . The advent of the kingdom of God is his sole hope and faith . . ."¹⁸ He also angered people because he protested unfair treatment of Indians "by Catholic officers and by priests of the Roman faith."¹⁹

Ramos Mexía was more than a Protestant; his religion was similar to that of the later Seventh-day Adventists in North America. He believed in the Second Coming, kept the seventh-day Sabbath, and even seems to have had the gift of prophecy, as early as 1820-1821.

He based his ideas about the Lord's return on the Bible, in the writings of Daniel, Paul, and John. Apart from Lacunza, he knew the "teachings of the Montanists, the Fraticelli, the Bohemian Brethren, and numerous other 'sects,'"²⁰ and probably also the writings of Joachim. According to Ramos Mexía, "The world has passed its midnight, and he sees the dawning light of Jesus the Light Bearer, who will make all things right."²¹

To this unusual Argentinian, the seventh-day Sabbath was especially important. He kept it himself and taught others to do so as well. This happened "not only on the Ramos Mexía estate at Miraflores, near Kaquel-Huincul, but by groups on his farm near Buenos Aires, known as Los Tapialas, also south of the river Salado, and on the estate of the Patria." Furthermore, "he had established six chairs, or professorships, of theology in the South, evidently in and around Miraflores, and at the Indian camp Ailla-Mahuída (New Hills), the other name of which was Llamóida. So the observance of the Sabbath was quite widespread."²²

At least once, Ramos Mexía was arrested and "ordered to cease observance of the Sabbath." We know this from a report on 8 September 1822 in *El Centinela* ("The Sentinel"). But he was a brave man and spoke with power and authority to his people. Indeed, "he considered himself as constituting a voice from on high . . . "from his establishment at Miraflores his voice was heard like the voice of a prophet in the desert, vibrant with the 'loneliness of the Pampa [sic]," declaring, "The Omnipotent has sent me to you—the Omnipotent has placed His hand on my shoulder—and since He took the veil from my face, I have never remained silent."²³

But Francisco Ramos Mexía was more than a religious reformer. On 9 July 1816, his country had declared its independence at Tucumán and named itself the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata. This was after the Napoleonic intervention in Spain, which unleashed a civil war. The struggle in southernmost South America continued under Argentina's great liberator, José de San Martín, though he "withdrew in 1822 in favour of the Venezuelan liberator Simón Bolívar, who completed the task two years later."²⁴

Amid this ferment, there appeared in 1820 a publication called *The Gospel That Is Presented before the Nations by the Citizen Francisco Ramos Mexía*, "at the height of the wave of reform that was sweeping over the nation." This was just after "the citizenry had called his brother Idelfonso Ramos Mexía into the turbulent swirl of affairs at Buenos Aires to act as governor." Part of the southern Adventist's publication focused on the Sabbath. He "sums up the struggle of all crea-tion from the days of Adam onward, as between unbelieving men, given to idolatry and paganism, and believers in the mediation of Jesus Christ through His blood and sacrifice. Sunday, he boldly declared, was the iniquitous symbol of the former, and the seventh-day Sabbath, the holy emblem of the latter—the sign between believing men and their Creator." The purpose of Francisco Ramos Mexía in writing this work was not simply theological. He was trying to enunciate basic principles for his country "in the very storm center of the church-and-state struggle over independence and ecclesiastical reforms."²⁵

We can wonder what greatness Argentina missed when it failed to accept the ideas of this godly man and patriot. We also wish his writings could all have survived. But they did not. After his death, his fanatically Catholic family destroyed the majority of them. "But happily the marginal notations in his own characteristic handwriting have been preserved on the volumes of his set of Manuel Lacunza's *La venida del Mesías*, who was his favorite author."²⁶

It is to this book that we now return, for remarkably it also had an influence in the United Kingdom—at that time the cultural and intellectual center of the English-speaking world. There, in 1804, the British Bible Society was organized,²⁷ and soon the missionary societies began to flourish. At least in part, this resulted from prophetic study, around the turn of the nineteenth century. A direct stimulus was the French Revolution, which variously enthralled and terrified people in both England and the United States.

Numerous British commentaries on prophecy were reprinted and also widely circulated in North America. An especially striking compilation was the anonymous *Prophetic Conjectures on the French Revolution*, containing ninety-six statements by eight well-known European scholars. In the United States it sold like hot cakes, the first edition being exhausted within just a few days.²⁸

Particularly striking about this compendium were statements in it, published more than a hundred years before, that foretold a coming upheaval in France and a revolt from the Papacy, all of it based on Revelation 11.²⁹ One of these predictions was from the pen of a Huguenot writer, Pierre Jurieu, before 1687. In his *Accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies*, he said, "France, which a long time ago has begun to 'shake off the yoke of Rome,' will 'break with Rome and the Roman Religion.'³⁰ And Robert Fleming, a Scottish Presby-

terian minister at Lothbury, in his *Rise and Fall of the Papacy* (1701) predicted papal humiliation by 1794, which was "his end date for the 1260 years (from Justinian on to 1794)."³¹

When Pius VI was arrested on 15 February 1798, "a whole group of men began to assert that that very date, 1798, marked the end of the 1260 years." One of the first to do so was Edward King, a graduate of Cambridge University, England.³²

This interest was not limited to the writing of books and articles. Fervent preachers also went about to proclaim the Second Coming and the end of human history. Outstanding among these was Edward Irving (1792-1834) from Scotland, who had graduated from Edinburgh University in 1809 and was ordained in 1819. "Piety was his outstanding characteristic; fasting and prayer his habit. Deep sympathy and understanding of their joys and sorrows endeared him to his people,"³³ and in the pulpit he was powerful.

From Christmas day, 1825, he regularly began to preach about the Second Coming. Just then, a Church of England clergyman, who had been working in Spain, came back to his country and brought a copy of Lacunza's great work. It so happens that Irving "had been studying Spanish." He found *La Venida* a compelling book with a very clear message and decided to translate the whole of it into English.³⁴ This is what he did. Edward Irving's English translation of Lacunza appeared just two years later, in 1827, and had "a really remarkable circulation."³⁵ In this way, *La Venida* entered into the bloodstream of the Advent movement in the Anglo-Saxon world.

In Regent Square, Irving had a large and wealthy congregation. "There a thousand persons packed the church Sunday after Sunday to hear Irving's extended expositions of prophecy. In 1828 he undertook a tour of Scotland to proclaim the imminence of the advent. The overcrowded galleries of the largest churches could not accommodate the crowds, where he was heard with enthusiasm. The people of Edinburgh came out to hear him at five o'clock in the morning. At Holywood and Duncourse he preached to open-air congregations of 10,000 to 12,000."³⁶

Unfortunately this powerful preacher became bogged down in other issues. One was the human nature of Christ; the other, glossolalia—which plagued his congregation in October 1831. Though Irving never spoke in tongues, he was afraid of condemning the phenomenon. So when he came back from his highly successful tour of Scotland, he had to face a charge of heresy, and was removed from the pulpit in 1832. Following an ecclesiastical trial in 1833, he lost his status as a clergyman in the Church of Scotland. After this, his health gave way, and he died in 1834. All the ministers of Glasgow attended his funeral service "as that of a minister of Christ."³⁷ But he had translated Lacunza, and the message he had loved lived on.

Froom states that in Britain and on the European continent "a veritable galaxy of premillennial writers had arisen, and at least eight periodicals were exclusively or chiefly devoted to the exposition of prophecy—the *Jewish Expositor*, *The Morning Watch*, *The Christian Herald*, *The Investigator*, *The Christian Witness*, *The Christian Record*, *The Watchman*, and *The Expositor of Prophecy*."³⁸

Remarkably active in the field of prophetic exposition between 1831 and 1844 was Joshua William Brooks (1790-1882), "prebendary of Lincoln Cathedral, author, and editor of *The Investigator*."³⁹ He also compiled *A Dictionary of Writers on the Prophecies*, containing more than 2,100 titles, with 'occasional descriptions' of treatises, together with 500 commentaries on whole books of Scripture issued up to 1834."⁴⁰

To this we can add a list of twenty men who, according to Loughborough, seem to have had a reasonably clear understanding of the 2300 days as a time prophecy, even if the sanctuary doctrine was not yet properly understood. Apart from some North Americans, most of these people lived in continental Europe or Britain.⁴¹

Much of this material was also read in the United States. With such tremendous prophetic witnesses, we would have expected the Advent movement, too, would greatly prosper in Britain; and, indeed, for a while it did—though not for all that long. Froom gives many examples of such writings and also mentions outstanding preachers, of whom Joseph Wolff (1795-1862) became especially famous. Let us dwell a little on his story.

Born and reared as a Jew (in fact, he was a rabbi's son), he decided to become a Christian. The rationalism of many Protestants disgusted him, so first he turned to Catholicism but later became an Episcopalian.

Known as the Bible man, because he widely distributed the Scriptures, he also urged the reading and translation of *La Venida*. All this angered many Catholics. In 1822, he disputed with Romanist priests on Mount Lebanon, telling them that the pope was Antichrist.⁴² Soon, in 1825, the Catholic Church issued bulls against him, attacking him for distributing the Scriptures and teaching "heresy."

In London during 1826, he met with an international group. They concluded unanimously that the end of the world would come in 1843,⁴³ though later he thought it would be in 1847.

Also in 1826, he attended the first of the very important Prophetic Conferences at Albury Park, near Guildford in Surrey, England. Among those present were Edward Irving, William Cunninghame (1776-1848), and Hugh M'Neile (1795-1870). The last mentioned had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, and acted as moderator. For six days, these devoted scholars studied the approaching Second Advent, both Daniel and Revelation, the times of the Gentiles, and the Jews in prophecy. "All seemed agreed that the 1260 and 1290 days of Daniel

were accomplished, and that the remaining years of the 1335 had begun," though "certain questions were left open—whether 2300 and A.D. 1843, or 2400 and A.D. 1847 was the right number."⁴⁴

In 1831, Joseph Wolff was sent as a missionary from Great Britain to labor, first, among the Jews of Palestine.⁴⁵ This was at the very time when Irving was nearing the end of his witness. Afterwards, Wolff traveled throughout central Asia and the rest of the world, proclaiming that Jesus would come in 1847.⁴⁶

Wolff, like the apostle Paul, was a man of massive intellect as well as an untiring, persistent worker. To equip himself for carrying out his gospel commission, he learned many languages, including Arabic and Persian.

Between his missionary exertions, Wolf was in 1833 ordained to the Anglican priesthood. In that same year, he received the LL.D. degree from the University of Dublin. Later, in 1837, he was also ordained in America as a deacon of the Church of England and granted the D.D. degree by St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland.⁴⁷

According to his journals, down to the year 1845, this converted Jew proclaimed the Lord's speedy advent in Palestine, Egypt—including Sinai and the shores of the Red Sea—Mesopotamia, the Crimea, Persia, Georgia, the Ottoman Empire, Greece, Arabia, Turkey, Bokhara, Afghanistan, Cashmere, Hindustan, Tibet, the Netherlands, Scotland, and Ireland. He preached on board a ship in the Mediterranean, at Constantinople and Jerusalem, on St. Helena, and in New York City, to all denominations.⁴⁸ Part of the time, he carried with him a printing press, donated by Henry Drummond.

In 1827, Wolff had married into the British aristocracy. His bride was Lady Georgiana Mary, daughter of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Oxford, the acquaintance being fostered by Irving. Also at that time, Joseph Wolff was naturalized as a citizen of the United Kingdom.⁴⁹

He shared the message of the Second Coming with the people of more than twenty nations, belonging to many denominations and religions. Among those who listened to him were Christians (including Syrians and Chaldeans), Jews, Muslims, Parsees, Hindus, Yesedes, Sabeans. He spoke to pashas, sheiks, shahs, the kings of Organtsh and Bokhara, the queen of Greece⁵⁰ and, at a joint session, the United States Congress. On this occasion, the legislators were joined by the clergy of Washington, D.C. Wolff enjoyed a very special privilege: the use of the House of Representatives in the Capitol. The motion that this be permitted had been introduced on 18 December 1837 by ex-President John Quincy Adams, who referred to Wolff as "one of the most remarkable men living on the earth at this time."⁵¹

But did it always go well with this herald of the kingdom? No, he was often opposed and persecuted. At one time, like his namesake in the Old Testament, he was even enslaved. "On his last mission to Bo-

khara, in 1843-45, the Persian banditti of the Khan of Khorasaun made him a slave, with the design of selling him to the Turkoman chiefs, but they finally set him free, declaring him their guest and sending the Arabic Bibles he gave them to their mullahs."⁵²

When he died in 1862, at the age of sixty-five, Joseph Wolff was "contemplating a new and still harder missionary journey."⁵³

In Britain, many other preachers, some of them very powerful and persuasive, also proclaimed the Second Coming and showed from the Bible how its end-time predictions and eschatology were being fulfilled. Therefore, we would have expected that island—the center of the British Empire—with all its spiritual light and great intellectual advantages, would witness greater triumphs for the three angels' messages.

But this, alas, was not to be. In the British Isles, the prophetic witness would soon be not only greatly opposed but largely stifled. Much of the blame for this must be squarely placed on clergymen and academics who contradicted it. A fatal factor was the ever-increasing acceptance of Ribera's Futurism, generated more than two hundred years earlier to counteract the Historical School.

1.4 From the Later Nineteenth Century to the Present

For prophetic interpretation and the correct understanding of eschatology, 1826 was a momentous year. The first conference on prophecy took place at Albury Park; Edward Irving was translating Lacunza's *La Venida* into English, preparatory to its publication the following year; he had furthermore, on the preceding Christmas, begun to lift up the trumpet to herald the Second Coming.

But also in 1826, somebody who was very antagonistic to what these men were doing suddenly came out with a dissonant counterblast, in the form of a seventy-two-page pamphlet entitled *Enquiry into the Grounds on which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years*.¹ In it, he emphatically rejected the year-day principle, without which the traditional Protestant interpretation would collapse. The author was Samuel Roffey Maitland (1792-1866). Who was he?

Born in London, the child of nonconformist parents, Maitland was mainly self-educated, though he did attend St. Johns and Trinity College. In 1821, he was admitted to deacon's orders and two years afterward became curate of Christ Church, Gloucester.² Later he was librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.³

Though Maitland eventually wrote fifty books, his notoriety (or fame, depending on one's point of view) resulted from his 1826 *Enquiry*, and especially the following paragraph: "After much consider-

ation, I feel convinced that, 'the time, times, and dividing of time;' Dan. vii. 25: 'Time, times, and a half;' Dan. xii. 7: 'Time, times, and half a time;' Rev. xii. 14: 'Forty and two months;' Rev. xi. ii—xiii. 5: 'The thousand two hundred and threescore days;' Rev. xi. 3: are not mystical phrases relating to a period of 1260 years; but, according to their plain meaning, denote a period of 1260 natural days."⁴

As time went on, it would become abundantly clear that "he had contempt for much of the general concept of the 'Reformation as a religious movement'." He also attacked the orthodoxy of the Waldensians and Albigenses, to whom he mistakenly attributed the Historical School of prophetic interpretation, though—as we have noted—the earliest Christians belonged to it. And the year-day principle was discovered in the twelfth century by Joachim of Floris, a Roman Catholic.

Maitland pooh-poohed many time-honored prophetic interpretations. For instance, he did not believe the fourth empire of Dan. 2 represented Rome and said the 2300 days were literal time. He rejected the idea of the pontiff being the Antichrist, and attacked the Evangelical party, as well as many others, such as John Foxe, the sixteenth-century Protestant who had written *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.⁵

From what source did this controversial man obtain his ideas? There are "strong indications" that in his writings Maitland borrowed from Ribera. In the Lambeth Palace library, "he found Ribera's book on the shelf" and even "had it reprinted as a matter of public interest."⁶

Maitland was essentially a Protestant successor of this Jesuit writer, whose concepts we now need to examine further.

Ribera's ideas were published in about 1590 as a five-hundred page commentary on Revelation. In it, he denied that the papacy was the Antichrist, as Protestants had been teaching. His basic approach was to omit from prophetic scrutiny almost the entire period occupied in history by the Roman Church, except its very beginnings.⁷ After Ribera's death, his book was revised and printed in five more editions within the next thirty-three years.

"Ribera assigned the first few chapters of the Apocalypse to ancient Rome, in John's own time; the rest he restricted to a literal three and a half years' reign of an infidel Antichrist, who would bitterly oppose and blaspheme the saints just before the Second Advent. He taught that Antichrist would be a single individual, who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, and conquer the world—and all in this brief space of three and one-half literal years!"⁸

At the same time, Ribera retained the medieval doctrine that the millennium extended throughout the Christian era, from the cross to the coming of the Antichrist just before the Second Advent.⁹ This cor-

responded to the thousand years of Satan's binding as described in Rev. 20,¹⁰ For him, this was an elastic, indefinite, or figurative period of time.¹¹ Now all of this is obviously pure Augustine.

But the latter had also taught that the Lord's holy ones, as represented by his church, were already reigning on earth. This conception Ribera could no longer accept. After all, the history of Catholicism throughout the Middle Ages had been dismal. For hundreds of years, within the church itself, the papacy had been drawing sharp criticism: from Bishop Arnulf in the tenth century, the learned Cistercian abbot Joachim in the twelfth, Archbishop Eberhardt II, and the great Dante in the thirteenth, as well as many others who followed them. And then came the Protestants, whose condemnation had by Ribera's time already swollen to a chorus that could be heard all over the earth.

So in this respect Ribera departed from Augustine's teaching and said the saints of the Most High would reign in heaven and not on the earth. In addition to this, he gave up the Augustinian interpretation that the seventy weeks of Dan. 9 had ended with the crucifixion,¹² which is what Tertullian had also believed.¹³ Instead, he adopted two ideas from other early writers whom we have already referred to.

Irenaeus had pondered Antichrist's three and a half years, referred to in Dan. 7:25 and Rev. 13:5, and noted that the great reprobate would be sitting in God's temple (2 Thess. 2:4). Searching for another Scripture that may refer to such a period of time, Irenaeus thought he had found it in Dan. 9:27. Thereupon he allocated this period to Antichrist, although he did not link it with the seventy weeks or mention a gap.¹⁴ It was, however, a radical departure; for Irenaeus was here applying the last of the seventy year-weeks, not to our Saviour but to our mortal enemy.

Hippolytus' view of this period was somewhat similar. He made "the sixty-nine weeks reach from the first year of Darius the Mede to Christ's *first* coming, and the seventieth to begin separately after a gap, just before Christ's *second* coming." Hippolytus divided the last prophetic week of Dan. 9 "between the two sackcloth-robbed witnesses (Enoch and Elijah) and the Antichrist."¹⁵

This ancient writer, born in the second century, occupies a strange position in the history of prophetic interpretation. Like Historicists, Futurists have laid claim to him. He certainly interpreted Dan. 2 and 7 in terms of the distant past as well as his present and immediate future. Therefore his perspective was largely continuistic, despite that gap idea, which was a quixotic quirk. And how long would it be? As Hippolytus experienced his world, the future was likely to be very short, and so would the gap be; after all, he believed that Jesus would be coming very soon.

But Ribera, who lived about fourteen hundred years later, had a very different perspective. He was faced by the same problem that had confronted Joachim three hundred years earlier—and solved it in a different way: with an anachronistic hodgepodge of ideas from the past. Essential to them, and his greatest weakness, was the preposterous gap theory. Time is continuous. There are no gaps in it. The same holds true for the plan of salvation.

There is also another reason why the Futurist solution is hopeless. As shown in *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001) as well as a *Ministry* article (August 2002), there is simply no prophetic link between the 1,260 days/42 months/3½ years and the second half of the seventieth year-week in Dan. 9. It is contradicted by the simple fact that, as literal time, 3½ years do not consist of 1260 days. We can easily prove this with a simple electronic calculator.

According to the Gregorian calendar, the year comprises 365 days, except when there is a leap year. The actual number is 365.2422 days. So we must use this figure as the basis of our calculation, as follows: $365.2422 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days; not 1,260 days. There is an 18-day discrepancy!

Did Ribera not notice this? He certainly did, for in 1582—just as he was putting the finishing touches to his manuscript—Pope Gregory XIII proclaimed the new calendar and had it implemented throughout the Catholic world. Ribera even admitted the problem: "These days do not completely make up three years and a half, just as Christ did not complete a half year [sic] of preaching."¹⁶ This, however, is a feeble argument. The fact that the Bible also expresses the 3½ years as 42 months and 1260 days shows that Inspiration meant this to be not an approximate but a very specific number. And it is meaningful only as a symbolic figure, in terms of prophetic year-days. In other words, this prophetic period just cannot, as literal time, be identical with the last half of the final year-week described in Dan. 9:27.

It is doubtful, however, whether Maitland—Ribera's successor—was also aware of this fatal calculation error embedded in Futurism. The same is true of his intellectual heirs, the present-day Dispensationists.

For all that it no longer recognized the pope as its head, the Church of England, to which Maitland belonged, had always contained an element which was more Catholic than Protestant. But in the nineteenth century, the distance that separated Canterbury from the Vatican was about to be narrowed, with Futurism providing the theological bridge for doing so. In this process, two institutions of higher learning were to play a prominent part.

The first of these was Trinity College, later the University of Dublin, Ireland. Here Maitland soon acquired a passionate disciple: Dr. James Henthron Todd (1805-69), the Regius Professor of Hebrew, who had become an Anglican priest in 1832.¹⁷ Though a Protestant, he was

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also a nationalist, preoccupied with the history of his country, writing a biography of Saint Patrick and working hard on the resurrection of Irish manuscripts.¹⁸ In 1838 and the next year, he was Donnellan lecturer "and chose as his subject the prophecies relating to Antichrist. Openly proclaiming himself Maitland's follower, he boldly attacked the Reformers' Historical School view—still commonly held by the Protestant clergy in Ireland—that the Pope was Antichrist."¹⁹ His 1838 lectures were later published as *Discourses on the Prophecies Relating to Antichrist in the Writing of Daniel and St. Paul* (1840) with a dedication to Maitland.²⁰

For Todd, too, the Antichrist was not the papacy but an individual, who would appear immediately before the Second Coming, with a Jewish rather than a Christian background.²¹ Todd attributed the traditional Protestant views to the Waldensians and Albigenses, who had "applied the Scriptural symbols . . . of beast, harlot, and synagogue of Satan, to the Papacy." This line of thinking, he thought, resulted from Manichaeism. He did, however, also acknowledge the role of medieval Catholics like the spiritual Franciscans, Fraticelli, and followers of Joachim. According to Todd, "the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's vision is even yet to come, and is not Rome. And again, the fourth kingdom of Daniel 7 is not the Roman Empire, and the horns are not fulfilled in the Roman Empire. Furthermore, he maintains that the first, second, and third beasts are not identical with the gold, silver, and brass. He reiterates that the fourth kingdom 'will at some future period be established upon the earth.' Moreover, Daniel 11 is not a chronological prediction of the events of modern history."²²

Todd was denying very much of what the earliest Christian expositors, including Tertullian and Hippolytus, had explicitly affirmed. Especially noteworthy in all this was that he did not regard Catholicism as an apostasy from Bible religion. For him, despite its errors, "the Church of Rome [was] a true Christian Church."²³

It was no random circumstance that such ideas would be cherished at Trinity College in Dublin, or even that the man who held them should be a Protestant Anglican.

Founded in 1592, before the English settlement of North America, that academic institution has grown into one of Europe's premier research centers. It "enjoys the privilege of receiving all Irish and UK copyright material—a right it has had since 1801."²⁴

In our time, it seems almost axiomatic that an Irish nationalist must also be an Irish Catholic. This has not always been the case. Herbert A. Kenny points out that England's oppression of Ireland began before the Reformation, inter alia when Anglo-Norman barons invaded that country in the twelfth century.²⁵ But England, always eager to benefit itself, has frequently also treated Irish Anglicans as poor cousins

and discriminated against them. Therefore, as Kenny reminds his readers, "a disproportionate number of Ireland's heroes" as well as "a disproportionate number of its literary and artistic geniuses" were Protestants, or at least their descendants.²⁶

Indeed. An extraordinary number of the most eminent "English" writers have been Irish, often linked with Dublin. These have included Jonathan Swift, Richard Steele, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, and William Butler Yeats—the greatest poet in the language after the earlier Wordsworth.

Surely, Todd's Irish patriotism and fellow feeling for likeminded Catholics provided a powerful motive for not wanting to see the Roman Church or the papacy as the Antichrist. The same is true of other figures we must now introduce.

The first of these was William Burgh, afterward De Burgh (1806-66). Educated at Trinity College in Dublin, he also became Donnellan lecturer at that institution, in 1853 and again in 1862. He produced a treatise on *Antichrist* (1829), as well as *The Apocalypse Unfulfilled* (1832) and *Lectures on the Second Advent* (1832). The last-mentioned work was directed against Hugh M'Neile, another Irishman but a staunch supporter of the Historical School. At first, up to 1821, Burgh himself had still believed in a premillennial Second Coming, "but soon afterward he became persuaded of the Futurist concept of a personal antichrist that would be revealed before the Lord's coming. He also expressed 'unfeigned gratification' over Maitland's Futurist *Attempt to Elucidate the Prophecies Concerning Antichrist* (1830)."²⁷

Another Futurist with an Irish connection was John Nelson Darby (1800-82), who was educated "at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1819 as Classical Medallist. He was called to the Irish Chancery Bar, but soon afterwards, in 1825, took Deacon's orders from Archbishop Magee, by whom he was priested the next year. He was appointed to the Wicklow parish of Calary, residing in a peasant's cottage on the bog."²⁸

Even the Plymouth Brethren originated in Ireland. "About 1825 Edward Cronin gathered the first congregation in Dublin, and was joined by other leading spirits, the most notable perhaps being John Nelson Darby and B.W. Newton. The name Plymouth Brethren is derived from the fact that Plymouth was long the chief center of the movement."²⁹ It was not, however, before the conferences (from 1830 and onward) held at the mansion of Viscountess Powerscourt near Bray³⁰—also in Ireland—that this group "became the formulators and promulgators of the Dispensationalist-pretribulationist-Futurist premillennialism now widespread in Fundamentalist circles."³¹

Nothing has for the past two hundred years played a more important part in the religious history of the Anglo-Saxon world than

the Irish connection, in both its purely Catholic and its ecumenical aspects.

Regarding the former, Paul Blanshard has in *The Irish and Catholic Power* presented a startling analysis. Especially his chapter on "The Irish Catholic Empire in America" shows how in 1953 the Roman Church of this country—and, for that matter, of the entire English-speaking world—was dominated by people from the Emerald Isle. "Every cardinal in the United States was of Irish extraction—Spellman in New York, Mooney in Detroit, Stritch in Chicago, and McIntyre in Los Angeles. (Moreover, every other cardinal in the English-speaking world was of Irish stock—McGuigan in Toronto, Griffin in London, and Gilroy in Sydney.)"³²

But in another way, too, the ecclesiastical impact of Ireland has been immense and possibly even more dangerous to the Protestant world. In the later nineteenth century, Futurism—particularly through its espousal by Irish Anglicans—largely neutralized the first angel's message in the British Isles. More than that, it did much to Catholicize the Church of England and also to prepare the way for the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century.

While these developments were afoot, the religious ferment affecting Britain in the early nineteenth century had also reached Oxford University. There, however, it did not concentrate at first on eschatological events like the Second Coming or the fulfillment of the time prophecies in Daniel or Revelation. Instead, it began by using aesthetic and emotional methods, focusing attention on England's medieval, Catholic roots.

This movement began in 1833 with John Keble's sermon on "National Apostasy" at Oxford. It eventually caused the defection of many Anglican priests to the Roman Church. The most eminent of these were two scholarly men: Henry Edward Manning (1808-92), Prime Minister Gladstone's friend, and John Henry Newman (1801-90). Manning went on to become the Archbishop of Westminster—a purely Catholic title. That is, he was appointed head of the Roman Church in England. Both converts became cardinals.

The Oxford Movement formally ended in 1845, with Newman's conversion to Catholicism,³³ though to this day its Rome-ward influence has endured.

Another name for the Oxford Movement was Tractarianism, because it produced a series of ninety *Tracts for the Times*, issued in that university town between 1833 and 1841. The most important writers were Newman, Pusey, Keble, Froude, and Williams.³⁴

Though the tracts discussed a variety of questions, "the underlying intention of all of them was," as Lytton Strachey puts it, "to attack the accepted doctrines and practices of the Church of England."³⁵

But according to Froom, they also sought "to demolish the doctrinal barriers that separated the Anglican Church from Rome, and so let down the bars for the re-entry of many in 1845-46."³⁶ Tract 90 set out "to prove that there was nothing in the Thirty-nine Articles incompatible with the creed of the Roman Church," provided they were correctly interpreted.³⁷

Newman was the editor³⁸ and by far the most influential personality of the Oxford Movement. A gifted writer and poet, "he was a child of the Romantic Revival, a creature of emotion and of memory."³⁹ He was also a slippery and charming sophist, about whom Thomas Huxley wrote when he had reread him, "After an hour or two of him I began to lose sight of the distinction between truth and falsehood."⁴⁰ All the same, Newman was absolutely enchanted with the Middle Ages, in which both he and Keble "saw a transcendent manifestation of Divine power, flowing down elaborate and immense through the ages; a consecrated priesthood, stretching back, through the mystic symbol of the laying on of hands, to the very Godhead . . ."⁴¹

Unlike the Lollards and other dissenter groups from the time of Wycliffe down to the Reformation, the Church of England had been founded by King Henry VIII (1491-1547), because he wanted a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, which the pope could not agree to. This was really a nonsensical as well as a sordid basis for separation from Rome. Newman and his friends did not deny that subsequent history, including Reformational influences, had been beneficial by cleansing the church in England of many Roman corruptions. But they thought "she had become enslaved by the secular power, and degraded by the false doctrines of Protestantism."⁴²

Increasingly Newman felt pressed "toward the doctrines of a living and infallible authority in the Roman Catholic Church,"⁴³ which for him was just as important as the Bible.

Yet one special hurdle barred the way of the Anglicans on their way back to Rome: the Protestant teaching that the papacy was the Antichrist according to various Bible prophecies, including the 1260 year-days. But Ribera's Futurism, revived by Maitland and emphasized by Todd, enabled them to surmount it.

About this, Henry Newman was quite specific, in his essay "The Protestant Idea of Antichrist," written five years before he joined the Roman Church. He said, "The discourses which Dr. Todd has recently given to the world, are, perhaps, the first attempt for a long course of years in this part of Christendom [Protestant England] to fix a dispassionate attention and a scientific interpretation upon the momentous Prophecies relating to Antichrist in the writings of Daniel and St. Paul."⁴⁴

Newman added, "We entirely agree with Dr. Todd"⁴⁵ and also wrote, "The question really lies, be it observed, between those two alter-

natives, *either* the Church of Rome is the house of God *or* the house of Satan; there is no middle ground between them. The question is, whether, as he [Todd] maintains, its fulfilment is yet to come, or whether it has taken place in the person of the Bishop of Rome, as Protestants have very commonly supposed."⁴⁶

Newman, much like Todd, attributes the Historical School of prophetic interpretation to "three heretical bodies," between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, namely the Albigenses, Waldensians, and the Spiritual Franciscans—"the third of which arose in the Church of Rome itself, as well as the Fraticelli, and the Joachimites, including Olivi," and afterwards "the Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, and English Reformers."⁴⁷ We, however, have traced it much further back, to the earliest Christian church.

Manning, whose defection to Catholicism came six years after that of Newman, held a similar view. He also declared, "Now, a system like this [Catholicism] is so unlike anything human, it has upon it notes, tokens, marks so altogether supernatural, that men now acknowledge it to be either Christ or Antichrist. There is nothing between these extremes. Most true is this alternative. The Catholic Church is either the masterpiece of Satan or the kingdom of the Son of God."⁴⁸

But he went further. He not only considered the Protestant interpretation of Scripture and prophecy the "master-stroke" of deceit, but also added an argument based on Dan. 8:11-14. His ideas on this should interest Seventh-day Adventists, who exactly at that time in America had begun to teach the doctrine of a heavenly sanctuary and its cleansing from 1844 and onward.

According to Manning, the Jewish sacrifices in type apply to "the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, the true Paschal Lamb, which came in the place of the type—the sacrifice of Jesus Himself on Calvary, renewed perpetually and continued for ever in the sacrifice on the altar."⁴⁹ As Manning saw things, Protestantism had already desecrated, in many lands, the continual sacrifice. "What is the characteristic mark of the Reformation, but the rejection of the Mass, and all that belongs to it. . .? The suppression of the continual sacrifice is, above all, that mark and characteristic of the Protestant Reformation."⁵⁰

This, then, is what Futurism led to in nineteenth-century England. It defeated the Historical School of prophetic interpretation, together with an incipient British Adventism, and then went on to bolster the Oxford Movement. Not only did important Anglican clergymen like Newman and Manning become Catholics. They came to see the work of Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and others as the abomination that makes desolate the sanctuary service of Catholicism. For them, the *tamid*, the continual sacrifice, had become the sacrifice of the Mass!

Chronologically there is a curious parallel between the career of Adventism in America and of the Tractarians in England.

During August 1831, William Miller (1782-1849) covenanted with God to share what he had discovered in the prophecies, and was promptly asked to preach. He continued to do so until 1844.⁵¹ In 1833, the Oxford Movement began, when John Keble also preached a sermon. The Tractarians formally ceased their activities in 1845, when Henry Newman joined the Roman Church.

These Catholic conversions coincided, in 1845-1846, with the seminal years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when its pioneers were formulating three of its most distinctive doctrines: the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the Spirit of prophecy.

And so the reader may imagine: "Well, that's how it all ended! The Oxford Movement ceased to be a factor in the English-speaking world." But, no, those nineteenth-century events were only a beginning. They crystallized two competing structures, diametrically opposed to each other—and set on a collision course for the future.

With the Oxford Movement there had also begun a tremendous growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England; it has gone far to liquidate its Low Church or more Protestant strain; and the spirit of the Tractarians still lives on in the ecumenical movement.

This is how Michael De Semlyen contextualizes it: "The Reformed faith of Anglicans and Free Churchmen had been eroded over the centuries by the Counter-Reformation, and particularly in the nineteenth century, after the 1833 launch of the *Oxford Movement* in the Anglican Church, by John Henry Newman and the other Tractarians. As belief in the Bible was diminished by humanism, rationalism and liberal theology, Roman Catholic tradition was held firm and strengthened by the new Anglo-Catholic group in the Church of England. By the beginning of this century High Anglicans had joined liberal traditionalists in key positions at the head of the church, doctrinal differences were downgraded and ecumenism was well and truly under way."⁵²

Since the twentieth century, the Church of England has been teetering on the brink of the abyss, about to jump right back into the arms of Rome; and—apart from that—two pontiffs, Paul VI as well as John Paul II, have described "Cardinal John Henry Newman . . . as the man who inspired the Second Vatican Council."⁵³ But to this they really ought to have added something about the role of Futurism, transmitted from Ribera to Maitland, to Todd, and finally to Manning and Newman, which broke through the prophetic barrier between Protestantism and the Roman Church.

In addition to these developments, Futurist Dispensationalism also migrated to America, where it was destined to become especially potent. Its original popularizer was the Scofield Reference Bible with its notes. This was first published in January 1909 and reissued at various times. "In 1967, E. Schulyer English wrote that the sales of

the Scofield Bible had topped three million copies. Now, the number hovers near the five million mark with all language editions."⁵⁴

But who was the author of this work? He was an American, influenced by ideas from Britain. "Cyrus Ingerson Scofield was born in Michigan in 1843. When the Civil war began, he was in Tennessee with his sisters. While there, he enlisted in the Confederate army. Military records show he fought in the Confederate Army for over a year in 1861-1862, then was discharged by reason of not being a citizen of the Confederate States, but an alien friend. Scofield told his biographer Charles Trumbull that he served through the war, and that he was awarded the Confederate Cross of Honor." After his conversion, he became a Congregational preacher in St. Louis and, from 1882 in Dallas, Texas. The next year ordination followed, after his successful raising up of a full-fledged church in that place.⁵⁵

In the late twentieth century, Dispensationalism received a tremendous boost through two books by Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) and *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*, plus a spectacular movie. The former book was an international best seller, with more than thirty million copies sold in thirty-one foreign languages.⁵⁶ However, the public largely lost interest in his ideas, when the Second Coming did not materialize in 1988. Lindsey had predicted Christ would return within a generation, that is, about forty years after the founding of the Israeli state on 14 May 1948.⁵⁷

At the turn of the millennium, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins with their *Left Behind* series repeated Lindsey's success. Their conception is very similar to his, though they have avoided the pitfall of time setting into which he fell. Also, they present their ideas through the medium of fiction, though the underlying theology is supposed to have a factual basis, as explained in LaHaye's *Revelation Unveiled*.

He has retained the idea from the Cold War era that Russia will seek to conquer Israel. For this, he thinks it is due to suffer destruction at the hand of God.⁵⁸ He also maintains that Antichrist's kingdom will be fundamentally atheist, with socialism as the "basic philosophy" of its government and economic system.⁵⁹ Well, these notions are also now outmoded, like those of Hal Lindsey. Russia has returned to the fold of the Orthodox Church and is striving to become a more or less capitalist country.

Dispensationalism began as the nineteenth-century Protestant version of Futurism, a Jesuit product of the Counter Reformation. As demonstrated, it is basically Catholic eschatology.

The intellectual currents that started flowing in the British Isles during the early decades of the nineteenth century so many years ago are still with us, stronger than ever before, and are threatening

to overwhelm the entire Protestant world as with a flood. In a crisis hour, proponents of the Historical School must also confront it.

Now it rests with them, and particularly Seventh-day Adventists—its final champions—to safeguard and maintain this strain of prophetic interpretation. It is a precious and eschatologically an indispensable heritage. Central to it is the year-day principle. Many of the views we hold have come down to us from very long ago: from the Apostles, from the earliest Christian Church, from the Waldensians and Albigenses, from Joachim and other devout medieval Catholics, from the sixteenth-century Reformers, from Lacunza and Ramos Mexía, from Joseph Wolff, from the Millerites, and from those who established the Remnant Church—"which keep the commandments of God," having the testimony as well as the faith of Jesus (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

Placed into our hands, historicism is a bright and shining torch. We must never let it go out, but hold it high, to illuminate aright the events that lie ahead, not only for us but for a benighted Planet Earth, as it plunges on through space toward its rendezvous with destiny, when the Lord returns.