

CHRONOLOGY SIMPLIFIED

(The discourse below was given by T. A. Smith, Sunday, Oct. 31, 1976 to his home Ecclesia, Bellingham, Wash.)

On Reprint page 4746, written in 1911, we find these words: “We wish to suggest here that none should feel unnecessarily annoyed if he is not able to understand all the items of the chronology or of the Tabernacle Shadows, or other minor features. Our relationship to the Lord is not necessarily dependent upon our knowledge of every detail. We are to remember that many of us were God’s people before we understood any of these things, before we understood the philosophy of the divine plan. Hence we are to be trustful of the Lord and wait for the remainder, as he may open it to us. And we are to remember that the supreme test is loyalty to the Lord. This was the test upon our Lord Jesus: would he be loyal to the Father?”

And in the 1911 convention report (page 30, last paragraph) the Pastor said something that should be an encouragement to brethren who find chronology difficult to fully understand. Here are his exact words: “It is thus like chronology. I should think that one-half of the friends do not have that quality of mind which would enable them to understand a chronological proposition. And some of them might feel that because they could not understand all that was written in the second volume of Scripture studies on chronology, they could not be saints. Not at all, dear friends. Those who can understand chronological matters, let them have that pleasure. Let those who cannot do so not worry themselves about it.”

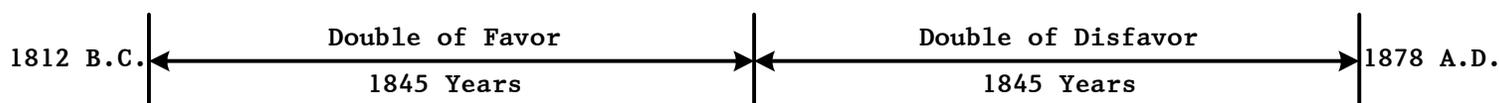
It is interesting to note carefully what the Pastor said and also what he did not say. What he said has just been quoted above. What he did not say was that a supreme effort should be made to keep studying until all chronological propositions are thoroughly understood. This is important to grasp.

More than one person in our acquaintance has expressed disappointment and concern over their inability to understand chronology thoroughly and their inability to remember even what they did understand. We are of the opinion that chronology may not be so hard as supposed; at least some features of it. Perhaps one difficulty is the way some features of chronology are presented. A chart, for example may seem complicated with so many lines running up and down and other lines running from one side of the chart to the other, PLUS arcs, large and small joining together the lines running up and down.

We would like to study this matter and see if it is possible to present some features of chronology and prophecy in a very simple manner, leaving out all lines running up and down and omitting also arcs, large and small. If we try this, we may see that some of the features of chronology and prophecy are rather simple, and even easy to remember.

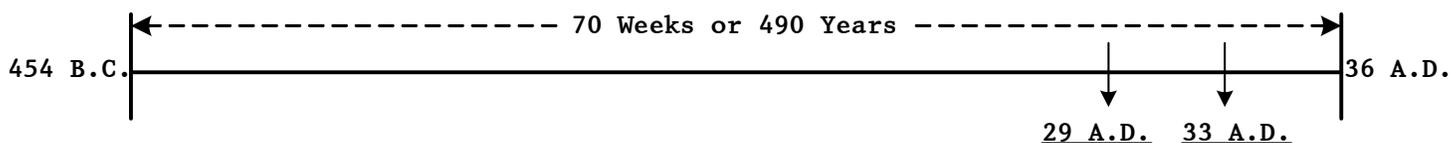
Let us start out with what we commonly call “the doubles” that marked one period of favor upon natural Israel and a like period of time of disfavor. We find this discussed in Vol. II, page 213, par. 2: “Separated from the world, they were the recipients of special favor from God for 1845 years. This period began with the beginning of their *national life*, at the death of Jacob... These 1845 years of national life and favor ended with their rejection of Messiah—A.D. 33—when, five days before his crucifixion, he presented himself to them as their king, and not being received, declared, ‘Your house is left unto you desolate.’ ...” Then on page 214, par. 1, we read: “During their long period (1845 years) of national favor, during which other nations were ignored, Israel had chastisements and blessings combined. ...” On page 218, par. 1 we read: “Eighteen hundred and forty-five years since A.D. 33 shows A.D. 1878 to be the end of their period of disfavor.” Then on page 218, par. 2 we read: “All these prophetic points in the past are clearly marked, and we should expect some evidence of God’s returning favor to Fleshly Israel (‘Jacob’) in or about A.D. 1878. This we do find, in the fact that the Jew is now permitted privileges in Palestine denied him for centuries past. And it was in that very year—1878 A.D., when their ‘double’ was full, and God’s favor was due to return to that people—that the ‘Berlin Congress of Nations’ was held, in which, Lord Beaconsfield (a Jew), then Prime Minister of England, was the central figure and took the leading part. There England assumed a general protectorate over the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, among which is Palestine; and the Turkish government amended its laws relating to aliens, which greatly ameliorated the condition of the Jews then residing in Palestine, as well as partially opened the door for others to locate there, with the privilege of holding real estate. Previously, the Jew was but ‘a dog,’ to be cuffed, kicked and abused by his Mohammedan ruler, and was denied the most ordinary privileges of existence, in the land sacred to him with memories of the past, and with promises touching the future.”

Now all this is easy to grasp and can be represented simply and clearly with a straight line, showing the beginning of natural Israel’s first double and when it ended, and from that end, started the second double, and its end in the same length of time.



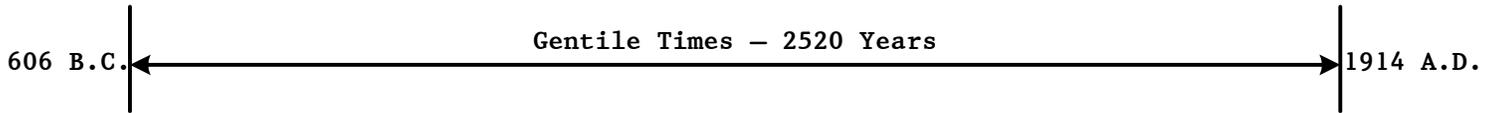
Let us take another prophecy—it too concerns natural Israel. It is commonly called the 70 Weeks of Daniel. 9:23-27. If you will read these verses, you will be able to follow what we will have to say. The opening statement was that “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...” Seventy weeks are 490 literal days, and as this is symbolic time, 490 years is meant. (Vol. II, page 65, par. 3.) These verses from Dan. 9:23-27 are quoted in Vol. II, page 63; and on page 64, par. 2, the writer states that this is the only prophecy which marked the date of the first advent. The starting of this 490 year period is understood to be 454 B.C. (Page 67, par. 1.) 69 weeks of symbolic time reached to the time when Jesus became the Messiah at 30 years of age. (Page 66, par. 1.) This was in the year 29 A.D. when Jesus started his ministry, when he was begotten of the spirit and became the Messiah. (Page 66, par. 1.) This left one symbolic week of times or 7 years. In the middle of this week of symbolic time, Jesus was crucified, and this was expressed in the words “he shall cause the sacrifice [of our Lord Jesus] and oblation to cease.” (Page 68, par. 1.) Then this left one-half of a week of symbolic time (3½ years) that was to be granted as a continued or continuing favor to Israel—before the preaching of the Gospel would go to the Gentiles; and it is accepted as a reasonable fact (on the basis of this prophecy) that the Gospel was preached to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert in the year 36 A.D. which would complete the “Seventy weeks determined upon thy people and thy holy city.”

This prophecy, too, can be shown by the use of a straight line.

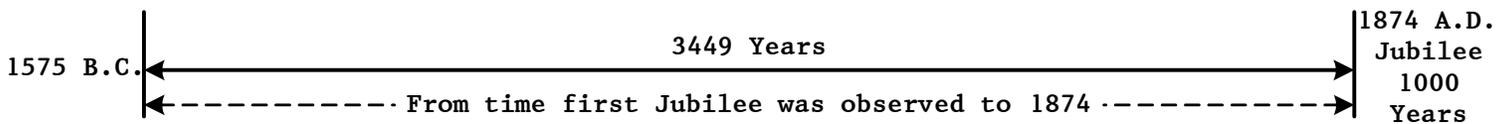


Next let us see what we can do with the period known as the “Times of the Gentiles.” In Vol. II, page 73 the Pastor wrote: “During this interval, the dominion of earth was to be exercised by Gentile governments; and Israel both fleshly and spiritual, have been and are to be subject to these powers until their time is expired.” In other words we are not to rebel against that which God permits. On page 79, par. 2 we read: “The Bible evidence is clear and strong that the ‘Times of the Gentiles’ is a period of 2520 years, from the year B.C. 606 to and including A.D. 1914.” At the top of page 80 we read: “And if B.C. 536 was the year in which the 70 years of Jerusalem’s desolation ended and the restoration of the Jews began, it follows that their kingdom was overthrown just 70 years before B.C. 536, i.e. 536 plus 70, or B.C. 606. This gives us the date of the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles—B.C. 606.” Now Vol. II was first published in 1889 and it is evident that the Pastor was on the right track, for in 1914 World War I began which confirmed the Pastor’s careful study of the prophecies. Chapter IV of Vol. II goes into great detail on the subject. Many important events are linked to the date 1914 A.D.

This period, too, can be easily pictured by a straight line.



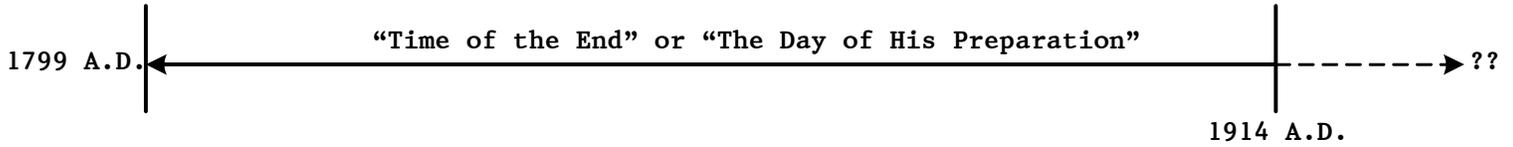
Possibly the most difficult prophetic time period is what is known as the Jubilee. Our Pastor might have had this in mind when he spoke so kindly and sympathetically in the 1911 Convention which we quoted at the beginning of our talk. Some brethren find mathematics easy to understand and have no difficulty in solving any problem. But the Jubilee calculation is not easy to understand, and this is stating the matter mildly. The details of this difficult subject are found in Vol. II, starting on page 173. The Pastor must have spent a great deal of time in study and prayer to arrive at the conclusion that he did. The conclusion seems to fit so well other prophetic features and the meaning of the Divine Plan for the restitution of mankind, that it seems most reasonable to accept the Pastor's reasonings. It is unnecessary to picture the calculations on the Jubilee as they are outlined in detail in chapter VI of Volume II. The conclusion of the matter can be shown by a single long line.



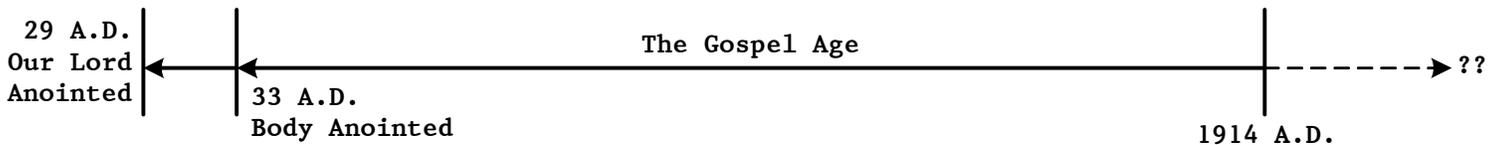
The "Time of the End" or "Day of His Preparation" is explained in Vol. III, study II, starting on page 23. In the "Day of Preparation" there is a general increase of knowledge, paving the way for the coming Millennium of favor. This "increase of knowledge among the masses, giving to all a taste of liberty and luxury, before Christ's rule is established to rightly regulate the world, these blessings will gradually become agencies of class-power and will result in the uprising of the masses and the overthrow of corporative Trusts, etc., with which will fall also all the present dominions of earth, civil and ecclesiastical." The year 1799 A.D. is the time when this period begins. There is an interesting sentence on page 50, par. 2: "The era closing with A.D. 1799, marked by Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, sealed and defined the limit of Papal dominion over the nations." In the chapter on "The Time of the End," the Pastor thought the kingdom of Christ would be established without fail in 1914, and this date was thought to be the end of "The Time of the End" and the end of "The Day of Preparation." At the time the Volume was written this assumption was thought to be very reasonable, and was accepted by all of us. But as

the rule of Christ was not established in 1914, we must conclude that we are still in the “Time of the End” and “The Day of His Preparation.”

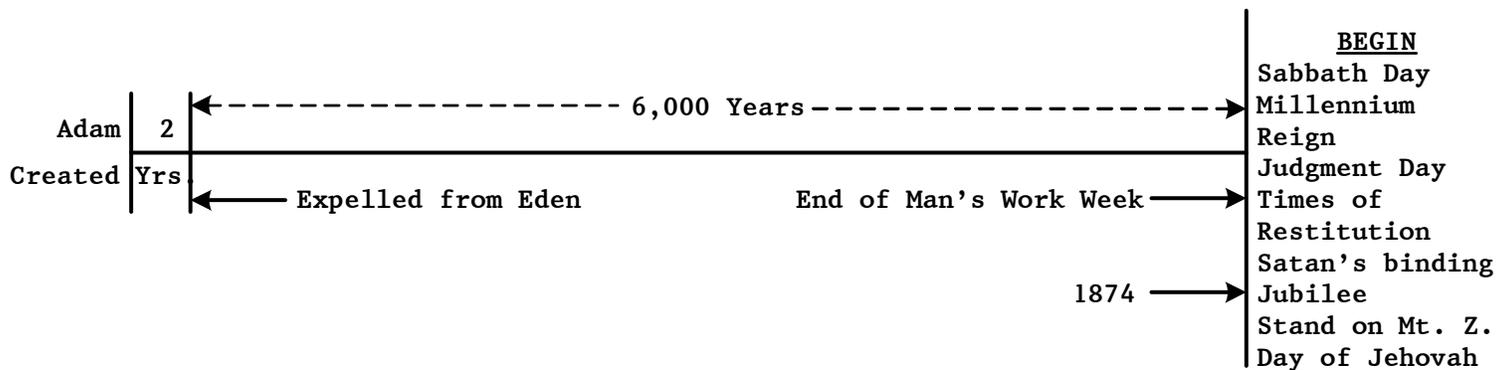
This we can show by a single long line with an indefinite end.



The Gospel Age also, can be indicated by a long line with an indefinite end. The Gospel Age can be thought of as beginning when our Lord was begotten of the spirit as the Head of the Church; or it may be thought of as beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the BODY of the Anointed. On Reprint page 5697, last paragraph, we find these words: “The Gospel Age will not fully end, we believe, until the Gospel message ends; and that will be when the door is shut, when the last member of the very elect shall have passed beyond the veil.” We find some interesting thoughts in the article entitled THE HARVEST IS NOT ENDED on Reprint page 5950 and 5951. In the first paragraph of the article, the Pastor said: “The fact is that the harvest work is going grandly on; it is not ended by any means.” So let us use a long straight line to represent the Gospel Age.



In Volume II, Study 2 we find a careful study of the length of time from Adam’s creation to the end of the 6,000 years. This is calculated to the year 1872 (Page 33, par. 1). Two years was thought to be the time that Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden before their fall and expulsion from Eden. This is discussed in Vol. III, page 127, par. 1 and 2 and 3; and these two years added to 1872 makes 1874 as the end of 6000 years from Adam’s fall.



Apropos to all this is a statement by the Pastor in Volume II, last paragraph on page 39: “Here we furnish the evidence that from the creation of Adam to A.D. 1873 was six thousand years. And though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand will be the epoch of Christ’s reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation.” Then the Pastor proceeded to give the details of the “reasonable foundation.”

This is a very remarkable statement indeed, that there is no direct Bible statement that the reign of Christ and the seventh thousand years of human history are the same. The Pastor showed his strong confidence in the “reasonable foundation”, and it is awe-inspiring to realize what a mighty step of faith this was on the Pastor’s part. Apparently he took the various details of the “reasonable foundation” as intended of God to be convincing to those of his people who would search for wisdom as for silver. The wise man expresses the thought in Prov. 2:1 to 5: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

There is much to the “reasonable foundation”. (Vol. II, page 39, last paragraph.) One feature was “The law given to Israel, the typical people, appointing that six days of labor and weariness should be followed by one of refreshment and rest from their own works...” Another feature: “On the typical seventh he inquired of the impotent man, ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’ and in answer to his faith and obedience gave him strength to take up his bed and walk. ... So during the antitypical Sabbath, the Millennium, it will be declared to all the world that ‘*whosoever will*’ may have life and health eternal if he will take the steps of faith and obedience.” A third point: “The Apostle Peter intimated that the seventh thousand-year period of the world’s history would be the seventh day in God’s reckoning, saying, ‘Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day... The day of the Lord will come,’ etc.—2 Pet. 3:8, 10.” (Page 40, par. 1.) Then the paragraph following this reminds us of the fact that the “dawn of the Millennium, or Day of the Lord, will be dark and stormy, and full of trouble upon the world and upon the nominal church, though its earliest dawning light will be full of comfort and cheer to the saints...” Then page 41, par. 1 goes on: “The general condition of the world today, and the rapid development since 1873 of Socialism, Nihilism, and Communism, whose avowed object is the overturning of the powers that be, and the distribution of the wealth of the world, are certainly not out of harmony with what we should expect...”

Another confirmation is the regathering of Israel to the land of Palestine which is in the nature of restitution. Then there is the Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares. Our Lord said "let both grow together until the harvest." There was to be a separation of wheat and tares, and we have all witnessed a work of separation beginning with the circulation of the Harvest Message world-wide. The wheat class was to "come out" for if any remained (unripe wheat) they would partake of her sins and share in her plagues. This is the lot of the less faithful who fail to come out when they hear the harvest message.

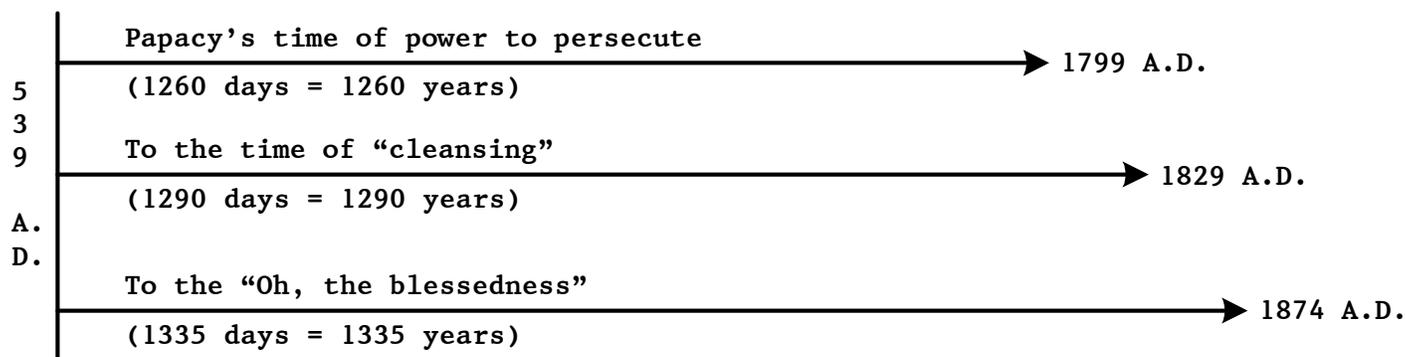
Another confirmation is in the mighty circulation of the truth after the Lamb stood up on Mt. Zion. This is expressed in two ways in Rev. 14:6 and 7 as the preaching of the "everlasting gospel to all that dwell on the earth," and an announcement that "the hour of God's judgment had come." This message is circulated by those who are spiritual virgins, those who are not defiled with any alliance in the world—secular or religious.

In Vol. II, starting on page 249 is a consideration of the prophecy of Mal. 4:5, 6. The prophet stated the matter in these words: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." On page 252, par. 1 are these words: "It is thus seen that the *Church in the flesh* (the Christ in the flesh, Head and Body) is the Elijah or forerunner of the *Church in glory*, Jehovah's Anointed." And we are convinced that "Our Lord Jesus and the Apostles, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus since, are of this great antitypical Elijah, prophet or teacher..." (Page 252, par. 1.) This is another evidence that we are well along in the end of the age and have reached "the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Farther along in Vol. II is another chapter (Chapter 9) confirming our belief that we are in the "Day of the Lord." This chapter is entitled The Man of Sin—Antichrist, and the interesting prophecy is expressed in 2 Thess. 2:3—"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition." There has been the "falling away," "the Man of Sin" has been revealed, so we have another proof that we are in the Day of the Lord.

The raising of the sleeping saints is something that cannot be perceived with our natural senses, neither is there any prophecy that tells us the exact date of this wonderful event. It is simply implied in the parable of the talents—Matt. 25:24-30 as particularly stated in verse 19: "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." So if we are convinced our Lord has returned, we can easily believe that the sleeping saints have been raised to be with our Lord on the Divine plane of being.

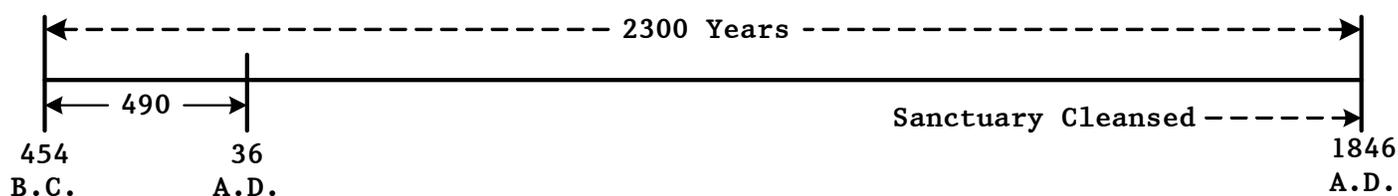
There is another line of prophecy from the book of Daniel and it is composed of three long periods of time—1260 prophetic days, 1290 prophetic days and 1335 prophetic days. This is found in Study III of Volume III, starting on page 61. All three of these Periods have their starting point with the rise of Papacy in 539 A.D., the time when the “desolating abomination” was set up. (Page 83, par. 1.) The 1260 years refer to the time of Papal power to crush. (Page 83, par. 1.) This measured from 539 to 1799, when Napoleon terminated Papacy’s power to persecute the true church. The 1290 days also started with 539 A.D. and their end was in 1829. This is expressed briefly on page 88, Par. 2: “Thus it will be seen that the separating work of the ‘Miller movement’ had its beginning at the time foretold—at the end of the 1290 days, 1829.” The next paragraph goes on: “Now how about the *waiting earnestly* until the 1335 days had been touched? Who have thus waited?” The Pastor included himself as one who “waited.” The fall of 1874 marked the end of the 1335 days—“Words fail us to express this blessedness.” In the 5th paragraph he wrote: “Oh, the blessedness of this favored time! Oh, the harmony, the beauty, the grandeur of the divine plan as it began to unfold when the 1335 days were ‘touched!’ It is to express, as far as lies within our power, this ‘blessedness’ and fuller unfolding of the divine plan, now *due* to be understood by all the ‘holy people’ now living, that this SCRIPTURE STUDIES series is being published. None but the ‘holy people’ will understand it. It is granted as a favor...” And this is the sentiment of all of us—we are the most blessed people on earth! And this superb blessing is an indication of where we are for it is the knock of our present Lord who is supping with us, and we with him! Truly, “OH THE BLESSEDNESS!”



Another interesting prophecy is found in Dan. 8:10-26 and this is treated in detail in Vol. III, Study IV, starting on page 95, and it is concerning “The Cleansing of the Sanctuary.” As worded on page 95, par. 2: this prophecy “points out distinctly the one special false doctrine, or fundamental error, which led to the full rejection of that system [the Papacy] by our Lord, and made it in his sight the desolating *abomination*. The prophecy now to

be considered shows, further, the time at which the true Church, the consecrated class—the Sanctuary—will be cleansed of the abominable defilements introduced by Papacy.” “... this prophecy points out a date at which a nucleus of holy believers would get entirely free from papal defilements, errors, etc., and at which the misappropriated ‘golden vessels,’ or precious truths, would begin to be restored to this holy or Sanctuary class.”—(Page 95, par. 3.) “Christ’s *continual* sacrifice was not actually cancelled or abolished by Papacy, but it was set aside by a false doctrine advanced by that system—which gradually, but in the end fully and completely, set aside the merit of Christ’s sacrifice as a *continual* and ever-efficacious one. This false doctrine is known as the Mass, or Sacrifice of the Mass.”—(Page 98, par. 2.)

The beginning point of the 2300 days is shown to be the same beginning point of the 70 weeks or 490 years, and this was 454 B.C. (Page 107, par. 2 and 3.) If we subtract 454 B.C. years from the 2300 years, we find the A.D. date when the 2300 years would terminate and this is 1846 A.D. And the event that fulfilled this prophetic vision was the reformation work of William Miller and others who did their part in discarding error, particularly the great error of the sacrifice of the Mass.—(Page 119, par. 1.)



While we are on the subject of prophecy we think of the words of Dan. 12:1 to 4. There is no date or period of time we can put our hands on but certain conditions are mentioned that strengthens our belief that we are well along on the stream of time. We have actually reached the time when our Lord has “stood up” in behalf of his people—natural Israel and spiritual Israel. Let us read Dan. 12:1, “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

We are truly in a “time of trouble” such as the world has never experienced before, and this means that Michael has stood up. And this is a prelude to the events mentioned in verses 2 and 3: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the

stars for ever and ever.” Yes, this time of trouble and the time of the resurrection of the dead and the time for the establishment of the kingdom are all linked together.

The 4th verse is full of significance: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Knowledge has been increased and continues to increase at jet speed; and there is a running to and fro, and this too at jet speed. So we are truly in the time of the end of the old order and the establishment of the new order of the Kingdom of God.