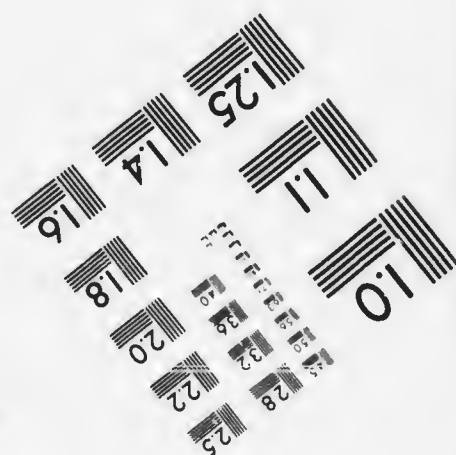
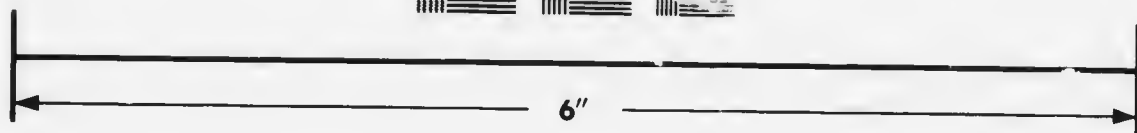
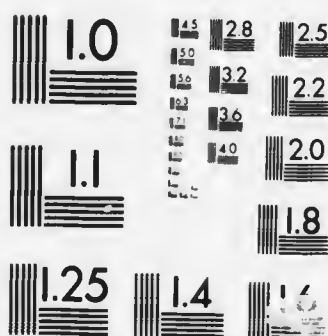


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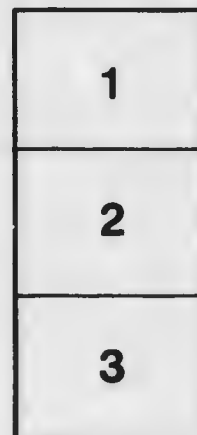
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THE  
"SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS."

(Reprinted from the London Times, of November 3, 1859.)

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

*A few Observations on the same Subject ; being  
the Substance of*

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, HALIFAX,

*On the 9th of January, 1860,*

BY

REV. GEORGE W. HILL, M. A.

CURATE.

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1860.



## THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS.\*

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THERE has arisen during the stirring years which still run their course a very widespread attention to the study of unfulfilled prophecy. Books on the subject are in great demand, and the supply apparently meets the demand. It is not unnatural to expect this. The last 10 years, dating their beginning at the great European convulsion of 1848, have, without doubt, witnessed so many national complications, social changes, and individual sufferings—event has so rapidly thundered on event, and scene flashed on scene—so altered have the face of Europe and the relations of Cabinets become, and so unsettled is the European sky at this hour, that intelligent and sober-minded men, with no spice of fanaticism in their nature, have begun to conclude that the sublime predictions uttered on the Mount 1800 years ago are being daily translated into modern history. Students of prophecy allege that they see the apocalyptic “vials” pouring out, and hear the “seven trumpets” uttering their voices and pealing in reverberations through Christendom.

From the earliest times there have been students of prophecy. Bishop Newton, Bishop Horsley, Mede, and others, are names familiar to every reader. In recent times the authors of *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, *The Great Tribulation*, and many others have at least awakened an interest on this subject in the popular mind. The last, and not the least noteworthy student is Lord Carlisle, the present Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He has translated,

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\* *Horæ Apocalypticæ*. By the Rev. E. B. Elliott, A. M., late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, 4 vols. Seeleys.

2. *Remarks on the Eighth Chapter of Daniel*. By Lord Carlisle.

8. *The Great Tribulation; or, Things Coming on the Earth*. By Rev. Lr. Cumming. Bentley.

or rather turned a whole chapter of Daniel into metre, but evidently with the intention of introducing under this disguise learned and elaborate notes and opinions.

Substantially Lord Carlisle concurs with the writers whose names or works we have referred to. In his preface he expresses his belief that we are now on the verge of stupendous events, and "in all probability approaching the close of this dispensation."

This conviction his Lordship draws from his own well-ascertained coincidences between the prophecies in the Apocalypse with the Book of Daniel and the phenomena recorded in history and in the daily journals.

Many people denounce all prophetic investigation as *a priori* unnecessary and injurious. This is hardly fair. On the assumption that these persons are Protestants, it strikes us that they must abjure the Protestant rule of faith, which is not, as we understand it, the Bible without the Books of Daniel and Revelation, but with these books as integral parts of it. These books are entitled to study in virtue of the character they have in common with all Scripture, and which is declared to be "profitable" and of the special blessing pronounced in them on those that read and understand them.

We do not think that rational interpreters of prophecy do in fact or of necessity set up to be prophets. They foretell what is written rather than attempt to foretell what is about to come to pass. They state their conclusions as inferences from the inspired record, accepting it alone as their only premises, and leave to their readers to acquiesce or otherwise in their deductions. They pretend to no interior inspiration. They may be mistaken, but certainly they are not fanatics. There are three schools of interpreters. A few—and these very few and feeble—believe that the Book of Daniel was exhausted and absorbed in the Book of Revelation, and that the Book of Revelation was all fulfilled in the days of Nero. This theory is discarded by every rational writer from the days of Bishop Newton and the learned Joseph Mede to the laborious Elliott. A second class—far more numerous, learned, and intelligent—incline to belief that the Apocalypse has not yet begun to be fulfilled, and that in a very short time all its prophecies will



develope themselves in portentous proportions on the stage of European Christendom. This system, which is going out or receiving many modifications, assumes that the whole period of 1800 years, replete with moral and social and religious phenomena of no ordinary nature, is wholly overlooked and ignored in a prophecy written in the first century, and proclaiming itself to be the record and history of things that are and "things that are to be hereafter." The most able and laborious school consists of those who believe that the Apocalypse is a continuous prospective history of Christendom from the days of St. John to the close of this present <sup>era</sup>, or dispensation, of course---necessarily not so clear as history. These divines hold that the seven seals already broken and done with, are a history in symbol of the fourth Great Kingdom, or Roman Empire, in its Pagan and persecuting character, down to the Conversion of Constantine,—the depression, if not entire annihilation of Paganism, and the elevation of Christianity to national place and power. The "horse" which is the basis of each seal-symbol as sacred to Mars, is regarded as the representative of the *Proles Mavortia* just as in Daniel the Persian Empire is represented by a ram, and the Macedonian by a he-goat, and the color of each horse denotes the material condition of the empire in historical succession. The "white" describes the prosperity of the empire from A. D. 96 to A. D. 180; the "red" bloodshed from A. D. 192 to 284; the "black" denoting famine, and the "pale horse" representing plague and pestilence and death. It would be impossible, within a short space to show the very remarkable coincidence between this interpretation and the historic facts recorded by Gibbon. The one almost seems the literal translation of the other. The infidel but brilliant historian is made the unconscious amanuensis of Providence writing out the historic facts that respond to the inspired prophecy as echo to sound. Be the system true or false, the coincidence is striking. The second series of Symbols consists of the "Seven Trumpets."

Those writers whose interpretations appear beyond comparison the most plausible, say, the first trumpet was fulfilled when Alaric the Goth burst upon the Roman Empire amid "Hail and blood;" that the second after Alaric

was Genseric, meetly represented by a "mountain burning with fire cast into the sea," and so on to the sounding of the last trumpet. Here again, the historic facts, too numerous for our space in date and character and succession, are so parallel that one is almost driven to accept the interpretation. The last of the three great divisions of Apocalyptic symbols are the seven vials, there being in all 21 great symbols from Patmos to Paradise regained. The Rev. E. B. Elliott and Dr. Cunningham believe that these began to be pointed out—that is that their effects began—in 1792. Passing over the illustrations of the first five we read in the sixth that when it was poured out "the waters of the great river Euphrates was dried up" Lord Carlisle in common with the writers we have quoted, refers this symbol to the Turkish Empire which, from 1821 to the present hour, has been manifestly in a condition of steady decadence, or national evaporation,—the old Turks crossing the Bosphorus every day to find graves, and all that is characteristic of Mahomedanism waning, and "Turkey dying from want of Turks," *The Times'* correspondent, writing in 1859 states:—

"The alarming state of the Ottoman empire, which country seems to be going thro' a succession of financial somersaults, from which, however, somehow or other it manages to alight with only an additional contusion, renders the accounts from the provinces truly deplorable; extra taxes being levied on the unfortunate populations to be redeemed by the imports of future years, while hordes of Albanian Irregulars render the provinces bordering on Greece insecure, and expose the poor inhabitants to every species of extortion and injustice. It is not to be wondered at that the old feeling of hatred to the Turkish yoke, which dates from the day Mahomed the second took possession of Byzantium, should be as much alive as ever. The Christians are replacing everywhere in the East, by a constant and unperceived effort the Mahometans who are disappearing; and under these circumstances, those of the Christian elements which offer some guarantee for the future must naturally attract the attention of Europe. Owing to their religion the Christian populations of the East consider themselves specially placed under the protection of Russia, and the influence of that power with the Greeks has been generally considered all-powerful."

There seems to be a very general belief in the application of this symbol, and the accuracy of this view. From the battle of Navarino to the present war with Morocco the Crescent has uninterruptedly waned—the sick man has died down and in the words of Lamartine already quoted "Turkey is dying from want of Turks." It is said in the sacred passage that this evaporation of the Moslem nationalities from their channels is in order to

prepare the way for "Kings of the East," literally ~~an anachronism~~ from "the sun risings." These Royal personages—Elliott, Bickersteth, Cumming, and others, understand to be the Jews, the ancient nation of "Kings and Priests," and that the recent sympathies felt towards the Jew, his gradual emergence from oppression and the growing interest which he and we cherish in regard to Palestine are the stirring of national life in the heart of that race. As soon as the Moslem recedes from Palestine the best writers on this subject believe that under a supernatural inspiration the sublimest exodus of the Jews will begin and Jerusalem be again their capital and "the beauty and joy of the earth." It is during the action of the "sixth vial" that "three unclean spirits like frogs go out to deceive the nations to gather them" to a great and sanguinary battle which, when it comes, is the alarm bell of the close of this economy. It would be impossible to enter minutely into this matter here. The prophetic writers before us understand by these "unclean spirits" one or other of Infidelity, Popery, Lawlessness, Tractarianism, Mormonism, Spirit-Rapping, and every other "ism" except Calvinism to which most of them incline. Mr. Elliott fixes the character of each "spirit" from the character of its source, and does not hesitate to name them as Romanism, Tractarianism, and Scepticism, each "frog" comprehending in its bosom many tadpoles. These systems gathered force from the first French Revolution, or rather from 1821 down to the last revolution in 1848.—The dregs of them still exist. Occasional spasmodic struggles prove alike their vitality and their dying. It is a singular fact on which Mr. Elliott particularly dilates that the ancient arms of France were not the *fleur de lis*, or the tricolour, but three frogs, and on this ground it is argued that France is to be most conspicuous in gathering the nations of Europe to this great war, and hence the writers before us daily expect a European war kindled by our ally across the Channel.

No man, whether he accepts these prophetic interpretations or not, can fail to mark the stormy nature of the political sky, or to expect from existing complications some gigantic outburst. Every Cabinet in Europe is agitated. Every King has his hand on his sword hilt. Statesmen's

hearts literally fail them for fear of the things coming on the earth at the present hour.

Dr. Cumming states in his recent work.—*The Great Tribulation*—that the 7th vial was in all probability poured out in 1848, that its being “poured into the air” denotes the universality of its influence—affecting physical, social and moral interests—its physical effects manifesting themselves in the morbid miasma prevalent during the last ten years; in unprecedented intensity and area, and showing its force in the potato, the vine cholera, and an altered normal condition of human health and disease. He also regards the “Great Earthquake” with which it begins its action as that “shaking” *σεισμος* “of the nations” which has spread over India, China, Russia, the Crimea, France, Spain, and Austria, and that each new complication issuing in a new conflict is another shock of the same earthquake.

He also thinks that the great panic in the commercial world in 1857, call at that date by *The Times* “a commercial earthquake,” when houses old and prudent as well as rotten fell, and bank exploded after bank in overwhelming crashes, was another heave or shock of the same earthquake. He thinks England for reasons it is unnecessary to enumerate, is to emerge from the “great tribulation” and her sun not to disappear till lost in the greater splendour in which “there will be no need of the Sun.”

The leading article in *The Times* of Thursday records an actual and visible fact which students of prophecy have been expecting for years :—

“Is ours a condition of profound peace? Certainly not. We have not done with India. In China all our work is to be done again! we have stumbled on a new race and for aught we know on foreign and more civilized auxiliaries. No, one may pretend to place limits on the war which has broken out, or on its bearings upon our European alliances.—A fraction of the Americans is, as usual, provoking a quarrel, which their Executive may not be able to avert. There is something amiss going on opposite Gibraltar. We are called in to assist in restoring peace to Italy, disturbed by our good neighbors. At home ten thousand poor simpletons are struggling and perishing with their wives and children for an “idea.” There are some uncomfortable things which, like distant thunder, are felt rather than heard or seen. We talk, and talk, and talk about rifle Corps, manning the navy, Coast defences, new guns, and floating batteries. Of course the talk is not without occasion, but the things are not done. On the whole it must be said there is an uncomfortable feeling something like the distress of nations, men’s hearts failing them for fear

It is then a very general belief that we are on the very

verge of a gigantic struggle; that France is to originate, ride, and if able, overrule the storm; that England, because of her free thought, free speech, and free press and Protestant religion the spring of them all, is to have directed on her the concentrated fire of Europe; and we must do them the justice to add they patriotically urge, on their ground, and from their point of view, what sane politicians uphold on theirs, an instant and powerful preparation on our part at any expense to defend Old England's shores. In *The Great Tribulation* the writer observes:—

"France the great actor in the prophetic outline flushed with her Italian Conquests, is reposing in her short bivouac, in order to enter on the arena refreshed and strong as a giant to fulfil her destiny. Austria, furious at defeat and disappointment, longs to avenge her wrongs, and tries by sacrifice to conciliate Hungary. Italy is one huge volcano, still, perhaps, making ready to receive into her fiery bosom the papacy with all its spoils of plundered nations, and injured kingdoms, and violated rights, and all its sins and its crimes inextinguishable for ever.

"Our own beloved land may soon be girdled with a belt of fire. Her freedom, her faith, her prosperity, her accessible asylum for the refugees and the oppressed, her gigantic power, her outspoken independence, her treasures, and her triumphs are the hate of despots, the envy of courts, and the provocatives of hostility on the part of nations that remember her past superiority, and long to measure swords with her once more. No ordinary events are looming up from every point of the European horizon, like strange birds of evil omen. All the ten years that have passed away, and the seven that still remain of the era of the "Great Tribulation" will cover a time of trouble unprecedented since there was a nation. It is the time when there "shall be great distress of nations, with perplexity," political, social, commercial, and moral,—the disintegration of political party, the distrust of trade, the dereliction of moral obligations, confusion of principles, and collision, of passion, the sea and waves roaring. There also shall be fulfilled and felt what is written.

The lull that now exists among the nations of Europe is very much like that of 1851. It is the eve of more terrible disturbances, and the time of preparation for it. Science and art, and national resources are tasked in all directions in order to make the most formidable weapons for offensive and defensive war. The discoveries of modern science, as embodied in the iron rail, the ocean steamer, and the electric telegraph, will lead to such military gatherings, such concentrations of troops, such lightning-like rapidity of action, such shocks of arms, as never were equalled in the history of the world. Everything seems to make ready for no common crisis, no ordinary issue. In the words of Daniel, 'There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; in the words of St. Matthew, 'There shall be a great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be.'

It is under the action of Vial 7, according to the views we are now dealing with that "Great Babylon" in the words of the sacred text "comes into remembrance to give her the cup of indignation." Certainly this was never so intensely true as at this moment. Pio Nono stands shivering in his slippers, holding in his trembling hand a cup of no common bitterness. The waters on



which he sets "peoples and nations" are being literally dried up. The extremity must be great that summons through his episcopal trumpeters in Ireland an Irish Brigade to his help. Never was the "Bark of St. Peter" in so troubled waters or its skipper in greater distress. It is during the influence of this vial that a "great northern hail" bursts on Christendom. This is interpreted by the students of prophecy as a Russian descent on Europe, as indicated by collateral prophecies in Ezekiel, and in all probability in conjunction with France. Not a year ago the best informed portion of the press alluded to a secret compact between France and Russia. It is very singular, to say the least, in whatever light we regard it, that inferences from prophecy should shadow out what is still strongly suspected to be fact.

We now turn to the most remarkable and difficult subject,—the prophetic dates, in a chapter in *The Great Tribulation*, headed "1867" it is attempted to show, and with some success, that—however much our best interpreters of prophecy differ in details they all agree that 1867—if their views be correct—must prove a great determining crisis in the world's history. There are certain dates in the Books of Daniel and the Apocalypse expressed in various formulas, One is "Time, times, and half a time"—that is a prophetic year—two prophetic years and half a prophetic year, or 1260 literal years.—Another form of the same period is 42 months. This is a governing period, but its commencement is the difficulty. It describes the dominant duration and tyranny of a great apostasy in Christendom within the ten Kingdoms and at the running out of these 1260 years that apostasy is steadily to begin its decay. The authors of the *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, and *The Great Tribulation* incline to date the beginning of this period in A. D. 532, when Justinian gave his vast prerogatives to the Bishop of Rome. On this hypothesis the 1260 years run out in 1792, and certainly at that date Romanism began its decadence in a baptism of blood. One remarkable proof is the following:—Sixty years ago there were 5,000 priests in Paris. The population has doubled since that time. There ought therefore to be now 10,000 priests in Paris. The Actual number is 800.

To this period of 1260, ending, we assume, in 1792 Daniel adds a period of 30 years. This would bring us down to 1822. Then, also, and that very year, was the beginning of a great change in Eastern Christendom, "The drying up of Euphrates" or progressive decay of Mahommedanism at its fountain. What goes far to confirm this is the fact that another period given by Daniel, called 2,300 years, on the end of which the "cleansing of the sanctuary" i. e., the preparation of Palestine for its people, was to begin. Dating this period at what has been, if not clearly, at least probably assigned before Christ 478, we find its termination in A. D. 1822. To this period, Daniel adds another of 45 years. This brings us down to 1867. Daniel says he is specially "blessed" who arrives at 1867.

Supposing this correct, 1867 would be in the words of Lord Carlisle, "the close of this dispensation" and, according to others, the restoration of all things, the baptism of the earth, and the regeneration of nature.

Another class of interpreters date the 1260 years at the decree of Phocas in 607, which they think was the real transformation of the Western Church into a corporate apostacy. If so, they would end in 1867. The same writers also hold that Daniel's great epoch, ending in the restoration of the Jews, began before Christ 433, and ends therefore in A. D. 1867, and that then, as they believe, the crescent in the east and the crucifix in the west will both disappear, and Christianity, the light of a few, be then the glory and the gladness of all mankind.

What casts some light on this subject is the ancient, and as Bishop Russell has shown, almost universal belief that the week of Creation was in brief the type of the great week of the world—that is that the six working days of the Creation-week correspond to the 6000 of working years of the world and that, as the former ended in the Sabbath day rest, the latter will culminate in the Sabbath of a 6,000 years—what St. Paul calls "*σαββατισμος*, the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

Now, the question occurs—have these 6,000 years nearly run out? According to the vulgar chronology, they are short of their end by at least 140 years. But Fynes Clinton, followed by others, has proved to demon-

stration that there is a mistake in the vulgar era, and that the birth of Christ must consequently be put forward to the year of the world or Anno Mundi 4132. This is really brought out with immense force and in all likelihood it is correct. If so we are again brought down to 1867, as the close of the world's long working week, and the eve of its magnificent and long predicted Millennial Rest. Dr. Cumming quotes in his chapter of *The Great Tribulation* headed 1867—an array of names who concur with him in looking forward to 1867, (not as ignorantly charged, prophesying the end of the world) as a great crisis—a testing crisis—intersected by the various lines of prophetic dates.—It appears from all this that these writers on prophecy have handled this branch of investigation as others treat geology, chemistry, or astronomy. It is a legitimate subject of research. The errors of geologists and chemists do not fairly militate against their respective fields, and we do not see why the errors of interpreters of prophecy should be adduced as a reason for ignoring what is difficult, but divinely recommended to our study. We do not discover any fanaticism in the works on prophecy referred to. The writers constantly guard themselves against misapprehension repudiating the claims of the prophet and accepting only the relation of the student. Some of their works are very learned. The *Horæ* of Mr. Elliott does credit to the theology of the age. Others are very popular. It is not, therefore, fair in rash and reckless writers to confound the sober, even if mistaken students of a grand text with fanatics and enthusiasts.

But whether these interpretations be right or wrong, there is no doubt that the barometer of Europe singularly—it may be accidentally—corresponds with their deductions from prophecy.



## SERMON.

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“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”—ST. LUKE, xxi. 24.

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It is a great mistake to suppose that the Old Testament alone contains prophetic declarations. The New abounds with them. Our Lord Himself, and His Apostles, St. Paul and St. Peter, St. Jude and St. John, foretold the future of the world, announcing some events that have since transpired, and many that are yet to come.\* Strange things were pictured by our Lord, as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, eighteen hundred years ago: the overthrow of the temple—the destruction of Jerusalem—the dispersion of the Jewish nation, and His own subsequent return to restore all things, and once more replace those foundations of the earth for so long a period “out of course.” The falling away from Christ and the usurpation of Antichrist,—the fearful errors and damnable heresies which should creep into the Church of Christ,—even the peculiar marks which should characterise the enemies of the Lord Jesus were delineated, as with a sculptor’s chisel, by the Apostle of the Gentiles.† when the Spirit spake expressly to him of the latter days. The purifying process through which the material world should pass,—the regeneration of the earth, poisoned by the serpent’s breath and blighted by the ancient curse,—the restitution of all things to their primeval beauty and their early purity,—are described by the Apostle Peter,‡ as though he had been transported forward to that day, and viewed from some lofty height the universal conflagration, when the heavens passed away with a great noise, and the elements melted with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that were therein were burned up. St. Jude§ took a retrospective glance, and, look-

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\* Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 12.

‡ 2 Peter iii. § Ep. Jude.

ing back over the wide waters of the flood, listened to the prophetic strains of that man who walked with God, and prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints!" By the light of the new dispensation he looked forward, also, to some of the consequences of that royal appearing, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." To that beloved disciple who leaned upon his Saviour's breast, a still fuller revelation\* was granted of things which then were, and of things which should be thereafter. That strange book transmitted to us contains, so to speak, the programme of those wondrous events, some of which have already transpired, and some of which are yet to take place. Not only does it foretell the grand climax of all things—the return of Jesus to the scene of His sufferings, and of His atonement—but draws an outline of the world's history from the period then existing down to its final close. It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand."

It is clear, then, that we are not limited to the Old Testament for prophecy. We have abundant predictions in the New. And we possess this great advantage when we consult the New—that we know for a certainty that none of those things which are foretold in it had come to pass at the time of their utterance; or, in other words, we have predictions pronounced at a date within our reach, and of such a nature that they cannot be easily misapplied to events. Now, in referring to the ancient seers and prophets, we have some difficulty to contend with in attempting to decide between those predictions which belong to the era of the first advent, and those which are connected with the second. This is peculiarly the case with certain passages which treat of the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the establishment of a kingdom over which the Messiah is to reign. Some of these appear to have been verified on the return of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin from their seventy years' captivity in Babylon. When the actual re-building of the temple is foretold, it may be assumed, naturally enough, by some, that this took place under Zerubbabel's direction, and during the prophet

\* Rev. St. John the Divine.

Haggai's life ; and, as a sequence, that these events are not yet in the future, but live in the history of the past. Practically, we have all found this difficulty in reading the Old Testament, and perhaps have been sometimes a little disheartened by the small result of our efforts to distinguish between those predictions already fulfilled and those still to be so. To turn, then, from an investigation of "the law, the prophets, and the psalms," to an inquiry into the prophecies of the New Testament, is almost as if emerging from dim twilight to the meridian blaze of noon-day splendor.

The important relative position of God's ancient people, the Jews, towards the Messiah, and also towards the Gentile nations, is plainly indicated in the sacred song of Simeon, where he represents the Lord Jesus in those two aspects suited to the two great national divisions of the human family—"a *light* to *lighten* the Gentiles"; because up to that time *they* were living in spiritual darkness ; but as the *glory* of God's people, Israel, because they already had the light of divine truth imparted to them, and that dawn was one day to swell to a flood of light, according to the ancient pledge, "My salvation shall not tarry, and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel, my glory." As there was an intimate connection between the Jews and Gentiles at the time of our Lord's birth, and as "salvation was of the Jews"—they being the ordained channel through which mercy was to flow to the nations of the world at large—so there is an indissoluble bond between God's chosen people and us Gentile races, until the time of our Lord's return to earth. So to speak, as we were once dependent upon the Jews, they are now dependent upon us. "The restoration of the Jews to Palestine forms the very keystone to the whole ecclesiastical and political structure of the world, and is the principal object to be accomplished by the awful events of the coming years. It is the grand consummation of which Hebrew prophets spake and Jewish bards sung ; it is emphatically the 'hope of Israel,' and the word of Judah's God is pledged to its accomplishment." For example, our Lord's words, occurring in the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel—"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations ; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"—foretell the fearful trouble of the nation, their wholesale slaughter by the sword, and their thralldom as the fettered captives of foreign princes. But the verse not only announces their

expatriation from that hallowed, venerated land, the very dust of which they believed holy, and proclaims their exile from that country so dear to them by a thousand memories—a land as much beloved by all to-day as by him whose patriotism evoked the vow, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning”; it signifies, also, how long the holy ground shall be trodden by unholy feet—“*until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*”

Now, if we turn to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we find the counterpart of the Saviour's prophecy in these memorable words: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be vain in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel *until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*” No one can doubt for a moment that the *times of the Gentiles* spoken of by our Saviour, and the *fullness of the Gentiles* spoken of by St. Paul, are equivalent to one another,—that what one means so does the other. From the whole tenor of Scripture, but especially from what precedes the observation of St. Paul, we can scarcely fail to gather that these expressions mean—when the full time for giving the Gentile nations an opportunity to embrace the Gospel has been completed, and God has gathered from out of them a people to Himself, that then, in answer to the beautiful Collect in the Burial Service, when he has “accomplished the number of His elect” He shall hasten His kingdom, and Israel shall be no longer banished from the possession given to Abraham and his seed after him. Without question, the Gospel is to be preached to all nations, but it is pointedly stated for what purpose, or what will be its issue—for a *witness*. Those magnificent and sublime passages so often quoted in the advocacy of the Missionary cause but so palpably misapplied, such as, “The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,” and “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;” refer, as the context shows, to the result of *our Lord's return to earth*, and in no way to this “fullness of the Gentiles.” We need but one or two testimonies to this assertion: first the simple question of our Lord in reference to the condition of the world at His coming—“Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth.” And again, the witness of St. Paul bearing directly on the matter, wherein, so far from saying that all the Gentiles will become Christians, he expressly supposes that the conversion of the Jews

will have an important influence in extending the Gospel among the Gentiles. "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness." It is evident, then, that at the period of the restoration of the Jews there will be some Gentiles yet unconverted, and amongst whom the Jews may labor. The "fullness of the Gentiles" cannot therefore mean the entire submission of them all to the Gospel, since the Jews are clearly to be converted before that takes place, and themselves become instrumental in their conversion.

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To return, then, to the point. The times of the Gentiles being fulfilled, spoken of by our Lord, and the fullness of the Gentiles spoken of by the Apostle, must mean the gathering out from the Gentiles a people for Himself. Until this time, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," says our Saviour; until this time, "blindness in part is happened unto Israel." What are the corroborative facts? Has not the Holy Land, the sacred city, been in possession of the Gentile world? Is it not an historic truth indelibly impressed upon the mind and memory of every youth, that Jerusalem has been the prey of Turks, Infidels and heretics? Is there a story more prominent in the world's annals than the wars of the Crusaders? Who knows not that the seat of Judah's kings and Judah's priests has been the battle ground for almost every people, or that to this day the lawful owners are excluded from the most revered spot in their loved and yet far-famed city? Are not these things so patent to the world that they are familiar as the language which we speak? and is it not equally true that a total blindness has happened to a part of Israel; aye, to the greater part; that while some few have acknowledged the man of Nazareth as their Messiah; while a part of the nation—small indeed—have received Jesus as their Saviour and their King, a complete blindness has taken possession of the great mass? Yes! these things are just what we should look for, for they are just what our Lord and His Apostles foretold. And so they are to remain until "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," or, until the "fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

That Jerusalem is no longer to be trodden down by other nations, and that the tribes of Israel are no longer to continue in blindness when this takes place, may not only be inferred but legitimately proved by the simplest process of reasoning on one



passage already quoted. Our Lord says, "they shall fall by the edge of the sword." Let every historian from Josephus down to the late learned and lamented Hallam be cited as witnesses to its truth! "They shall be led away captive into all nations;" call up even the infidels Gibbon and Hume, and they shall bear unequivocal though unwilling testimony that the man of Nazareth "declared things for to come," with a prescience that could only be divine. "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles": ask even children to tell the tale of wild and barbarous conflict in the Holy City, or read from the modern press the unseemly quarrels over the so-called sepulchre of Jesus, which kindled the flame of the Crimean war. Is all this to be literally understood and the remainder to be spiritualized? Is it not implied in all fairness that these things are only to occur *until* a certain period, which period arrived, the exiled captives shall return. As surely as they are to be banished while these events continue, so surely when they cease will their banishment cease also.

But what sign have we that the times of the Gentiles are near their fulfilment? Or have we any that the fulness of the Gentiles is well nigh complete, and therefore the restoration of the Jews not far distant? There are some which, at least, seem to be indications; which, to a devout mind, are solemn warnings. No doubt, strange things have before occurred in the world,—plagues and pestilences, famines and earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, distress of nations and perplexity, together with men's hearts failing them for fear,—all these things have been, and have aroused the attention of thoughtful and the fear of timid men. But the Christian student of prophecy is looking now not to these things alone, although more prevalent in their combination than ever before, but, in connection with them, to certain defined truths in reference to the spread of Christianity, or more guardedly to express it, the preaching of the Gospel, and to certain marks of time specified in Holy Writ, by which he thinks that he at least approximates the truth.

As it would answer, perhaps, no especial purpose to follow in the ordinary and beaten track in order to show the fulfilment of prophecy in general, (a subject so frequently handled of late in religious periodicals as to be tolerably familiar,) I will confine my observations to two central points; first, to the fact of the Gospel being preached for a witness unto all nations, and secondly, to the chronology of the prophets.

In confirmation of the first prediction being near its completion, we have the testimony of most credible witnesses. The gigantic efforts of our own branch of the Church of Christ to fulfil its sacred mission, press themselves upon our notice by every mail from England. That parent of all such institutions, whose labors are so consonant with its name, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," is leaving no effort unused to usher into India a band of Christian heralds to proclaim God's message of mercy, to preach the Gospel for a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. The Church Missionary Society keeps pace in the noble cause. The Christian zeal and enthusiasm of the Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa, opened up by the labors of the intrepid and unwearied Livingstone, speak in loudest terms the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. The many devices for making known the way of salvation, and the self-denying labors of a host of servants for Christ in the great cities, the provincial towns and the country villages, are manifestations that "knowledge is increased." The open-air preaching, the visits to the long-neglected and obscure in the hidden haunts of vice, the schools of industry and the houses of relief, the multiplication of churches and religious schools, are sweeping away the cause of the unbeliever's sarcastic censure, that while the heathen abroad are cared for, the heathen at home are left to perish.

The display of Bibles in 147 languages at the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, and the Annual Reports of all the Missionary Societies, unite their testimony to the great truth that the glad tidings of salvation are already well-nigh proclaimed as a witness to all the nations of the earth.

In calling attention to the chronological data, permit me to refer to the above article, reprinted from the *Times*, of Nov. 3d, 1859. The fact of that confessedly greatest periodical of the age devoting its columns to a discussion on the study of prophecy, is in itself one of the most remarkable signs of the times. The essay is a brief review of three books which attracted more than ordinary notice, written by men whose names are well-known to the world—Elliott, Cumming, and Lord Carlisle—the first two clergymen, the last a layman. "The Great Tribulation," by Dr. Cumming, has not yet reached this country, (except perhaps some private parties), and we, therefore, know nothing of it but that which is to be gleaned from papers and magazines. The "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*," however, by the Rev.

E. B. Elliott, A. M., of which the fourth edition was published in 1851, has been for some years well known in this Province. And it may be well to state for those who are not already aware of the fact, that the "Apocalyptic Sketches" by the Rev. John Cumming, D. D., are simply an epitome of this learned and celebrated work. Those who cannot procure the "Horæ Apocalypticæ," which consists of four good-sized volumes, each page of which requires very close application of the mind, will find in the "Sketches" alluded to, a most accurate outline or condensation of that profound and elaborate treatise. All who have read Dr. Cumming's popularly-rendered lectures in Exeter Hall, will, if they have time, take the deeper interest in Mr. Elliott's learned researches.

It is to be ardently hoped that more attention than ever will be turned to this inspiring subject,—the study of prophecy. It may indeed be that the evening of the world draws on apace. It is possible that we have entered upon the last prophetic week—the last seven years of this dispensation. How solemn and yet how cheering the thought that the day of Christ's Advent is so close at hand! "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

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N. B. That portion of the article in the *Times* which treats of the Chronology of Prophecy, was read at the close of these remarks.



