

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

793RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, JANUARY 6TH, 1936,

AT 4.30 P.M.

COMMANDER R. G. STUDD, D.S.O., R.N. RET., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of May 27th, 1935, were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the following elections:—As a Member: Col. A. H. van Straubensee; and as Associates: Eric W. Russell, Esq.; W. M. Reid, Esq.; James S. St. Clair; and the Rev. John Howe; and as a Missionary Associate: the Rev. H. S. Nesbitt.

The following had also been elected since the last Meeting:—As a Life Member: Mrs. C. H. Greenleaf; and as a Member: Lt.-Col. Sir Francis Fremantle, O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.S.; as Associates: Lieut. M. A. Bid-dulph; P. H. I. Dolton, Esq.; T. B. Gilbert, Esq.; W. J. Jackson, Esq.; Dr. J. F. Merrill; Miss Annie Moss; Arthur O. Neve, Esq.; Rev. G. H. Perman; B. P. Sutherland; Miss N. K. Snow; Dr. W. J. A. Schouten; Miss Tryon; G. R. Titchener, Esq., Edward Whittaker, Esq. (Eng.), and Harry Rees, Esq., B.Sc., Student Associates; and Miss A. M. D. Dinneen as a Missionary Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. F. W. Pitt to read his paper entitled "The Times of the Gentiles."

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

By the REV. F. W. PITT.

IT has been said that the important thing is not when the Times of the Gentiles began but when they will end.

There is some truth in this, if we confine our interest in the subject to its bearing upon present world events; but if we are to study it as a whole, it is essential to know when that period began which the Lord said should continue until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

It is generally accepted, both by Futurist and Historicist interpreters of prophecy, that the Times of the Gentiles began in 606 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and some Futurists and most Historicists have decided that the period should last 2,520 years.

If that were so, anyone from Daniel onwards could have made a simple calculation to show that the Times of the Gentiles would end in A.D. 1915, reckoning ordinary solar years. But if prophetic years of 360 days were used in the calculation, the end of the 2,520 years would be in A.D. 1878. The wonder is that no one in the distant past was "cute" enough to see this; for instance, Paul, who was certainly equal in intelligence to most of us. Yet though by his teaching the close of the Times of the Gentiles was related to the Second Advent, instead of telling people that they need not worry till A.D. 1878 or 1915, he urged them to be watching and waiting.

Date fixers before those years were, of course, proved to be wrong when their dates passed and nothing happened.

Later date fixers, in the hope of hitting upon a successful prediction, have altered the date of the commencement of the Times of the Gentiles from 606 B.C. to 587 B.C., when Jerusalem was destroyed. 2,520 years from this date would bring us to 1897, using prophetic years, or 1934, using solar years.

No doubt someone will find reasons for explaining the complete failure of every effort to fix the date of the Advent, and think out a new date, but the fact remains that 1934 has passed and the Times of the Gentiles are not at an end.

There must therefore be something wrong with the system of date fixing.

I submit that the year for a day principle which has governed all date predictions, is the cause of the trouble, and that it is without any Scripture authority.

In Numbers xiv, 34, we have the expression "each day for a year," or as in the Revised Version, "For every day a year." But it is unreasonable to take that expression and say that it authorises us to apply it whenever a day is mentioned prophetically. If it did, then the Lord meant He would be three years in the heart of the earth when He said three days.

What Numbers xiv, 34, actually says is, that for each day in which the land was searched by the spies there should be one year of wandering in the wilderness. "For every day a

year." The days are days, and the years are years. Even if it were otherwise, who is to decide when and how the extraordinary device of calling days years is to be applied?

For the purpose of determining the period of the Times of the Gentiles 2,520 days are turned into years. But where in Scripture are 2,520 days mentioned? Nowhere, from Genesis to Revelation, does the number 2,520 occur in any connection whatever, neither as days, years, nor anything.

It is quite evident, then, that they must be produced somehow by a process. It is done in two ways.

In Leviticus xxvi, there is the warning of judgment upon Israel for apostasy, and God said, "I will punish you seven times more for your sins."

These "seven times" have been wrested from their context and made to represent seven years. The rest is easy. Taking 360 days to a year, seven times 360 equals 2,520 days. Apply the Year Day theory, and there are the 2,520 years of Gentile domination. It seems like conjuring, but it is worse. Every scholar knows that the times of this chapter are not periods. The expression occurs in verses 18, 21, 24 and 28. Verse 21, which says, "I will bring seven times more plagues upon you" proves that an increasing number of judgments is meant. But, if it were not so, as "seven times more" is repeated four times, that would amount to twenty-eight, bringing the total years up to 10,080. This discrepancy has led some to abandon the times of Leviticus xxvi and fix on Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of debasement; and if that is correct Nebuchadnezzar may be still somewhere in the world eating grass like an ox.

I have considered the year for a day theory carefully and prayerfully for a long time, and I am convinced that every postulate from which the 2,520 years of Gentile supremacy are articulated has no foundation in fact, and that therefore it is not proven that the Times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar, apart from the fact that Scripture never says they did.

The Times of the Gentiles, therefore, cannot mean the period from 606 B.C. onward. If it did, then they must have ended when the Jews returned from the Captivity, for after that, and even while they were still in Babylon, they were God's chosen people, through whom He implemented His plans for the world's redemption.

Israel were God's people when Christ came. The Kingdom of Heaven was preached to and through them. Their rebuilt temple was the House of God. Their land was God's land, and after the death and resurrection of Christ Peter appealed to the nation to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out, so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the restoration of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets. (Acts iii, 19, R.V.)

The nation, as such, did not repent, and yet God graciously gave Israel further opportunities to become the channel of blessing to the world.

But with the stoning of Stephen, and the coming of the Apostle of the Gentiles, God set Israel aside, eventually scattering them among all nations, as they are at this day.

It should be noted that all prophetic time periods are related to Israel, and never to the Gentiles. Their affliction in a strange land was to be for 400 years. The captivity in Babylon seventy years. Daniel's seventy weeks of years were determined upon his people—the Jews and Jerusalem.

I am fully convinced that 69 of those weeks ended with the cutting off of Messiah, leaving "the one week" unfulfilled. This interpretation is ridiculed by many who resent the so-called "gap theory." But the gap theory is an established fact supported by many passages in the Old Testament.

For instance, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. ix, 6). The gap occurs between the first two sentences, which predict the coming of the Messiah, and the last sentence, which will not be fulfilled till the Messiah comes to reign. The gap is exactly that parenthesis between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel ix.

Nearly all the predictions of the coming of the Messiah give details of what did take place at His first coming, and what cannot now take place till His second coming.

There are reasons outside the limits of this paper which necessitated writing Old Testament prophecies as if they were one continuous whole, although events proved that part of the prophecy had to be deferred.

A second advent is never spoken of in the Old Testament. It is a definitely New Testament revelation necessitated by the rejection of Messiah by the Jews.

The Chosen Nation's obduracy and consequent judgment brought in the Times of the Gentiles, which will close with the Second Advent.

That the Times of the Gentiles began at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70 is implied by the Lord's own words in Luke xxi: "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."

From this Scripture and others I conclude that the Times of the Gentiles is that period during which God ceases to have any governmental dealings with the Israel people. During that period they are dispossessed of their land. Their Temple, which was ordained to be a house of prayer for all nations, is non-existent; their very language died out, and instead of being God's agents for distributing the riches of His Grace to the world, they are wanderers among all nations, hated and despised, a byword and a proverb.

There is, of course, a lesser sense in which the Times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar, but that was only a preliminary and temporary fulfilment of God's judgments upon His people, and as the Lord Jesus definitely related the Times of the Gentiles to the treading down of Jerusalem upon its destruction by Titus, it would seem to be from that date the Times of the Gentiles in the full sense should be reckoned, for since that day God has not used that nation for any purpose. "Blindness (or hardening) is happened unto Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans xi, 25); that is, until God has finished His work of taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name, "and to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written: After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts xv, 14-17.)

The "Times of the Gentiles" are not the same as the "Fulness of the Gentiles." The latter indicates the Church parenthesis

as in the gap between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel ix. The period of the Fulness of the Gentiles will end with the removal of the Church. The Times of the Gentiles will continue until the 70th week is ended, that is at least seven years longer than the Fulness of the Gentiles.

When those seven years are ended God will build again the tabernacle of David, and all Israel will be saved, and become the channel of blessing to the Gentiles. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of God from Jerusalem." Then the millennial glory, the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Thus we have in prophecy a complete plan of the ages, covering the Times of the Gentiles from A.D. 70 till the Millennium.

In these stirring days it is natural that we should inquire if there is any way of determining that the Times of the Gentiles are running out. Are we near the end?

I have sought to show that we cannot fix dates, for there is no chronological scheme in Scripture applicable to the Gentiles or the Church. Chronology had to do with the Jews only. When the fulness of the Gentiles is completed by the removal of the Church, predicted dates may be looked for. The last seven years of the Times of the Gentiles will be inaugurated by a seven years' covenant made between the Roman Prince that shall come and the Jews at Jerusalem.

At the close of the seven years the Second Advent will take place. This proves that the Jews are the outstanding sign of the end of the Age.

This is confirmed by the Lord's words in Luke xxi: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," which will not be till the last seven years have expired.

There have been attempts to falsify this prediction, especially that of Julian the Apostate, who, to justify his apostasy, undertook to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. The power of the Roman Empire in alliance with the fanaticism of Jews longing to recover their lost heritage, should have been able to do a simple thing like that. But, as Gibbon says, while the work was being feverishly pursued, the men using silver spades and the women silken shawls to carry away the rubbish, without warning, explosions and fireballs dispersed the workers and

frustrated Julian's purpose, who, not long afterwards, was killed in battle and cried, "O Galilean! Thou hast conquered." Since those days the Jews have been excluded from their land by Saracens and Turks until the Great War.

The story is well known of how when the British Government had run short of high explosive a Jewish chemist gave the formula of a new explosive in exchange for a promise that Britain would favour the Zionist scheme of making Palestine a national home for the Jews.

This resulted in the famous Balfour Declaration being delivered to Lord Rothschild as representing Judaism in this country.

When this Declaration was published several prominent students of prophecy waited on the late Dr. F. B. Meyer, and pointed out the importance of the Balfour Declaration in regard to the Times of the Gentiles.

Although the Turks were still in possession of the Holy Land, and with German assistance had fortified the Judean hills with modern armaments, Dr. Meyer and his friends arranged a mass meeting at the Queen's Hall, London, to be held on December 13th, 1917. Four days before the meeting was held the startling news was published that General Allenby had taken Jerusalem without firing a shot, and the Turks soon after yielded up the Holy Land to Britain.

This amazing event electrified the meeting at the Queen's Hall, for it indicated that God had lifted His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people. It was impossible to see in it anything less than a sign that the close of the Times of the Gentiles was on the distant horizon. Some people have gone so far as to declare that the expulsion of the Turk from Jerusalem ended the Times of the Gentiles. But this of course is not the case, for Britain is as truly a Gentile nation as Turkey, although, thank God, not so cruelly Gentile as some others who revel in Anti-Semitism.

If, then, the termination of the Times of the Gentiles has cast its shadow before, how long before, and under what circumstances will the last seven years, the seventieth week of Daniel, develop?

The first thing to happen is the coming in of the Fulness of the Gentiles, and the removal of the completed Church. After that the Jews must have settled in their land in sufficient

numbers to recover their nationhood, and choose a King, the Antichrist, the false King of the Jews. Until that day the Jews without a constitution and a recognised head, cannot make the seven years' treaty with the Roman Prince that shall come. The making of that treaty implies the recovery of Israel's nationhood, which consummation is already the ambition of the Revisionist Section of Zionism.

There is no outstanding personage in view who is a portent of the Antichrist King, but he will come in due course. It seems as if some Jews would recognise anyone who was bold and strong enough to assume kingship, for even before the war, Zionists offered the throne of David to the Sultan of Turkey if he would grant them permission to settle in the land from which they were then excluded.

But there is no uncertainty as to the Roman Prince with whom the covenant will be made. Mussolini, who is at least his portent, has declared and partly fulfilled his ambition to revive the Old Roman Empire. In a new street in Rome he has had set up a huge map of the Ancient Roman Empire, and Italians are being stimulated by promises of world dominion.

The unwarrantable invasion of Abyssinia is part of the programme. But Mussolini has his eye on much beside Abyssinia. After Abyssinia there is Egypt, though the Dictator keeps his own counsel as to that vital link with British interests in the East. But he has openly declared his policy for Palestine; has demanded that the Mediterranean shall become an Italian lake; Cyprus, Malta, and Gibraltar are marked down for inclusion in his scheme, and there is much beside.

Prophetic students at the beginning of this century were laughed at when they foretold the revival of the Old Roman Empire. But there it is being assembled under our eyes in preparation for the last seven years of the Times of the Gentiles.

One of the most significant acts of Mussolini was the restoration in modified form of the temporal power of the Papacy, and now we see the Scarlet Coloured Woman of Revelation xvii mounted on the Scarlet Coloured Beast, both of course thinking themselves master of the situation, but for the present allied in their project of universal world power.

The Pope has been praying for peace, and when it is asked why he does not use his great influence to restrain Mussolini's

aggression, we are told by his representative in England that he is an old man, unable to do anything.

But, if the truth were known, the Pope is as much in favour of the conquest of Abyssinia as Mussolini himself. The present Emperor has shown marked approval of the work of Protestant Missions in Ethiopia. He doubtless remembers Jesuit intrigues in the past, and fears that they will again undermine the authority of the government. But the Pope knows that if Mussolini's campaign succeeds, Abyssinia will again be free for Roman Catholicism and the Protestant Missions will be suppressed.

Thus we see the stage being set for the last dread scenes of the Times of the Gentiles.

There are other unmistakable evidences that the day of Israel's redemption is at hand.

"There shall be signs in the sun and moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth." (Luke xxi, 25, 26.)

There is not time to refer to all these signs; but one thing is beyond doubt: the "distress of nations with perplexity." The world has not yet recovered, and probably never will recover from the results of the Great War; but already, while there are scores of peace pacts, preparations for the next war are being rushed forward. Europe is an armed camp. More money is being spent on armaments than ever before in the world's history. Suspicion and unrest prevail everywhere, and neither the League of Nations nor protective alliances can allay the fears of men looking anxiously for those things which are coming upon the earth.

There are thirty millions of unemployed people; starvation and tyranny in Russia and elsewhere. National debts are being piled up by nations already paralysed by economic disaster. Gold reserves are depleted. Bankruptcy threatens most governments, and as H. G. Wells says, "there is no way out." The literal meaning, though he may not have known it, of the words, "with perplexity."

Surely the end is in sight, and our only comfort is found in the words, "When ye see these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth

nigh." That mighty event implying the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory will bring to an end the Times of the Gentiles.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Commr. R. G. Studd), proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was carried with acclamation, and commenting on the paper, said: I do not like the suggestion that, if anybody had been "cute enough," he could, years ago, have forecasted certain important dates such as 1917, 1934, etc. The Holy Spirit only reveals prophetic truth at the appropriate moment, and prophecy seldom enables anyone to accurately forecast a specific event before it comes.

I agree with the lecturer's statement that the year-for-a-day principle cannot always be applied to every day mentioned in the Bible, but I am unable to agree with him when he suggests that it can never be applied.

Nor can I reject out of hand Grattan Guinness' chronology, for he had been amazingly right with regard to 1917, and it might well be that he was right with 1934. He specified that these dates were important dates connected with the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. 1917 saw the freeing of Jerusalem: 1934 saw the beginning of the Jews being thrust out by a Gentile nation (viz., Germany) and forced to go back to Palestine. Emigration as a result had leaped up from about 4,000 per annum to 48,000 per annum.

We need to remember that dates refer rather to the restoration of the Jews than to the end of the time of the Gentiles. The two periods appear to overlap to some extent.

It is interesting, further, to note that whatever school of prophecy we belong to, or whatever theories we may hold, all exponents of prophecy are united in their belief that the Return of Our Lord is imminent. Not only so, but men everywhere appear now to be living in expectation of a world crisis of some sort; witness these extracts from a City periodical concerned with commerce alone:—

"We know, beyond any peradventure, that Britain is now a land of paradox. Internally she is enjoying an unprecedented and unparalleled recovery. Externally she is beset with many dangers, both of politics and economics. Her recovery has

occurred within a trading world which has not itself restored prosperity. Her continued prosperity depends upon no political forces being permitted to upset the course of her external trade and the inflow of her food and raw materials. She has, in short, reached a momentum like that of a bicycle—it depends upon the maintenance of a most precarious balance. A sudden gust, an unexpected obstacle, a mistaken leaning to one side or another, and the momentum ends as the vehicle crashes to the ground.

“If we suppose that anything but this is the case, we allow optimism to deceive us. . . .

“The episode of Italy and Abyssinia cannot have been other than a stimulation to the aspirations of Germany. If the united Powers cannot prevent the annexation of territory by force, why should not the claims of any claimant be thrust forward aggressively, provided the claimant has the force to threaten and command? Until the force available to the keepers of justice is superior to that of the outragers, ordered life among the nations must remain impossible.

“We face, therefore, a world in which the already enunciated States’—like Italy, Germany and Japan—desires for expansion, for military dominance, for raw materials, may soon become insistent demands. This means that we have passed from the era of disarmament to that of rearmament with a vengeance. It was foreseen long ago. It was as far back as the spring that one observer of the European scene said, “We are out of the post-war era and into the pre-war era.

“What really are the probabilities? Unless those nations without territory and without adequate internal resources, but with a passion for building up large and overflowing populations, can expand by peaceful penetration, they must expand by force. . . . Any one of these avenues may be the cause of that wholesale world war which all dictates of common sense and experience tell us will be the end of Western civilisation.”

Almost the whole world acknowledges that we stand upon the eve of some great event, but only students of prophecy realise what that event is going to be.

Lastly, we are persuaded that the Lord's return is imminent because it seems as though the Holy Spirit is speaking to men's hearts particularly on this subject at the present time. There is a quickened interest in it among Christian people. At Keswick last year the feeling of expectancy was very noticeable. Although no address was devoted to the subject of our Lord's return, yet whenever casual reference was made to it, it was noticeable that there was a sort of thrill of expectancy which ran right through the tent, so much so that it was remarked upon by one of the speakers at one of the meetings towards the end of the week.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Ambrose Fleming, F.R.S.) said: I am much interested in the subject of the paper by Mr. Pitt, and I note his novel treatment of it. It is always an advantage to be led to new views of any old subject, especially one so important as the present one, although I cannot, however, agree with some of Mr. Pitt's conclusions.

At the outset of any discussion on the subject of unfulfilled prophecy there are two questions to be considered which seem to me to be fundamental. The first of these is whether scriptural prophecy has been given to us in such a form as to enable us to predict exactly the course and time of future events. Is it not rather given in such a form that, when it has been fulfilled, we can see such correspondence between prediction and events as to confirm our faith in the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures?

The second question is whether exact predetermination is possible at all when dealing with events concerning beings like ourselves possessing within limits the power of free choice or free will.

It is now recognised that even in physical phenomena exact predetermination is not always possible. Heisenberg, a German physicist, has shown that in phenomena connected with atoms and electrons there is a principle of indeterminacy. We cannot, for instance, fix or know *both* the position and the motion of the electron. In radioactive atoms, such as radium or thorium, the nuclei of some atoms burst, but we cannot tell why one nucleus should break up and not another. On the average, a certain number break up in a year or any fixed time.

There is the same indeterminacy about life and its duration. We cannot tell how long each one of us will live ; but the life insurance societies, dealing with statistics of an immense number of human lives, can fix with close approximation the expectation of human life at any age.

The same indeterminacy holds good of certain events in human activities. If we were to say to a farmer, "When shall you reap your cornfield ? ", he would not give a definite date because that day might be wet or stormy. He would say, "I shall reap it when it is ripe." And if we were to ask him when it will be ripe, he would say, "I must wait and see."

Now the end of the period of time we are discussing, viz., "The Times of the Gentiles," is evidently connected with another event called "the end of the Age," and that again with a time of selection or separating which our Lord mentions under the simile of a harvest ; and when speaking of it He said : "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. xxiv, 36); and He added : "neither the Son" (Mark xiii, 32). Even then, although the Will and foreknowledge of God the Father may have fixed that a certain event or events shall take place, He may have reserved to Himself the power of determining *when* it shall take place, conditioned by the state of affairs at that time. We are therefore told it will certainly take place ; but we are not given the information, or can be given it, as to the actual time excepting broadly and generally.

Thus whilst the Daniel prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks" or Seventy Sevens, coupled with our knowledge of the approximate dates of the decrees of Cyrus and Artaxerxes for the return of some of the expatriated Jews to rebuild the temple and the wall of Jerusalem, enables us to see in it a chronological prediction which was fulfilled, yet it never enabled the Jews to recognise Jesus of Nazareth, when He came, as the Messiah or Christ, and it is noteworthy that Christ himself never appealed to it to convince the Jewish Sanhedrom that he was the promised Messiah. There were vague or indeterminate convictions about that time that his coming was due, as shown by the statements of Simeon and Anna at the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple and by the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem.

Whilst it is unquestionable, then, that there will be an end to the present human government of man by man, and that a supreme world-wide theocracy or Kingdom of God will be set up on earth, beginning with the events of the Second Advent, all attempts hitherto made to fix a precise date have been falsified by events ; and I am not sure that they do not do more harm than good, because when nothing very striking occurs at the date humanly predicted, it encourages unbelievers to say : “ Where is the promise of His Coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation ” (II Peter iii, 4). It seems to me that the course of human history is very much like a long railway journey for a passenger in an hitherto unvisited country. The traveller cannot tell precisely the time at which he will arrive at the terminus, but, from the general view out of his carriage window, he can say to himself, “ It cannot now be long. The houses and buildings get close together and more numerous. The green fields and forests are left behind, and, now and again, the train slows up as the signals are set against it.” Can anyone, taking a broad glance at the world to-day, believe that human power alone will bring the world back to an era of universal peace and prosperity and abolish war, poverty, crime, and international contests ? Science has made the world smaller and given inventions which annihilate space, but it has also furnished weapons for mutual destruction.

As regards the year-day theory, whilst I agree with Mr. Pitt that there are considerable difficulties in its application, yet Grattan Guinness' prediction of the importance of the year 1917 was obtained by its help. Starting from the year 604 B.C., the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's sole reign, 2,520 years brought us to 1917 and the liberation of Jerusalem from the grip of Mohammedanism, enduring for more than 1,200 years. In addition, 1,335 days, taken as lunar years (*see* Daniel xii, 11), and dating from the Hegiva (A.D. 622), terminated at the same date.

In Ezekiel (Chapter iv) we have a distinct equation of “ each day for a year ” (Ez. iv, 6)—390 days and 40 days for a similar number of years. The year-day theory of interpretation has been strongly supported by such prophetic students as Professor T. R. Birks, Mr. Elliot and Grattan Guinness.

I am rather dubious as to the correctness of Mr. Pitt's forecast of events towards the end of his paper. The view that Anti-Christ is a person, who will be elected by Jews as king, is not in accordance with the use of the word in the only places in which it is used in Scripture, viz., the Epistles of St. John. St. John writes of "many Anti-Christ" (I John ii, 18), and again, that he is Anti-Christ "that denieth the Father and the Son." The prefix *anti* is equivalent to *vice* as in Vice-President. It is thus any doctrine, or system, of worship, which puts anything in front of, or in place of Christ as an object of worship.

Now what we are seeing in Europe at the present time in Germany, Italy and Russia is the old revived worship of the State as supreme.

Mr. Renan, in his Hibbert Lectures, 1880, says with regard to similar ideas in the Roman Empire that the real object of worship of the Romans was the empire itself. The emperors encouraged this because it enabled them to pose as divine, or objects of worship. They did not object to other objects of worship, provided they were included. "Let men worship other gods or not as they pleased, but if they refused to offer homage to Rome and the emperors, they were not merely irreligious persons, but bad citizens." The Christians were persecuted not because they worshipped Christ, but because they would not worship the State and the emperors as well. It is quite out of the question to suppose that Mussolini or any successor can restore the old Roman Empire and conquer France, Germany, and the whole Near East; but he is reviving the Roman worship of the State as supreme, and, in that sense, is an Anti-Christ, as St. John uses the term.

As regards all else in the womb of the future, we must "wait and see." But all present events strongly indicate we are in the time of the End, and that the stone cut out without hands is now falling on the feet of the great image seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and that we are approaching the time when the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but shall break in pieces all present kingdoms, and shall stand for ever.

The Rev. C. W. COOPER, F.G.S., said: To my mind the main statements of the paper are built upon mistaken conceptions of

“The Times of the Gentiles.” On page 15, para. 3, the writer states, “The Times of the Gentiles began A.D. 70,” and further says this is implied by our Lord’s words (Luke xxi, 24), “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Surely this statement stands self-condemned, for it is beyond dispute that Jerusalem was at that time under the dominance of Gentile Rome, and had been under the dominance of the Gentile nations, since Nebuchadnezzar set up the first of the Babylonian succession of Gentile empires.

The plain meaning of the words of our Lord is that Jerusalem would continue to be “trodden down by the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled,” which occurred, at least in part, in 1917, when Jerusalem was set free by the victory of General Allenby, after 2,520 years of Gentile domination.

The same statements and the same claim, made in other passages, *e.g.*, page 16, lines 12–14, that “the Times of the Gentiles is covered by A.D. 70 till the Millennium,” is shown to be erroneous by the fact that our Lord bids us, in the parallel passage of St. Matt. xxiv, 15, to read and understand Daniel’s prophecies.

The four Gentile kingdoms were to stand as an image, intact (Dan. ii), until, not the introduction of Christ’s Kingdom, in the first century A.D., but until the “victorious” coming in of the stone Kingdom of God, which clearly marks the Times of the Gentiles as beginning with Nebuchadnezzar’s dominance, lasting until those Gentile Kingdoms are crushed.

So again with the fourth chapter of Daniel. “The Stump” of Nebuchadnezzar’s tree of Sin (not Nebuchadnezzar himself, but his Gentile anti-God kingdom) was to remain in the earth until “seven times” passed over it (Dan. iv, 23). The same teaching with regard to the “seven times” is repeated in the subsequent chapters of Daniel.

Hence, I consider it a grave error to say that Scripture does not represent that the Times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar as stated (p. 13, line 46).

The writer of this paper makes a strange statement on page 16, lines 12–14. Surely, God’s “plan of the ages” began in the time of

Genesis, and the Old and New Testaments are the history of the Israel and Judah nations unfolding that plan.

All Israel had so sinned against God that He punished them by allowing (Dan. ii, 37 says it was God's doing) Nebuchadnezzar to set up kingdoms contrary to God's kingdom. This was part of God's plan, but their overthrow after "seven times" was also part of His "plan of the ages."

It is strange that the writer should say on page 3, paragraph 9, "There is, of course, a lesser sense in which the Times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar," but why insert the words "only temporary"? All the chapters in Daniel say that dominance was to last the seven times, *i.e.*, 2,520 years, and the Book of Revelation speaks of the coming of the last half of these times, as time, times and half a time, *i.e.*, 1,260 days or 42 months—when the "Babylon" Gentile Kingdoms will be finally overthrown.

In view of these few references of Scripture as to the duration of the Times of the Gentiles, we are amazed to read the statement, on page 16, lines 18–20, "there is no chronological scheme in Scripture applicable to the Gentiles."

This confusion arises through the writer failing to see that the term Times of the Gentiles is synonymous in meaning with the Scripture use of the word "Babylon." I have examined every reference, throughout Scripture, to this name Babylon and in every case I find that each reference has but one of two meanings each made clear by the context, *viz.*, either it is a passing reference to the historical city, or a reference to a world rule and blighting influence in opposition to God's Kingdom.

I challenge the writer to produce one Scripture passage which states that "Babylon" is the Papacy, as the paper assumes on page 8. The Papacy, no doubt, is part of the false spiritual ruling power in the Babylonian kingdoms.

The Babylon of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation is to this day to be found in the kingdoms of this world, with its unscriptural system of economics, usury, etc., while the Kingdom of God is the kingdom over which Jesus is King and over which He will yet rule in Person until "the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our God."

Colonel A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE said : God addresses Himself in the present dispensation to three classes of people : the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God ; the last named, composed of all true believers, Jews and Gentiles who form the " Body " or Church of Christ. We do not know exactly when this Body commenced, or when it will be completed ; but we do know both Jew and Gentile existed before it did commence, and will continue on the earth after its completion. From this we gather that the Times of the Gentiles are related to the Jew, and have nothing to do with the Body of Christ. Times and seasons are given in the Bible in their duration, and not in reference to their starting-point, or their termination. Anno Dei reckoning ceases sometimes whilst Anno Mundi reckoning goes on, and it is governed according to God's Divine counsels concerning His people Israel.

In Daniel ii, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we are shown that five world powers would possess Jerusalem. Since all these powers have a previous existence before they get possession of the city, they are reckoned only as they obtained possession of Jerusalem. The five powers are those of Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Greece, Rome, and Islam. The real sign of the ending of these times must therefore be the removal of the Mohammedan power from the land of Israel (Luke xxi, 24, " Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled "). Has not the treading down ceased since 1915-17 ? Should not the Times of the Gentiles be understood to mean " the Times of the Gentile possession of Jerusalem " ? These five kingdoms are all in existence to-day, and in verses 34, 35 of this chapter (Dan. ii) it is foretold that they shall be broken in pieces together by Messiah's Kingdom.

The important question arises as to where are we now. In answering that question we have three New Testament prophecies given by our Lord : the first in the Temple (Luke xxi) ; the other two on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv ; Mark xiii). They deal with these three problems : (1) When shall these things be ? (2) What shall be the Sign of Thy Coming ? (3) What shall be the Sign of the Consummation of the Age ?

Luke xxi, 12, is very significant and says *before* all these, *i.e.*, before the Great Tribulation, and all that is recorded concerning

Jerusalem (verses 12 to 24). Between verse 24 and verse 25 our Lord passes over this dispensation and takes up the time of the end. There are two different words for "end," one, *sunteleia*, meaning the meeting-time of two ages—a transitional period; the other, *telos*, the actual end, in this case three and a half years. The *sunteleia* will probably be not less than 30 years, and not more than 40. During this period large numbers of Jews will be settled in Jerusalem. With some "form of government" they will be able to make a covenant for seven years with a Roman prince called Anti-Christ, who will be a member of the fourth iron power, because that power destroyed the city and the sanctuary. In the future they cause the sacrifice to cease, etc., after breaking their seven years' covenant.

What of the *fullness* of the Gentiles? At the end of the *telos* our Lord appears visibly to destroy Anti-Christ and his power. He sits on the Throne of His Glory for 1,000 years; and before Him there are gathered "representatives" of all Gentile nations. There is no resurrection, but the nations are judged, and some pass on to enjoy millennial glory, while others are removed. Surely this is "great grace" or "fullness," and is for the world like *life from the dead*, inasmuch as He has received His own people the Jews again (Rom. xi, 15).

The "Body of Christ," what of it? All from the grave, or else, some from life and the majority from the grave, will be "received up into Glory," "called on High," just as the Head of the Body was. Glory to His Name.

Mr. G. WILSON HEATH said: Mr. Pitt opens by selecting a date, 606 B.C., which years ago was thought to be correct chronology but which is at variance with modern chronology by more than a hundred years.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Pitt uses this to cast discredit upon the "day-year" interpretation of the prophetic number 2,520, and upon "day-year" reckoning generally.

If Mr. Pitt's datum B.C. line is, say, a hundred years too ancient, then his deductions on this "day-year" results are at fault.

If a more recent and more accurate B.C. datum line had been adopted, the 2,520 result might be expected at, say, 100 years

hence. My opinion is that Mr. Pitt's argument fails. Mr. Pitt finds himself compelled to accept modern chronology, and the "day-year" theory, when he deals with the 70 weeks of Daniel ix. His datum line, then, must be 452-4 B.C. as the "20th year of Artaxerxes," from which the 490 years (70 weeks) must commence if the coming of "the Anointed Prince," and the "cutting off" of the same is to coincide with the dates A.D. 26-29. I humbly suggest it is a mistake to refuse the "day-year" dates in connection with 2,520 year, and to use "day-year" dates to support the theory of the 70 weeks of Daniel ix. Those who refuse the "gap" theory in connection with the 70 weeks of Daniel ix, because Scripture states the 70 weeks are a "determined" or specially cut off and completed period, thankfully accept the "gap" period, say, in connection with Luke iv, 19, or the great "gap," the present interval of grace between the casting off of Israel and the future reception of Israel, this wonderful interval or "gap" when God in grace is calling out from Jew and Gentile a people to be Christ's co-heirs, His Body, the Church.

We affirm that the "determined" period of 70 weeks or 490 years, was given to Israel as a *final period of probation*, and that it ended at the cruel murder of Stephen, the man "full of the Holy Spirit," in, say, A.D. 35. Sin against the "Son of Man" was to be forgiven, but sin against the Holy Spirit would have no forgiveness (Matt. xii, 32). From then to now, and onwards, Israel are a scattered people, until He comes to set up His kingdom and reign.

Messiah was to be cut off "after" the 69 weeks (Dan. ix, 26), in the midst of the 70th week. He was anointed by the Holy Ghost at His baptism at the close of the 69th week. Then for three years or so He presented Himself to Israel and was then "cut off." They cried, "We have no king but Cæsar." Kingship was taken from Israel and given to Nebuchadnezzar and the Gentile powers, and will remain so, "as the Times of the Gentile," until the true King comes and crushes the colossal image of Daniel ii to fine dust.

The Rev. H. C. MORTON, B.A., Ph.D., said: I should have liked to follow up Sir Ambrose's argument and to show that it is not generally dates, but conditions and events to which the Bible

directs us. I rejoice over all so-called "indeterminacy," which frees us from the bondage of necessity and leaves room for real human freedom both in life and history.

It is very good to find myself in agreement with Mr. Pitt that there is very doubtful Biblical ground for assigning 2,520 years to the Times of the Gentiles; but I am bound to say that to me there seems even less Biblical assurance for certain statements made dogmatically by Mr. Pitt himself.

The "seven times" of Lev. xxvi is altogether too doubtful in its significance for anything more than a hesitant suggestion to be based upon it. But "more" in "seven times more" evidently is a mere mark of emphasis, and will not bear Mr. Pitt's meaning: vv. 18 and 21 say "seven times more"; vv. 24 and 28 only "seven times." Things which make one think it just possible that it *does* mean 2,520 years are: i, that the half of that period so often appears in the Bible; ii, that one or two notable dates, like 1917 and the deliverance of Jerusalem, fit into the 2,520 scheme of things. I should have liked such a paper as Mr. Pitt's to deal closely with two such issues as these.

Quite a large number of affirmations in this paper make me feel very critical. They are like the affirmations so common from some speakers at Advent Testimony meetings, for which no Biblical ground is given or presumably can be given. Just to take four out of the many:—

- i. That the "fullness of the Gentiles" "indicates the Church parenthesis as in the 60th and 70th weeks of Daniel ix."
- ii. That the "fullness of the Gentiles" will end with the removal of the Church.
- iii. That the Times of the Gentiles will continue seven years longer than "the fullness of the Gentiles."
- iv. That the Coming of the Son of Man will bring to an end the Times of the Gentiles.

There is already much confusion in the interpretation of what is called "prophecy"; but the many statements like these make the confusion worse confounded. I strongly contend that no dogmatic statements like these should be made unless there is clear and

definite Bible proof to be adduced on their behalf. I wish Mr. Pitt had confined himself to an attempt to test and adjudicate upon the common views, so stoutly advanced, as to the period called "The Times of the Gentiles." It would be a real gain to get *something* clearly settled by sound and convincing argument. I believe Mr. Pitt to be definitely without proof of each of the four statements quoted above. In this I may be quite mistaken and Mr. Pitt quite right. But what I look for in such a paper is clear proof of Scripture upon a Bible subject; and it is just clear proof from Scripture which he does not attempt.

Mr. H. W. BRYNING said: There are several points in Mr. Pitt's paper that are contrary to the teaching of the inspired words of prophecy, and, as the time allotted for debate is very short, it would be difficult to take up all the points that appear to me as unscriptural.

We are, however, in agreement regarding the truth of prophecy, though we may differ in interpreting its significance, particularly in regard to the beginning and ending of the Times of the Gentiles.

Students of prophecy do not appear to realise the significance in the subdivision of the seventy weeks into three sections that were historically fulfilled—but not without a break of thirty years between each. This break may be seen in the time which elapsed from the Decree of Cyrus to the first Decree of Artaxerxes, which was occupied only in the building of the Temple of Solomon. Grattan Guinness shows the period to have been 79 years (*i.e.*, 49 plus 30).

Therefore, the threescore and two weeks could not have begun to count until the way was prepared "to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince."

The whole period from the Decree of Cyrus is thus to be taken as 69 weeks-of-years plus 30 years, which makes the interval to the Nativity 513 years instead of (69×7) 483 years.

Now the seventieth week obviously began with the "anointing" of the Messiah, who began His ministry at the age of 30. Thus another interval of 30 years was included in the prophecy so as to try those who were wise in their own conceit in that day.

It was in the midst of this week that the Messiah was "cut off," but not for Himself; and, according to the text, the covenant

which was to be confirmed with many was so confirmed by the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews first, for three and a half years, and then to the Gentiles, among whom were the other lost sheep of the House of Israel, to whom our Lord sent out the 12 disciples, for all those were "*lost sheep*" who had walked contrary to God.

The "Times" of the Gentiles therefore began when the reigning "house" of Judah came under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the "head of gold" of his dream-image, which Daniel interpreted as being *the first* in a series of world empires.

This Gentile dominion over Israel was established in the fourth year of Jehoiakim and continued without a break until, as explained by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, Jerusalem ceased to be trodden down of the Gentiles.

Now the treading down of the Holy City came to an end when the British Forces occupied Jerusalem without opposition during the Great War. This outstanding incident of the war surely points to Divine intervention and approval of the nation into whose custody it passed, and has remained ever since A.D. 1917.

The date of this event, therefore, furnished what was required to ascertain the date of the Nativity in terms of the modern calendar; for no certain *datum* is known for the years "B.C." by present reckoning.

The end being thus given of the prophetic period, it is easy to ascertain the date of the beginning, and thereby learn the dates of the three periods as truly given to Daniel by the Angel of the Lord. Acting upon the revelation given, I believe that the correct date of the Nativity is 3 B.C., as shown below. The figures are quoted from a brochure on World Chronology, which I am engaged upon.

Extract from World Chronology.

Items	A.C.	B.C.	A.D.
Nebuchadnezzar's Year 1, Jehoiakim's			
Year 4, and the first year of Gentile			
dominion in the world	3430	604	
Jerusalem destroyed	3448	586	
Year 1 of Cyrus	3518	516	
,, 7 of Artaxerxes	3597	437	
The Nativity	4031	3	

Extract from World Chronology—continued.

Items	A.C.	B.C.	A.D.
“ The Anointing of Messiah ”... ..	4061		28
The Crucifixion	4064½		31½
Jerusalem destroyed by Titus	4134		70
Jerusalem handed over to the British Forces... ..	5950		1917
Judah’s <i>seven times</i> expires	6968		1935

Note.—This closes prophetic chronology from the Bible, but there is another date, which may concern what is written in Isaiah xxvi, 20, regarding the protection of God’s people during the “*time of trouble,*” which should end in 1936, according to the symbol of protection in the King’s Chamber, and revealed through the Chronology of the “*Witness in Stone.*”

MR. T. FITZGERALD wrote : I welcome Mr. Pitt’s paper, and I am glad the Victoria Institute has included in its syllabus a paper on such an important and momentous subject. All devout students of prophecy will appreciate any contribution to the fuller understanding of what is called Dispensational Truth. Augustine’s words are as true to-day as when uttered : “ Distinguish the dispensations, and then the Scriptures will agree together.”

There is a great deal in Mr. Pitt’s paper with which I entirely agree, but there are some statements open to criticism. While the lecturer grants that in a lesser sense the Times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar, he urges the view that the Lord Jesus definitely related the Times of the Gentiles to the treading down of Jerusalem upon its destruction by Titus in A.D. 70, and that it would seem to be from that date that the Times of the Gentiles, in the full sense, should be reckoned.

We need to determine the exact meaning of the words used in Scripture. “ The Times of the Gentiles ” have a definite and distinct meaning. The plural form of *kairos*, which is used, signifies fixed or appointed periods of limited duration : not *one* period only, but *several*, and each of these periods characterised by distinctive events. Then the plural form of *ethnos* is used to denote not *one*

nation, but that *several* nations are related to the times, each nation a distinctive people, "living under common institutions" but having a destined time-limit to its course.

We have, further, the words "shall be trodden down," expressing power to subjugate, to dominate what has been conquered. Jerusalem stands for the centre of Jewish government, and represents the whole of Palestine.

This analysis conveys the meaning that our Lord predicted that Jerusalem would at a future day be compassed with armies, and that the Gentiles, who then held sway, would continue their domination until the "Times of the Gentiles" (a retrospective and prospective term)—times which had their beginning when power was given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar—reached their appointed end in "the end time."

The Jews and their land have never been released from the foreign yoke since Nebuchadnezzar's day. The nation of Israel has been in the condition of Lo-ammi, "Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God" (Hos. i, 9), since the words were written, and they still apply.

There was a remnant in Palestine necessary for the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the forerunner and the advent of the Messiah, but Jerusalem and the land were under Gentile rule.

Definite nations were destined to rule over Palestine, and the duration of their rule was fixed. Hence Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome each held sway in their turn and then were set aside. The present domination of the Gentile over Palestine, no doubt, has its predetermined limit, for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv, 18); but there is no revelation in Scripture as to the length of time the present domination will endure, just as there is no revelation in Scripture when the present "Day of Grace" will close.

When, however, the conditions depicted by Daniel and confirmed by our Lord arrive (Dan. ix, 27; Matt. xxiv, 15), then the wise will understand, and will learn from the books that their deliverance is at hand (Dan. xii, 10; ix, 2; Luke xxi, 28).

There is just one other point. Is it correct to state that "Since those days the Jews have been excluded from their land by Saracens and Turks until the Great War"? Surely Jews have lived there,

but life had been almost unbearable owing to the cruelty of Turkish officials and oppressive taxation.

Mr. L. E. JOSE wrote : We have reason to be grateful to Mr. Pitt for his watchman's call ; and we lift up our heads and look along the landscape of contemporary events to the horizon, and thence to the sky above. The constructive suggestions in the paper are the essentials which we shall ponder in our hearts. But my comment deals with a, perhaps, lesser matter which, yet, should not be passed over. In throwing one beam of light on the last days, the lecturer has tried to shut off another, for the year-day theory is actually and exactly fulfilled in the soli-lunar cycles. This may be—

- (1) Coincidence (which seems unlikely).
- (2) The result of an ancient knowledge of celestial cycles, deliberately expressed in symbolic terms, which were quoted or otherwise used in the Book of Daniel, and again in the Apocalypse.
- (3) The direct inspiration of God.

Further, the prophetic times have been fulfilled again and again in accordance with this theory.

Mr. Pitt's argument that it is wrong, because nowhere plainly stated in Scripture, would rule out a good part of the things spoken in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Christ, *e.g.*, Rachel weeping in Rama for her children. No reference to Bethlehem or Herod, or the Wise Men ; apparently a prediction of local and contemporary application. The meaning of God's promises and sentences is often concealed till the right time comes and the right people.

The late Dr. Grattan Guinness laid stress on the gradual illumination of God's people as the end draws near. The light shines more and more, but each increase of daylight retains some darkness and error. And this seems exemplified in his own wonderful contribution, with its indisputable and exact illumination, united again and again with a mistake, or misapprehension. His long-spun-out and crowded pages are veritable gold mines of treasure for our earnest search and study. The fall of the Turkish power in

Jerusalem and the fall of the Caliphate and Sultanate at the next indicated point warn us to ponder with pure hearts and hushed earnestness what may have passed before our blind eyes in 1934.

May it not be that *every* school of thought is basically right—picture-thought, spiritual, præterist, presentist, futurist? Deep principles fulfil themselves with exactitude in many ways and many spheres; yet in each human interpretation there is likely to be error and ignorance and confusion of thought in details and in generalisations. But with God's elect the darkness departs as the dawn approaches. His ways are higher than our ways; His thoughts than our thoughts. His way is one, with many expressions. And our part is not to wrangle, but to watch and watch and watch, with eagerness and mutual encouragement (such as Mr. Pitt offers); for in such an hour *as we think not* the Son of Man cometh.

Dr. NORMAN S. DENHAM, D.Litt., wrote: I am in general agreement with the lecturer, but would point out that in his adherence to a specious interpretation of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks he is ultimately supporting the system of prognostication which he rightly deprecates.

If anyone will trouble to check Sir Robert Anderson's calculation of the sixty-nine weeks in *The Coming Christ*, he will find that the sum exceeds the true total of days by ten. But, even if the epochs of reference were correct, which they are not, why may we calculate a *Jewish* prophetic period given to Daniel in 459 B.C. (received 538) in terms of Julian dating formulated by the Roman, Julius Cæsar, in 46 B.C.?

No prophetic period in the Bible has been fulfilled in other than ordinary Jewish calendar years. The termini always bore defined, God-given demarcations. No pseudo-prophet can clearly define from Scripture what was signified to happen in 1917 or 1934. There has been failure to inquire into the system of Biblical time reckoning. It was inclusive. Orientals did not compute, as we do, in intervals. Neither has the question of the accuracy of Ptolemy's Canon been raised. It is palpably incorrect for the Persian era; hence any significance of dates founded on the hypothetical period of 2,520 years fails.

There are eclipses and festivals noted by historians—Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, Eusebius, etc.—which are not satisfied by the received system of years. There is one, and only one, series of years which will satisfy these notices, because, for instance, in the space of 25 years only, not less than five solar eclipses and two Olympic years are noted. The issue must result in the telescoping of the Persian era very considerably, and the right solution will agree precisely with the true interpretation of the Seventy Weeks.

I would heartily endorse the lecturer's statement that prophetic years do not measure the times of the Church or Gentile nations, except that these times are given for our instruction, and for the benefit of those who shall pass through the Great Tribulation, when the Church of God has been gathered Home.

Mr. G. B. MICHELL wrote: With one exception I am in cordial agreement with the whole of this paper. The exception may seem to some hypercritical, but, for the accuracy of the Scriptures, it is important. I refer to the term "prophetic year" for 360 days. This period is not a year in any sense of the term, and is *never* so called in the Bible. It is invariably called a "*time*" (*mo'ed*). This word (or any other) does not occur in Leviticus xxvi. The word there used on every occasion is *sheba'*, *i.e.*, *sevenfold* in one word, and has no reference whatever to time. Ever since I first met with the expression "prophetic year," in Grattan Guinness' works, more than fifty years ago, I have protested against its use. There is only one kind of year used in the Bible, and it was absolutely accurate, namely, the true solar year of 365½ days, regulated by the Egyptian observations of the heliacal rising of Sothis. The lunar "year," of 12 lunations, was observed only for festival purposes, and never ran consecutively for more than four years. It was then adjusted to the solar year. It could not, therefore, be used for consecutive lunar periods for chronological purposes.

The excuse put forward for the "year-day" theory is Ezekiel iv, 5, 6. This, however, is the reverse, not a year for a day, but a day for a year!

I agree that "the Pope is as much in favour of the conquest of Abyssinia as Mussolini himself." The Vatican has always hated

every form of the Eastern Church more intensely than any other error, even Islam.

W. BELL DAWSON, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.C., wrote: It would not be possible in any reasonable space to reply fully to the many questions brought up by the Rev. F. W. Pitt on "The Times of the Gentiles"; but it may be allowable to draw attention to the following points:—

(1) Periods predicted in Scripture relate to the limitation of "evil times," or periods of trial and difficulty for the people of God. This is evident all through Scripture, as in the 400 years of servitude in Egypt, the 40 years in the Wilderness, and the Babylonian Captivity. It is thus contrary to the whole tenor of prophecy that the Second Advent should be fixed by the ending of a period.

(2) The purpose of the predicted period is to maintain hope, and to awaken expectation of deliverance when the end draws near. This is clear from the above examples, as well as the Seventy Weeks to the Messiah, which did so very notably.

(3) The long periods beginning in Daniel's time were not to be understood until the "Time of the end." We find, accordingly, that it was only at the Reformation that correct exposition of the periods began.

(4) At that era also the principle of "a year for a day" became definitely established. In regard to the prevalence of this view a recent work (1935) may be cited, which explains exhaustively the interpretation of prophecy throughout the Christian era: *The Impelling Force of Prophetic Truth*, by L. R. Conradi. (See pp. 338-39, and other references to the matter.)

(5) It is to be regretted that the author of this paper, by laying out the future so definitely, disregards the sound warning of Sir Isaac Newton, who was a deep student of the prophecies. He says: "The folly of interpreters has been to foretell . . . as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have . . . brought prophecy into contempt."

It has always been difficult for those who live in a time of crisis, as we do at present, to perceive the true significance of events. But are we not much in the position of Daniel when Babylon had already given place to Persia, and deliverance had not come? He

makes his appeal to God, in view of the predicted period in Jeremiah, for the time seemed to be up. Would it not be well, therefore, if the whole Church would now make this its prayer: "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

MR. PITT'S REPLY.

If by the "Times of the Gentiles" is meant that period during which Israel is a subject race, then, as I admit in my paper, the "Times" began in 606 B.C. But if the "Times of the Gentiles" means the period in which God has no governmental dealings with or through Israel, then they began after the stoning of Stephen in accordance with the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans.

When the "Times of the Gentiles" began is of minor importance to my exposition of the manner of their ending which was so vehemently opposed by Dr. Morton, although I am in agreement with the vast majority of prophetic students to-day. But when the Times of the Gentiles began is vital to those who contend without any Scripture authority that they will last for 2,520 years. By the aid of the year-for-a-day theory a number of interpreters have calculated that the Times would end in 1934.

Passing over the remarks of those speakers who said nothing more against my paper than that they do not agree with me, let us test the so-called chronologic system so ably expounded by Dr. Grattan Guinness, for, after all, the correctness of a theory depends on how it works out.

Dr. Guinness, in *Light for the Last Days*, new edition, p. 6, states that "Daniel's prophecies foretold the events of twenty-five centuries, the existence of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires, and represent them as occupying the entire interval between the prophet's own days and *the day of the resurrection of the dead and the establishment of the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of God on earth.*"

That is quite plain enough, and Dr. Guinness proceeds to calculate the date when the 2,520 years begin. He finds three dates, but the latest of them brings us to the year 1934. Here are his words (p. 255):—

"Yet we must call attention to a further interesting fact connected with the *last possible measure* of this comprehensive and wonderful

'Seven Times' that starting from the capture of Zedekiah and the burning of the temple in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar and terminating in 1934. The termination of the 'times of the Gentiles' meets at this point the 1,335 lunar years dated from the Omar capture of Jerusalem, an event even more momentous in its effects on Palestine and Jerusalem than the Hegira era of the commencement of Mahomedanism.

"No chronologic prophecy of Scripture indicates any date whatever beyond this year, as astronomic considerations forbid the thought that the supplementary seventy-five (see Daniel xii, 11, 12) is to be added to these solar measures."

Nothing can be more explicit than these statements. According to Dr. Guinness, Daniel's prophecies foretold the Times of the Gentiles as lasting 2,520 years, from 587 B.C. to A.D. 1934. In the latter year the resurrection of the dead would take place and the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of God would be established on earth.

Do the facts prove the correctness of this system of interpretation? "If the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing the Lord hath not spoken" (Deut. xviii, 22).

1934 is gone and we are in 1936, but the dead have not been raised and the Kingdom of God is not established on earth.

One speaker referred to the rise of Hitler as being a sufficiently important event to justify Dr. Guinness in fixing on 1934 as the last of the 2,520 years, which means that instead of the resurrection of the dead and the Kingdom of God, we have Hitler. That is as bad as asking us to believe that when God says a day He means a year. Such excuses only emphasise the futility and even absurdity of the chronologic system so learnedly and powerfully supported by Dr. Guinness.

But we are told there must be something in the chronologic prophetic method. Did not Guinness foretell the deliverance of Palestine from the Turk in 1917? No, he did not, though we have been assured scores of times that he did. What he said about that memorable year was: "There can be no question that those who live to see this year 1917 will have reached one of the most important, perhaps *the* most momentous of these terminal years of crises" (*Light*, p. 255).

There is nothing about the Jews or Jerusalem, or anything definite, and if instead of Jerusalem being captured, Mussolini had appeared in that year, it would probably have been said that Dr. Guinness had foretold the coming of Mussolini.

If Dr. Guinness's system really indicated the release of Palestine in 1917, surely it should have again proved itself seventeen years later in 1934. But it was proved to be false and unreliable. If it was right for 2,502 years of the 2,520 it ought not to have gone to pieces with the crowning day, which is the climax of prophecy.

I have dealt in my paper with the fanciful year-for-a-day theory, so I need not refer to that again except to correct a misstatement of fact. Two of the speakers suggested that I was inconsistent in repudiating the year-for-a-day theory because, they alleged, I resorted to it in my reference to Daniel's Seventy Weeks. The charge would be true if Daniel's weeks were weeks of days, but they are not. Bishop Horsley says that it is false to say that the Hebrew word for sevens means seven days, and that "he must be a baby in Hebrew literature or a giant in effrontery that will deny this."

The seventy sevens are sevens of years of 360 days each; there is therefore no necessity to resort to the year-for-a-day theory as $70 \times 7 = 490$ years of 360 days each.