

THE TIME IS AT HAND

STUDY I

SPECIAL TIMES AND SEASONS DIVINELY APPOINTED

The Times and Seasons of Divine Appointment – Why Not More Plainly Stated – In Due Time Revealed – Earnest Desire to Know the Times and Seasons Commendable – Mistakes of Adventists – The Real Object of Time Prophecies – Our Present Position – The Object of Succeeding Chapters.

AS in "THE PLAN OF THE AGES" we endeavored to set forth the prominent outlines of the divine arrangement for human salvation from a purely Scriptural standpoint, so it is the purpose of this volume to show, on the same authority, that the various features of that plan have definitely appointed times and seasons for their accomplishment; that, so far as that plan has progressed, each succeeding feature of it has been accomplished exactly on time; and that *the time is now at hand* for its culmination in the blessing of all the families of the earth. Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:16

During the long centuries of the Gospel age, the Church, as instructed by her Lord, has prayed, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But, like drowsy children, because the time was long, many have almost forgotten the import of the words that now seem to die upon their lips. To all such whose hearts are still loyal to the Lord, we call in the words of the Apostle Paul, "It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the [Millennial] day is at hand." Yea, it is even at the doors. The kingdom of heaven is now at hand, not in its mere embryotic or incipient stage, as at our Lord's first advent (Matt. 3:2), but in the sense in which he declared it was yet to come (John 18:36, 37)—"in power and great glory."

Only those, however, who have made a careful study of the Plan of the Ages will be prepared to appreciate the teaching of this volume concerning the divinely appointed times and seasons for the development of the various features of that plan, and for its final consummation. It is hoped that none will undertake this study, therefore, before they have thoroughly comprehended the lessons of the preceding volume. Otherwise it will not be meat in due season to them. Truth is only meat in season when we are prepared to receive it. A child is not prepared to solve a mathematical problem until he

has first been instructed in the use of figures and of language. So also with divine truth: it is built up step by step, and to gain an understanding of it we must ascend by the steps provided—carefully, of course, proving by the Scriptures every advance step we take, yet not fearful to take the steps as we thus find for them sure footing. Only those who have implicit faith in God, and to whom a "Thus saith the Lord" is the end of all doubt and controversy, can be led by the Spirit of God into advanced truth as it becomes due—led into things new, as well as confirmed in things old and proved true by the same authority.

Only such, God proposes so to lead. In the end of the age, which is the harvest time, much truth is due to be uncovered, which God did not make known in times past, even to his most faithful and devoted children. It was in *the time of the end* that the Prophet Habakkuk (2:3) declared that the vision, concerning the glorious consummation of God's plan, should speak and not lie; and that to some of God's children it should speak so plainly that they would be able, as directed, to make it plain on tables; that through their instrumentality others might be enabled to read it clearly: and then Daniel also (12:4, 9, 10) declared that knowledge should be increased, and that the wise (through faith) should understand the vision.

Our object here is not to prophesy out of the abundance of human imagination, nor in any sense to be wise above what is written in the sacred Scriptures. Therefore, discarding all human inventions, we keep close to the fountain of divine truth, endeavoring to read prophecy in the light of prophecy and its manifest fulfilment; and to make plain upon tables that which God said would be sealed up, and which therefore could not be understood before this time of the end, but of which he gave assurance that it should *then* be understood.

In this volume we offer a chain of testimony on

the subject of God's appointed times and seasons, each link of which we consider Scripturally strong, while the whole of it when viewed together, in the relationship which one part bears to another, gives evidence of a plan so broad and comprehensive, a design so deep, and a harmony so perfect, as to clearly manifest to the studious and reverent inquirer that it is beyond the breadth and depth of human thought, and therefore cannot be of human origin.

We find that the end of the Gospel age, like the end of the Jewish age, is called a harvest (Matt. 9:37; 13:24, 30, 39); that like that also, it is a period of forty years; and that upon the harvests of the ages the rays of prophetic testimony are specially concentrated, particularly upon the harvest of this age, where even all the light of the Jewish age—because of its typical character—converges in a glorious focus. In this light we may now distinctly see the stately steppings of our God, not only in the long vista of the ages past, but also in the present outworkings of his plan. And not only so, but according to his promise to show us things to come (John 16:13), we see, with wonderful distinctness of vision, his wise policy for the blessing of all in the incoming Millennial age—even down to its glorious consummation in the restitution of all things. We find that many great and wonderful events center in this harvest: that in it occur the great time of trouble, the day of Jehovah; the final and complete overthrow of Antichrist and the fall of Great Babylon; the beginning of returning favor to the Jew; the second advent of our Lord and the establishment of his kingdom; and the resurrection and reward of the saints.

We find in prophecy the beginning and the ending of this harvest period clearly marked, as well as the events due to occur in it. And to call attention to and trace the various lines of prophetic time to the events in which they culminate is, in substance, the object of this volume. To receive its testimony, the reader will need to have an ear to hear (Rev. 2:7; Matt. 11:15), and must expect meekly to cast away many preconceived opinions as fast as he comes to see their lack of harmony with God's Word. To such as are thus minded, and who pursue the lessons of this volume with patience and care, and in the order of their arrangement, we doubt not it will be a great

blessing. If its lessons are received into good and honest hearts, we trust it will be a power to separate them from the world and to ripen them as wheat for the garner. To thus quicken and ripen and separate the saints, as wheat from tares, in this time of harvest, is the object for which, we apprehend, these prophecies now unfolding were designed by our Lord.

Those permitted to view God's grand chart of the ages, which so clearly maps out the orderly arrangement, the deep design and the wonderful scope of the divine plan as set forth in the preceding volume, should be anxious to discover whatever God may be pleased to reveal concerning its times and seasons. Their interest in this subject should be many fold greater than that of any in the past ages who did not see the great blessings in reservation for all. Faithful children of God long to know when the King of Glory shall come in, and the prince of darkness be bound; when the children of the light shall shine forth as the sun, and the darkness be scattered; when the saints shall be received into full divine adoption, and the groaning creation released from the bondage of corruption; and when our heavenly Father's glorious character shall be fully revealed to an astonished world, causing all who love righteousness to bow their hearts in adoration and love and obedience.

To be devoid of such desires indicates a lack of interest in, and appreciation of, God's plans. The apostles, the prophets and the angels all desired and sought earnestly to know what *time* the spirit of God indicated through the prophets. And this interest on the part of his children is ever pleasing to God; for though he never heretofore gratified such desires to any considerable extent, because the due time had not yet come, he never once chided such interest. On the contrary, he called the inquiring Daniel greatly beloved, and answered his inquiry so far as was consistent with his plan.

Such inquiry, therefore, should not be regarded as an improper prying into the secrets of God. God would have us manifest that interest in his plans which would "search the Scriptures," and "take heed to the sure word of prophecy," and thus be in that proper, waiting attitude which will quickly discern the truth as it becomes *due*. Secret things belong

unto God, but things revealed belong unto us and our children forever. (Deut. 29:29) Therefore, if we confine ourselves strictly to the Word of God, and avoid idle speculation, we are on safe ground. If God's plan and times and seasons are not recorded in the Scriptures, none can find them there; and God has surely had nothing recorded by his prophets and apostles which he desires to keep secret forever. In due time and order every recorded feature of the divine plan, and its time and season, is manifested to those watching; but the entire outline of the plan, together with the time features of it, was not due to be understood until the period designated "The time of the end." (Dan. 12:9, 10) And let it be borne in mind that until such time as God purposes to reveal his secrets, neither learning nor piety can find them out. Although the prophecies have stood for centuries before the eyes of all, they *could not* be unlocked and their secrets read until the due time had come.

When some of the disciples came to our Lord inquiring concerning the time for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, before it was yet due to be revealed, he answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath appointed by his own authority." (Acts 1:7) And on another occasion, concerning the same subject, he said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is....And what I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch.*" Mark 13:32, 33, 37

These words of our Lord cannot be understood to mean that none but the Father will *ever* know of his times and seasons; hence it no more proves that we cannot know those times and seasons *now*, than that our Lord cannot know them now. And the very fact that the entire outline of our Father's plan, and also his times and seasons, are now clearly discernible, is strong proof that we are now living in the time of the end of the present dominion of evil, and the dawn of the Millennial Day, when knowledge should be increased, and the wise should understand. (Dan. 12:4, 10) If prophecy was never designed to be understood, there could have been no reasonable object in giving it.

These expressions of the Master indicate that

God is not executing the various parts of his plan in a random, haphazard manner, but that he has *fixed* and definite times and seasons for every feature of his great work. And his infinite power and wisdom guarantee that there can be no miscarriage or delay.

The words also impress the thought that up to that time the Father had revealed the times and seasons connected with his plans to no one, not even to our Lord Jesus. So far from warranting the general supposition, that our Lord rebuked investigation and interest in the times and seasons, and by these words *forbade* such examination, the very reverse is true. His words clearly show that though the times and seasons were *not yet* given to them to know, they would be very important some time, and would then be revealed to those watching. In view of the fact that they would be unsealed some time, and that they would be very important *then*, he urges them to "*take heed*," and not to allow indifference to come over them, but to "*watch*" continually, that they might know when the due time should come.

Those who *watched* all down the age, though they did not see all they watched for, were nevertheless greatly blessed and kept separate from the world, by so doing; while those who will be living in the "*due time*" and shall obediently "*watch*," shall know, shall see, "shall understand," and not be in ignorance, in the midst of the wonderful events of the "harvest" of this age. He who at any time neglects to watch, loses a blessing upon which the Master laid great stress, and proves himself to be either blinded with prejudice by the god of this world, or overcharged with matters of this life and present interests, to the neglect of his vow of full consecration to the Lord, to seek chiefly the Kingdom and life to come.

The Apostles Peter and Paul call attention to this subject of the times and seasons. Peter declares (2 Pet. 1:16), that we are not following cunningly devised fables; that he saw in a figure the glory of the coming kingdom of Christ on the mount of transfiguration, when he beheld the glorious "*vision*" of Moses and Elijah and Jesus in glittering garments—Moses representing the ancient worthies (Heb. 11:38-40) who shall be the earthly representatives of the heavenly Kingdom, and

Elijah representing the "overcomers" of this Gospel age—the scene as a whole foreshadowing the "glory to follow," after the sufferings for righteousness' sake shall have completed the election according to favor. Yet Peter, even while relating his vision, points to the prophetic testimony, saying, "We have a *more sure* word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn." (2 Pet. 1:19) He well knew that all the prophecies could not be fully understood by any *then*, and thus urged a watching attitude on the part of the saints—not a watching of the sky, but a watching for the fulfilment of all that God had spoken by the holy prophets concerning the restitution, and the "*times* of restitution," which form so large and important a part of their testimony. He assures us that prophecy will have freshly important truths for us, all the way along *until* Day-dawn.

The Apostle Paul declares, "Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. [Quietly, stealthily it will come, and after it has come, many will not for some time know that they are in it.] When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them [sudden or rapid, compared with the slow processes of the past six thousand years, as our day is called the fast day of steam and electricity—not sudden as lightning, but sudden] *as travail* upon a woman. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:1-4

The "brethren" all have the lamp, the sure word of prophecy mentioned by Peter, as a light in a dark place; and while they keep the proper attitude of brethren, as faithful, meek and humble students of the Word, they will at no time be in darkness: *they* will always have the truth supplied as meat in *due season*. At no time have those then living in full harmony with God been left in ignorance of necessary truth, to grope their way in the dark with the world. Abraham and Lot knew of the destruction of Sodom *beforehand*, God saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17) Noah knew of the flood in time to build the ark, and was informed of the *very day* that he should go into it. At the first advent, too, Simeon

and Anna, and the wise men of the East, knew to expect Messiah. In fact, the expectation was general then. (Luke 2:25-38; Matt. 2:2; Luke 3:15) And if God so dealt with the house of servants, shall he do less for the house of Sons? Our Lord and Head has said, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things *that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you*." Our Lord certainly shall know of the times and seasons in *due time*, since he is to accomplish the plan, and unless *he has changed*, he will make known the plans to those close to him and associated in his work—*his friends, his saints*.

Reason, then, teaches us that so surely as it is written, "The Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7), and that most of what he revealed unto them was not for themselves, but for us, the Gospel Church (1 Pet. 1:12), so surely will the faithful not be left in darkness, unable to discern it, when the day of the Lord has come. It will not come upon *them* as a thief and a snare—unawares; for they will be watching, and will have the promised light then due upon the subject.

The Apostle states why he makes the positive assertion that ye, brethren, will know of the times and seasons when due, and will not be in darkness, saying (verse 5), "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." Such are begotten of the truth, and are to be developed by the truth more and more unto the perfect day—to which they belong. James 1:18; John 17:17, 19

Notice how carefully the pronouns *ye* and *you*, and *they* and *them*, of this and other scriptures, distinguish the classes referred to—the saints from the world. The knowledge which the saints will have in the day of the Lord is contrasted with the ignorance, on the part of the world, of the significance and tendency of transpiring events—"Ye have no need that I write unto *you*." "When *they* shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon *them*... and *they* shall not escape. But *ye*, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake *you* as a thief. *Ye* are all children of the light." "Take heed," says our Lord, "to yourselves, lest at any time *your* hearts be overcharged with

surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon *you* unawares; for as a snare it shall come on all *them* that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch *ye*, therefore [watch yourselves and also the word of prophecy], and pray always, that *ye* may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:24-36

It follows, then, that if a child of God, living in the day of the Lord, remain in darkness or ignorance as to the fact, he must be either surfeited with the things of this life and intoxicated with the spirit of the world, or else overcharged with the cares of this life, and in either case indifferently neglecting to watch with his lamp trimmed and burning and with oil in his vessel—i.e., with the Word of God in heart and mind, and with the spirit of truth in himself.

Though much, connected with the times and seasons, as well as with the details of the plan, had been foretold by the prophets, they confessed their ignorance of the import of the prophecies to which they gave expression. (See Dan. 12:8; Ezek. 20:49; Matt. 13:17; 1 Pet. 1:10-12.) Stated in dark and symbolic language, and linked with events then future, to understand them then was impossible. Thus, though recorded aforetime, and made to bear witness to the divine foreknowledge and arrangement, they were for the learning of those living in the due time for their fulfilment, and not for those who uttered them. (Rom. 15:4) They awaited the unfolding of various connected features of the divine plan and human history, which, by God's arrangement, should unlock them, and enrich the patient, searching children of God with "meat in due season" for an hour of trial and need in "the evil day"—the day of trouble with which this age closes, and in the midst of which also the new era and dispensation dawns.

A wonderful modern device, which serves well to illustrate the divine arrangement of time prophecy, is what is termed a Combination Time-Lock, used in some of the largest banks. Like other combination locks, the key or handle remains in the lock constantly. Certain peculiar movements of the handle, known only to one aware of the arrangement, are needful to open it, while the slightest deviation from the proper movements only

complicates the matter and makes it the more difficult to open. The Combination *Time-Lock* adds the peculiar feature, that by a clock arrangement inside the bank vaults, the doors when closed at night are so locked that they cannot be opened by any one until a fixed hour the next morning; and then, only in response to the use of the right combination upon which the lock has been set.

Thus our Heavenly Father has closed up and sealed many features of his plan during the night with his great Time-Lock, which was so set as to prevent their being opened until "the time appointed"—in the morning of the great day of restitution. And then Jehovah's Anointed, "he that hath the key" and understands the combination upon which it has been set, "openeth, and no man shutteth." (Rev. 3:7) He opens unto us by giving us the necessary information as to how the key of prophecy is to be operated by those desiring to find the treasures of infinite wisdom. And we may unlock the treasures of divine wisdom now, because the morning hour has come—though it is early and not yet light to the world. But only by carefully heeding the instructions, and applying the key to the combination set by the great Designer, will its treasures open to us.

In fact, this illustration fits the entire plan of God in all its parts: Each feature of truth and each prophecy is but a part of the one grand combination, which may be opened now because it is morning—because the bolts of the great Time-Lock are withdrawn. And this grand combination, once opened, discloses fully and grandly the boundless treasures of divine wisdom, justice, love and power. He who opens will indeed know God as never before.

Let us, then, examine the Scriptures with a reverent spirit, that we may learn what God is pleased to show us with reference to his times and seasons. Since he has recently made the grand outlines of his plan so clear, we may reasonably expect that his time is due to lead us into a knowledge of its time features. The times and seasons were wisely hidden in the past, and the saints were thus saved from discouragement, because the time was long; but as the plan nears its glorious consummation, it is the privilege of the

saints to know it, that they may lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their deliverance draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28) The revealing of the time, in the "time of the end," will be as profitable and stimulating to the saints as its revealing before would have been unprofitable and discouraging.

Evidently our God is a God of order. Everything that he does is in accordance with a definitely prearranged plan; and his appointed times and seasons are no insignificant or unimportant part of that plan. Notice that Jesus was born on time—"In the fulness of time God sent his only begotten Son." (Gal. 4:4) Not before, nor after, but just when the time was full. Our Lord's first preaching was on the subject of time—"He came preaching, and saying, *The time is fulfilled.... Repent and believe the good tidings.*" (Mark 1:15) "*In due time Christ died.*" (Rom. 5:6) "He rose again the third day [at the appointed time] *according to the Scriptures.*" (1Cor. 15:4) During his ministry his enemies frequently sought to take him, but it is stated that they could not, "*because his hour was not yet come.*" John 7:30

The time prophecies were not given to satisfy mere curiosity, but to enable the student of the Word to recognize the foretold events *when due*. For instance: Although prophecy marked the time and manner of the first advent, it was not understood until Christ had come; and then it helped those who carefully studied the Scriptures to recognize the man Jesus as the Christ, sent of God according to appointment and prophecy. And, just so, prophecies marking the time and manner of the second advent are due to be understood at about the time of that event, to aid us in recognizing his day when it has come—and its order of events and the duties of the hour. One cannot read the Old Testament Scriptures thoughtfully without noticing the prominence given to dates, and the great particularity with which some are marked, even to a day, though quite frequently they are attached to what may seem to be very insignificant events. But the close student will find that these various dates and chronological references are links in a wonderful chain of evidence which points out with great precision particularly two of the most notable and important events in the history of the world, viz.: the first and second advents of the world's Redeemer and Lord, and the important matters

associated therewith.

The fact that the majority of Christians are indifferent to these things is no reason why those who love his appearing, and desire to be found approved of him, should drop into a similar condition of lukewarmness.

It should be borne in mind that fleshly Israel, except the "friends" of God, stumbled and *knew not the time* of their visitation (Luke 19:44), and that the prophet has foretold the stumbling of *both* the houses of Israel—the nominal Jewish house, and the nominal Christian house. (Isa. 8:14) Only "*a remnant*" in the close or harvest of each dispensation is prepared to receive and appreciate the truths then due, and therefore to enter into the special privileges and blessings of the dawning dispensation. It therefore remains for each individual Christian, in the closing period of this age, to see to it that he is one of "the remnant," and not one of the lukewarm, listless, indifferent mass of the *nominal* Christian Church, which will surely stumble, as foretold by the Prophet, by the Lord and by the apostles, and as foreshadowed by the course of fleshly Israel, which was declared to be its shadow or type.

But while time prophecy will be of great advantage in its due time, showing various features of God's plan pertaining to the harvest, etc., it is also true that a knowledge of the manner of our Lord's coming and appearing is very necessary. To this, very careful attention, in its appropriate place, is requested. And back of all this knowledge must lie holiness and humility, which must pave the way for its reception by enabling the child of God to remove prejudice from his heart and to search diligently to know what has been revealed. So it was at the first advent: the earnest, consecrated, meek ones alone discerned the time and manner. The worldly and overcharged ones, the full ones, will not discern either the prophecies or the signs of the times fulfilling them, until the harvest is past and the summer of special favor is ended.

In the end or "harvest" of the Jewish age, the truly humble and earnest "Israelites indeed" were in a condition of expectancy which differed widely from that of the proud, worldly-minded and self-

righteous about them; so that not only were they more ready to accept God's plan as he had arranged it, but they were more ready to hear and examine the truth when they came in contact with it. And our Lord, while dismissing the self-satisfied, fault-finding quibbles of the Pharisees with dark or evasive answers, took time and care in making truth clear and plain to the humble, earnest seekers. (Matt. 13:10-17; 16:1-4; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 18:18-30; John 1:45-51; Luke 24:13-32 and 33-49; John 20:24-28; 21:1-12) The proud and self-satisfied, and all who followed them, stumbled (Matt. 15:14), while the humble and truth-hungry inquired earnestly for the truth. (Matt. 13:36; Mark 4:10) And the Lord expounded the dark sayings to such, and said, "Unto *you* it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but to them that are without [not Israelites *indeed*], all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand."

So, too, it is at the end of this age. Truth here, as there, separates the earnest and humble, and leads them forward into the knowledge now due to such, and strengthens and enlightens them, that they may not stumble with the mass of nominal Christians; while the lukewarm and self-satisfied reject the truths here due, because blinded by their own improper condition of heart. Hence they will be rejected by the Lord as unworthy of becoming his bride. Eph. 4:1; 1 Cor. 9:27

It is a serious error into which many fall, to suppose that a knowledge of God's doings and plans is of little importance, that the graces of Christian character are all that God requires, and that these are better conserved by ignorance. How differently the Scriptures present the matter! They counsel us, not only to cultivate the graces of the Christian character, but to preserve constantly that condition of heart which will enable us to discern the truth—especially that great truth of the Lord's presence when due—and when dispensational changes take place. A knowledge of dispensational truth is quite as important in the end of this age as it was in the end of the Jewish age. Those who did not discern the truth then due did not receive the favors then due. And just so in the end of this age: Those who cannot discern the truth now due, being blinded by unbelief and worldliness, cannot receive *special*

favors now due. They are not overcomers, and hence are unfit to be the bride of Christ, and to enter into the glorious inheritance of the saints as joint-heirs with him. Truth, in this age, under the adverse circumstances for its reception, becomes a test of our faithfulness to God, and therefore as a sickle separates the fit ones from those unfit—the wheat from the tares.

Odium attaches to the study of prophetic time by reason of past misapplications of it by "Second Adventists" and others, and the consequent failures to realize the events expected to occur at stated times. We see, however, that even this has been a part of God's plan to obscure the subject to all but the class for whom it was intended, by permitting contempt and ridicule to attach to it, thus hindering the worldly-wise and prudent from apprehending it. (Matt. 11:25) This, we doubt not, was as much a part of the divine plan as the sending of Jesus into Nazareth, a despised place, "that he might be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23), though he was really born in the honorable town of Bethlehem. As the worldly-wise and prudent of that day said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" so today, when prophetic time or anything relating to the Lord's second advent is mentioned, many cry "Adventist," as if to say, "Can any good thing come out of Adventism?"—even though they admit that many prophecies containing time are not yet fulfilled, and that the second coming of the Lord is the most prominent topic of Scripture.

We have great sympathy for both the First Adventists (the Jews) and the Second Adventists, though only a few of either realized the truths they so nearly apprehended, yet failed to grasp, each being blinded by *false expectations*. Our Adventist friends have failed to recognize both the manner and the object of the Lord's return as taught in the Scriptures; consequently they have not been expecting to "see him as he *is*," but as he *was*. They consider the object of his coming one which will fill the hearts of all except the saints with dismay and terror; that his object is to gather the elect, destroy all others of mankind, and burn up the world. Having such ideas, they used the time prophecies as a whip to scourge and drive the world to God. But the world coolly looked on, and said that these were unreasonable enthusiasts, and, if there is a God, he

is certainly more reasonable and just than that. The scorn of the world grew more and more intense, as time after time they foretold a wreck of matter and a crush of worlds, and time after time their predictions failed—until now the very mention of prophetic time is received very generally with an incredulous smile, or with open contempt, even by Christians who well know that prophecy and chronology constitute a large proportion of God's revelation.

But blessed is he

"Who bears unmoved the world's dark frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
Whom seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

But God provided time prophecies for no such purpose, nor will he attempt to convert the world in any such way as this; for he seeketh such to worship him as worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23), and not such as are frightened into his service. If he had designed to terrorize men into obedience, he could have devised some more successful method than the proclamation of *time* – as our Adventist friends have proved. Prophetic time was given, not to alarm the world—nor for the world in any sense—but to enlighten, strengthen, comfort, encourage and guide *the Church* in the troublous times in the end of the age. Therefore it is written, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise only." To these, this becomes meat in due season, and it, with other meat, will strengthen those who use it, so that they will be "able to *stand* in the evil day"—the day of trouble with which this age closes. It will enable them to understand the wonderful events transpiring around them, so that they will neither be consumed by fear and dread, nor swallowed up by the projects and false theories—science falsely so called—with which this day will abound. And, withal, they may be in the devouring fire [trouble], witnesses for God and his plan, and teachers of the people—pointers to the glorious outcome of Jehovah's plan, lifting up a standard for the people. Isa. 62:10

This is the object of time prophecy, and how important, how indispensable—that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, at this time. Without these prophetic time-proofs, we might see the events of this Day of the Lord, and know not of

it, or of our duties and privileges in it. Let none, then, of the truly consecrated undervalue these prophetic time-evidences, which were designed to guide our words and deeds in the early Dawn of the Millennial Day, before sunrise, while the world and the nominal church are yet asleep, ignorant and heedless of the dispensational changes now occurring. These prophetic time-proofs were largely God's means of drawing the attention of the writer more fully and carefully to other features of the divine plan. Attention given to these must result in lasting profit to the student, not only by informing him of "present truth," but also by giving force and vital reality to all Scriptural truths, by furnishing proof that all God's plans are working together in *time*, as well as in *kind*, to the development of his glorious purposes.

The failure of the predictions of Adventists, who attempted to fix a time for the burning of the world, etc., etc., has been more in regard to the character of the events expected than in the time. Like the Jews, they erred by looking for the *wrong thing* at the *right time*. This was the secondary cause of their failure to clearly apprehend the truth, but the primary cause of it was the fact that it was not yet time for a clearer unfolding. And yet it was time for the stirring up of the saints to look for the Lord's appearing—for a going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and a disappointment prior to his actual coming—all of which was indicated in our Lord's parable of the Ten Virgins, as will be shown at length hereafter. As shown in the preceding volume, the fire which is to devour the earth in the Day of the Lord is symbolic, not literal; and in succeeding chapters it will be shown that the applications of some time prophecies which Adventists have discarded as failures were not failures, but correct, and that they clearly mark the symbolic fire of this time – already getting under way.

The Advent people, laboring under the difficulty of expecting a literal burning of the earth, attempted to force all the prophetic periods to one common day of termination—a twenty-four hour day at that—and thus they did violence to some prophecies to make them fit and end with others. But the clearer view of the divine plan now reveals the perfect harmony of the various time prophecies,

and there is no necessity for twisting or doing violence to any, to make it fit with the others. As in succeeding chapters we institute an examination of the leading prophecies, we do not form a theory and then endeavor to bend all the prophetic periods to it, but we carefully trace each period to its termination, and then weave together the theory or plan thus indicated by the great Revealer of secrets. It will be found that the order and harmony of God's plan are just as manifest in its times and seasons as in the glorious features of that plan traced in the preceding volume, and mapped out on the Chart of the Ages. And when the great clock of the ages strikes the hours indicated on the prophetic dial, the events foretold are as sure to follow as that God foretold them.