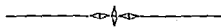


of the "Preaching of Peter" just alluded to? Where is the lost "Apology" of Quadratus, Aristides' immediate predecessor? This would be a much more precious find, because it went into the details of the Gospel history, and was an exposition of the faith, as we gather from a meagre fragment preserved by Eusebius, for the benefit of the more cultured pagans. Where, too, is the last work of Papias (of Hierapolis), before him again, and where is the oft-quoted by Eusebius "Ecclesiastical History of Hegesippus"? This newly-found but inestimable treasure should encourage our scholars to pursue their investigations in those distant homes of learning, happily respected by the Mohammedan conquerors, with a keener and livelier expectation for the speedy restoration of those great legacies of Christian antiquity which Eusebius so often mentions, and the ante-Nicene Fathers so frequently allude to.

MORRIS FULLER.



ART. II.—THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.

WHAT is the *terminus a quo* of these seventy weeks, or *hebdomads*? What is their *terminus ad quem*?

It ought not to be an unprofitable or a hopeless task to ascertain and to set forth the truth in answer to these two questions.

I. The *terminus a quo* is given us in these words: "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks" (Dan. ix. 25). Exactly such a command, or decree, was given by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign to, and at the instance of, Nehemiah, "according to the good hand of his God upon him." This was in the year B.C. 444. This ought to be, one would think, the *terminus a quo* we are in search of.

But there are three other *termini a quo* suggested by expositors. One is the command issued by Cyrus in the first year of his reign, B.C. 536, as commonly reckoned, or B.C. 506, according to the Rev. John Milner, in his suggestive article in the *CHURCHMAN* for November, 1890, entitled "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel and Persian Chronology." Another is the decree of Darius, B.C. 518, which, however, as Mr. Milner observes, merely confirms that of Cyrus. The third is the commission given to Ezra by Artaxerxes in the seventh

year of his reign, B.C. 457, of which Mr. Milner remarks that the decree given thirteen years later to Nehemiah by the same king was but a renewal.

But, in the first place, none of these commands, or decrees, was "a command to restore and to build Jerusalem." They referred only to the temple; they never mention the city. The building of the city, indeed, is mentioned, as if it, and it alone, were in progress, in the letter written and sent to Artaxerxes by "Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions." They wrote to prejudice and alarm the king about the rebuilding of "the rebellious and the bad city," and even went so far as to say that the Jews had already "finished the walls and repaired the foundations." But if these unscrupulous men deceived the king by what seems to have been their very untruthful letter, that is no reason why they should deceive us. And not a word is said in the Book of Ezra, except in this wicked letter, about any building of the city, while much is said of the building of the house of the Lord, and of that alone. And, again, in the year B.C. 444, Nehemiah could complain before the king that "the city, the place of his father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire." So that if any previous decree had gone forth "to restore and to build Jerusalem," it was an ineffectual and abortive decree, and no fitting *terminus a quo* for anything—not, at any rate, for the period in which Jerusalem was to be "built again, with street and moat even in troublous times." So that the year B.C. 444, with its command from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, sending him "unto the city of his fathers' sepulchres that he may build it," stands, to our mind, the only and unmistakable *terminus a quo* of the seventy weeks. We shall consider further on what Mr. Milner urges against it, and in favour of the first year of Cyrus instead.

II. But what is their *terminus ad quem*? A very strange mistake has been made here by many expositors—a mistake which the words of Scripture are surely plain enough to have prevented anyone making. The *terminus ad quem* of the seventy weeks has actually been fixed by one expositor after another at "Messiah the Prince," notwithstanding that the angel said plainly to the prophet that "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks," probably for restoring and building Jerusalem, "and threescore and two weeks." Now seven *plus* threescore and two are sixty-nine, not seventy. And yet the late Mr. Elliott, in the preface to his great and learned work, "Horæ Apocalypticæ," confesses that "the prophecy of the seventy weeks, 'until Messiah the

Prince' in Daniel," is one of those that "present certain difficulties and obscurities." But the "difficulties and obscurities" must be, to some extent at least, of his own making; for certainly there is no prophecy in Daniel of seventy weeks "until Messiah the Prince." There is one of $7+62=69$ weeks "unto Messiah the Prince," which is surely a somewhat different thing.

Mr. Grattan Guinness, too, in his very interesting work, "The Approaching End of the Age," without making or confessing any difficulty or obscurity in the matter, speaks repeatedly of "the seventy weeks," as being "unto Messiah the Prince." For instance (on p. 280, sixth ed.), he says: "It"—*i.e.*, that period of 490 years—"was the time that elapsed between Artaxerxes' decree to restore and to build Jerusalem and the days of 'Messiah the Prince.'" "The seventy weeks of Daniel ix. elapsed between the decree of Artaxerxes and the advent of Messiah" (p. 302). Again (p. 345), speaking of the "'seventy weeks,' or 490 years," he says: "This extended to the coming of Messiah the Prince and the destruction of Jerusalem, consequent on his rejection"—though how it could extend to both these events, so far apart from each other, he does not explain. In his Appendix, however (p. 596), he makes the seventy weeks end, neither at the coming of Messiah the Prince nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, but in the year A.D. 34, just five years after the crucifixion in A.D. 29—the nativity being fixed, for sufficient reasons, at A.D. 6 of our ordinary reckoning. The seventy weeks are thus made to end at no particular period at all, and the seventieth week to begin nowhere in particular—somewhere in the middle of the earthly ministry of our Lord.

It seems plain that Mr. Milner also in his interesting article, already alluded to, considers the seventy weeks as reaching "unto the Messiah the Prince." He says (p. 97): "The 490 years must date from the first of Cyrus, and we have, therefore, to reduce the 569 years of the common chronology to the requisite 490," the 569 years being the time, in the common chronology, from the first year of Cyrus to the crucifixion. But why reduce this 569 to 490, unless in order to bring the end of the "seventy weeks" (or 490 years) of Daniel to what he considers—and rightly, as we believe—the time of "Messiah the Prince"?

While Mr. Milner, for reasons which he gives, and which we shall consider presently, makes the seventy weeks begin with the edict issued in the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536 or 506, Mr. Guinness makes them begin in B.C. 457, with the command given to Ezra by Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign,

to restore and to build Jerusalem, though in neither of those edicts, as we have already observed, was there any such command or permission given, so far as we know from Scripture. Seventy weeks, however, or 490 years, from any of those three dates bring us to nothing which can be spoken of as "Messiah the Prince." Reckoning 490 years from the first brings us to 46 or 40 years before the birth of Christ; reckoning them from the second brings us to B.C. 16 or 10; reckoning them from the third—Mr. Guinness's *terminus a quo*—brings us to the year A.D. 39, if not to the year A.D. 45. Reckoning, however, from B.C. 444, which we have seen good reason for maintaining as the true *terminus a quo*, seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, or 483 years, bring us exactly to Mr. Milner's time for "Messiah the Prince," *i.e.*, His crucifixion, or to the year A.D. 29, which Mr. Guinness rightly assigns as the date of the crucifixion. In other words reckoning the right number of years—483—from the right *terminus a quo*—the twentieth year of Artaxerxes—brings us exactly to the right time for "Messiah the Prince," unto whom those 483 years were to run. We might almost write "Q.E.D." after this. It was the very thing, so far, to be proved, and it seems proved to demonstration.

Our reasons, which no doubt were Mr. Milner's also, for making the crucifixion rather than the nativity or the baptism of Christ to be the time of "Messiah the Prince" are these: (1) It is said in Daniel, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." But this would more naturally mean "immediately after" than "three and a half years after," or "thirty-three years after," or some indefinite time after. (2) "Unto the Messiah the Prince" may well mean, "unto the time of the Messiah manifesting Himself and offering Himself to Israel as the Prince," which He did when, but not before, He rode into Jerusalem—as it was predicted Zion's King should come unto her—a few days before His crucifixion. We confess we are also influenced by the fact that this juncture occurs exactly at the end of the 483 years from the commission to Nehemiah, and so exactly suits the prophecy as its fulfilment. When a key fits the lock, it is sufficient proof that it is the right key.

But let us notice now the arguments put forward by Mr. Milner on behalf of the decree of Cyrus as the true *terminus a quo* of the seventy weeks:

(1) He quotes Calvin and Gregg in support of the exegesis which makes the object of the word "restore"—in the words "to restore and to build Jerusalem"—to be not "Jerusalem" as expressed, but "thy people," as understood. But this is by no means obvious, nor does it seem natural. It seems adopted

to suit and support the theory of the first year of Cyrus as the *terminus*. "To restore and to build" seems far more naturally explained by the marginal rendering of the A.V., "to build again." So it is in the Vulgate, "*ut iterum aedificetur*." Moreover, in the same verse, when we read that "it"—*i.e.*, Jerusalem—"shall be built again," the Hebrew idiom is, "it shall return and be builded," which seems an exactly similar idiom to that other, "to restore and to build Jerusalem." Indeed, Dr. Pusey's rendering of the two passages in Dan. ix. 25 are, "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," and "street and wall shall be restored and builded." Pool, Auberlen, and Guinness make "Jerusalem" the object to "restore" as well as to "rebuild."

(2) Mr. Milner alludes to Isa. xlv. 28 as if it predicted that Cyrus was to say to Jerusalem, "*Thou shalt be built*." But this is more than doubtful. All through the passage, vers. 24-28, it is the LORD that is the subject of the verbs "that maketh;" "that stretcheth forth;" "that spreadeth abroad;" "that frustrateth . . . and maketh foolish;" "that confirmeth . . . and performeth;" "that saith of Jerusalem, she shall be built;" "that saith to the deep;" "that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure"—that alone is said of Cyrus; "even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." In the Septuagint this is clearly understood and set forth. Thus, in vers. 26-28, we have, "ὁ λέγων τῇ Ἱερουσαλήμ . . . ὁ λέγων τῇ αβυσσῶ . . . ὁ λέγων Κύρῳ . . . ὁ λεγων Ἱερουσαλήμ." So in the Vulgate, ver. 28, "Qui dico Cyro . . . qui dico Jerusalem." Bishop Lowth also takes the same view, "Who sayeth to Cyrus . . . who sayeth to Jerusalem," etc. It is certainly not predicted of Cyrus in this passage that he should say to Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be built."

(3) Mr. Milner quotes from Josephus a certain document as the letter from Cyrus to Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes, in which the "rebuilding their city" is mentioned. We are not particularly interested in discrediting this document; but it may be well to draw attention to the fact that, as Prof. Whiston, the editor, says in his note, "This leave to build Jerusalem and this epistle of Cyrus to the same purpose are most unfortunately omitted in all our copies, but this best and completest copy of Josephus." Whiston goes on to take the same ground as Mr. Milner in reference to Isa. xlv. 28, which we think we have shown to be untenable.

(4) But Mr. Milner has another argument for the first year of Cyrus, which he considers a "a fatal objection to the seventh or twentieth of Artaxerxes." It is that, according to Nehemiah, it was *not* the city, but merely *the outer wall*, or fortifications,

that they—the recipients of the decrees of Artaxerxes—“were engaged in rebuilding”; also, that Nehemiah mentions two or more houses as already built while the wall was being built. So that, “Beyond all question, when Artaxerxes gave these orders *the city was already rebuilt*, and it must have been done in consequence of some previous edict; but there was no previous edict except that of Cyrus.” Now, in answer to this, it occurs to us (1) that, notwithstanding those few houses that are mentioned by Nehemiah—supposing they were built at the time—he complains to Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of that king’s reign, that “*the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, lieth waste*,” and he asks and gets permission to go to the city, that he “*may build it*.” Strange that Mr. Milner should say that “*the city was already rebuilt*” at the time. (2) That Nehemiah tells us (chap. vii. 1, 4), “When the wall was built . . . the city was wide and large; but the people were few therein, and *the houses were not builded*.” We may observe that Ezra, the recipient of the first decree of Artaxerxes, makes mention of no building as the result of that decree but that of the temple. It is only in Nehemiah that the “houses” alluded to by Mr. Milner are mentioned. It is not inconceivable, however, that the builders of the temple may have lived in houses of some sort while that work was going on, even before any permission had been given by Artaxerxes to build the city; and even though Nehemiah could say some thirteen years after, “the houses were not builded.”

But it seems to us that the *terminus a quo* is absolutely fixed, at any rate for Mr. Milner, as the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, in this way. He has taken—and rightly taken—the crucifixion as the time of “Messiah the Prince.” Let him—as we suppose he will, and as we think he ought—accept, with Mr. Guinness, A.D. 29 of the ordinary chronology as the date of the crucifixion. Let him then reckon back from that date the number of years till then as given by the angel to the prophet, viz., 483 (not 490). This will bring him exactly to the year B.C. 444, or the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, which accordingly must be the *terminus a quo* of the seventy weeks.

But we have not yet really reached the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy weeks. We have been occupied so far with the *terminus ad quem* of the sixty-nine weeks. What about the seventieth week? We have seen how Mr. Elliott merges it in “the seventy weeks ‘until Messiah the Prince,’” getting himself into confessed and hopeless difficulty thereby; and how Mr. Guinness does the same, making it and the seventy weeks end in the year A.D. 34, five years after the cutting off of the Messiah or the crucifixion of Christ. According to the

prophecy in Daniel it would appear, as we have seen, that the sixty-nine weeks run their course right up to the cutting off of the Messiah. The seventieth week thus occurs after, not any part of it before, the crucifixion. Now seven years—or for that matter Mr. Guinness' five years—after the crucifixion bring us to nothing that can in any way be alluded to as taking place at the end of the seventy weeks. But is not the missing seventieth week sufficiently accounted for by identifying it with the "one week" of Dan. ix. 27. This, we may remark, is a week divided in "the midst," so that we can hardly help identifying the latter half of it with the "time, times, and half a time" of Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7, and Rev. xii. 14, the twelve hundred and sixty days of Rev. xi. 3 and xii. 6, the forty and two months of Rev. xiii. 5, and, let us add, the "shortened" time of the great tribulation of Matt. xxiv. 22. At the end of the "seventy seven times" (Pusey) which close with this terrible half week, will that be fulfilled, we doubt not, which is meant by the words of Dan. ix. 25—we give them in Dr. Pusey's rendering—"to close the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity (or to forgive iniquity), to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Holy of Holies." As to what is meant by all this, we will only say that the seventy weeks in which it was to be fulfilled were "decreed upon Daniel's people and upon his holy city," and that it seems to point unmistakably to the time when Jerusalem's "iniquity is pardoned" (Isa. xl. 2), when "her people shall be all righteous, and they shall inherit the land for ever" (Isa. lx. 21), when "the Lord shall be her everlasting light and her God her glory," when "the days of her mourning shall be ended" (vers. 19, 20).

It may be objected by some that we have no right thus to break off this seventieth week from the rest of the seventy. But it seems to us that it is unmistakably broken off for us. And, besides, how natural that the seventy weeks should be broken off on the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah the Prince, and should be taken up again when guilty Jerusalem and her Christ-rejecting people come again into remembrance before God. Where else after the crucifixion does that seventieth week come in? Is it possible to doubt the identity of the latter half of that week with the prophetic period for the closing scenes of this dispensation—the twelve hundred and sixty days, the forty and two months, the time, times, and a half (or three and a half years)? We may remark that it seems to be not the only instance on record of the continuity of a prophetic period being thus broken up. At least Mr. Elliott (*Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii., p. 227 n., 3rd ed.) quotes with

approval Archbishop Newcomb's account of the forty last years of Judah's iniquity as including fifteen and a half years of Manasseh's reign, two of Amon's, eleven of Jehoiakim's, three months of Jehoiachin's, and eleven years of Zedekiah's. This leaves out Josiah's reign of thirty years and Jehoahaz's reign of three months between Amon's and Jehoiakim's, gross idolatry not having prevailed in those two reigns.

But the breaking off of the last week of the seventy and reserving it for the end of the dispensation is no new thing in prophetic interpretation. It is at least as old as Hippolytus, the martyr Bishop of Portus, A.D. 210. He says: "By one week, therefore, he (Daniel) meant the last week which is to be at the end of the whole world (or age); of which week the two prophets Enoch and Elias will take up the half. For they will preach twelve hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth, proclaiming repentance to the people and to all the nations."¹ Again, still more clearly, "when the threescore and two weeks are fulfilled, and Christ is come, and the Gospel is preached in every place, the times being then accomplished, there will remain only one week, the last, in which Elias will appear, and Enoch, and in the midst of it the abomination of desolation will be manifested, viz., Antichrist announcing desolation to the world."² Mr. Milner says of the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel that it is "known to have been fulfilled." We are constrained to differ with him. The prophecy of the sixty-nine weeks has been fulfilled, but not that of the seventy, except in part; nor that of the seventieth. It will bring us through what remains of this present age to the beginning of the better age to come; through what remains of the night which is far spent, aye, through its darkest and most trying hours, to the dawn of the everlasting day which is at hand—to the Sun of righteousness arising on the world with much-needed healing in His wings, to be indeed, as never before, "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel."

W. T. HOBSON.

¹ Treatise on "Christ and Antichrist," ch. xliii. (see also ch. lxiv.) (Clark's Anti-Nicene Library), p. 25.

² Fragment on Daniel—"Secundum Septuaginta," ch. xxii., p. 454.

