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Analysis of the Chapter



This chapter is properly divided into three parts, or comprises three things:

I. The inquiry of Daniel into the time that the desolations of Jerusalem were to continue, and his determination to seek the Lord, to pray that his purpose in regard to the restoration of the city and temple might be speedily accomplished, [Dan 9:1-3](#). Daniel says [Dan 9:1](#), that this occurred in the first year of Darius of the seed of the Medes. He was engaged in the study of the books of Jeremiah. He learned from these books that seventy years were to elapse during which the temple, the city, and the land were to be desolate. By a calculation as to the time when this commenced, he was enabled to ascertain the period when it would close, and he found that that period was near, and that, according to the prediction, it might be expected that the time of the restoration was at hand. His mind was, of course, filled with the deepest solicitude. It would seem not improbable that he did not perceive any preparation for this, or

any tendency to it, and it could not but be that he would be filled with anxiety in regard to it.

He does not appear to have entertained any doubt that the predictions would be fulfilled, and the fact that they were so clear and so positive was a strong reason why he should pray, and was the reason why he prayed so earnestly at this time. The prayer which he offered is an illustration of the truth that men will pray more earnestly when they have reason to suppose that God intends to impart a blessing, and that an assurance that an event is to occur is one of the strongest encouragements and incitements to prayer. So men will pray with more faith when they see that God is blessing the means of restoration to health, or when they see indications of an abundant harvest; so they will pray with the more fervour for God to bless his Word when they see evidences of a revival of religion, or that the time has come when God is about to display his power in the conversion of sinners; and so undoubtedly they will pray with the more earnestness as the proofs shall be multiplied that God is about to fulfill all his ancient predictions in the conversion of the whole world to himself. A belief that God intends to do a thing is never any hinderance to real prayer; a belief that he is in fact about to do it does more than anything else can do to arouse the soul to call with earnestness on his name.

II. The prayer of Daniel, Dan. 9:4-19. This prayer is remarkable for its simplicity, its fervour, its appropriateness, its earnestness. It is a frank confession that the Hebrew people, in whose name it was offered, had deserved all the calamities which had come upon them, accompanied with earnest intercession that God would now hear this prayer, and remove the judgments from the people, and accomplish his purpose of mercy toward the city and temple. The long captivity of nearly seventy years; the utter desolation of the city and temple during that time; the numberless privations and evils to which during that period they had been exposed, had demonstrated the greatness of the sins for which these calamities had come upon the nation, and Daniel now, in the name, and uttering the sentiments, of the captive people, confessed their guilt, and the justness of the Divine dealings with them. Never has there

been an instance in which punishment has had more of its designed and appropriate effect than in prompting to the sentiments which are uttered in this prayer: and the prayer, therefore, is just the expression of what we "should" feel when the hand of the Lord has been long and severely laid upon us on account of our sins. The burden of the prayer is confession; the object which he who offers it seeks is, that God would cause the severity of his judgments to cease, and the city and temple to be restored. The particular points in the prayer will be more appropriately elucidated in the exposition of this part of the chapter.

III. The answer to the prayer, [Dan 9:20-27](#). The principal difficulty in the exposition of the chapter is in this portion; and indeed there is perhaps no part of the prophecies of the Old Testament that is, on some accounts, more difficult of exposition, as there is, in some respects, none more clear, and none more important. It is remarkable, among other things, as not being a direct answer to the prayer, and as seeming to have no bearing on the subject of the petition - that the city of Jerusalem might be rebuilt, and the temple restored; but it directs the mind onward to another and more important event - the coming of the Messiah, and the final closing of sacrifice and oblation, and a more entire and enduring destruction of the temple and city, after it should have been rebuilt, than had yet occurred. To give this information, an angel - the same one whom Daniel had seen before - was sent forth from heaven, and came near to him and touched him, and said that he was commissioned to impart to him skill and understanding, [Dan 9:20-23](#). "The speediness of his coming indicates a joyful messenger. The substance of that message is as follows: As a compensation for the seventy years in which the people, the city, and the temple had been entirely prostrate, seventy weeks of years, seven times seventy years of a renewed existence would be secured to them by the Lord; and the end of this period, far from bringing the mercies of God to a close, would for the first time bestow them on the theocracy in their complete and full measure." - Hengstenberg, "Christology," it. 293. The "points" of information which the angel gives in regard to the future condition of the city are these:

(a) That the whole period determined in respect to the holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for the people, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy, was seventy weeks - evidently seventy prophetic weeks, that is, regarding each day as a year, four hundred and ninety years, [Dan 9:24](#). The time when this period would "commence" - the "terminus a quo" - is not indeed distinctly specified, but the fair interpretation is, from that time when the vision appeared to Daniel, the first year of Darius, [Dan 9:1](#). The literal meaning of the phrase "seventy weeks," according to Prof. Stuart ("Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy," p. 82), is seventy sevens, that is, seventy sevens of years, or four hundred and ninety years. "Daniel," says he, "had been meditating on the accomplishment of the seventy years of exile for the Jews, which Jeremiah had predicted. At the close of the fervent supplication for the people which he makes, in connection with his meditation, Gabriel appears, and announces to him that" "seventy sevens" are appointed for his people,' as it respects the time then future, in which very serious and very important events are to take place. Daniel had been meditating on the close of the seventy years of Hebrew exile, and the angel now discloses to him a new period of seventy times seven, in which still more important events are to take place."

(b) This period of seventy sevens, or four hundred and ninety years, is divided by the angel into smaller portions, each of them determining some important event in the future. He says, therefore [Dan 9:25](#), that from the going forth of the command to rebuild the temple, until the time when the Messiah should appear, the whole period might be divided into two portions - one of "seven sevens," or forty-nine years, and the other of "threescore and two sevens" - sixty-two sevens, or four hundred and thirty-four years, making together four hundred and eighty-three years. This statement is accompanied with the assurance that the "street would be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." Of these periods of seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, the close of the first is distinguished by the completion of the rebuilding of the city; that of the second by the appearing of the Anointed One, or the

Messiah, the Prince; that of the third by the finished confirmation of the covenant with the many for whom the saving blessings designated in [Dan 9:24](#), as belonging to the end of the whole period, are designed. The last period of one week is again divided into two halves. While the confirmation of the covenant extends through it, from beginning to end, the cessation of the sacrifice and meat-offering, and the death of the Anointed One, on which this depends, take place in the middle of it.

(c) The Messiah would appear after the seven weeks - reaching to the time of completing the rebuilding of the city - and the sixty-two weeks following that (that is, sixty-nine weeks altogether) would have been finished. Throughout half of the other week, after his appearing, he would labor to confirm the covenant with many, and then die a violent death, by which the sacrifices would be made to cease, while the confirmation of the covenant would continue even after his death.

(d) A people of a foreign prince would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of all would be a "flood" - an overflowing calamity, until the end of the desolations should be determined, [Dan 9:26-27](#). This fearful desolation is all that the prophet sees in the end, except that there is an obscure intimation that there would be a termination of that. But the design of the vision evidently did not reach thus far. It was to show the series of events after the rebuilding of the city and temple up to the time when the Messiah would come; when the great atonement would be made for sin, and when the oblations and sacrifices of the temple would finally cease; cease in fact and naturally, for the one great sacrifice, superseding them all, would have been offered and because the people of a foreign prince would come and sweep the temple and the altar away.

The design of the whole annunciation is, evidently, to produce consolation in the mind of the prophet. He was engaged in profound meditation on the present state, and the long-continued desolations of the city and temple. He gave his mind to the study of the prophecies to learn whether these desolations were not soon to end. He ascertained beyond a

doubt that the period drew near. He devoted himself to earnest prayer that the desolation might not longer continue; that God, provoked by the sins of the nation, would no longer execute his fearful judgments, but would graciously interpose, and restore the city and temple. He confessed ingenuously and humbly the sins of his people; acknowledged that the judgments of God were just but pleaded earnestly, in view of his former mercies to the same people, that he would now have compassion, and fulfill his promises that the city and temple should be restored.

An answer is not given "directly," and in the exact form in which it might have been hoped for; but an answer is given, in which it is "implied" that these blessings so earnestly sought would be bestowed, and in which it is "promised" that there would be far greater blessings. It is "assumed" in the answer [Dan 9:25](#) that the city would be rebuilt, and then the mind is directed onward to the assurance that it would stand through seven times seventy years - seven times as long as it had now been desolate, and that "then" what had been the object of the desire of the people of God would be accomplished; that for which the city and temple had been built would be fulfilled - the Messiah would come, the great sacrifice for sin would be made, and all the typical arrangements of the temple would come to an end. Thus, in fact, though not in form, the communication of the angel was an answer to prayer, and that occurred to Daniel which often occurs to those who pray - that the direct prayer which is offered receives a gracious answer, and that; there accompanies the answer numberless other mercies which are drawn along in the train; or, in other words, that God gives us manymore blessings than we ask of him.

[Daniel 9:1](#)

dan 9:1

In the first year of Darius - See the notes at [Dan 5:31](#), and Introuction to Dan. 6 Section II. The king here referred to under this name was Cyaxares II, who lived between Astyages and Cyrus, and in whom was the title of king. He was the immediate successor of Belshazzar, and was the predecessor of Cyrus, and was the first of the foreign princes that reigned over Babylon. On the reasons why he is called in Daniel

Darius, and not Cyaxares, see the Introduction to Dan. 6, Section II. Of course, as he preceded Cyrus, who gave the order to rebuild the temple [Ezr 1:1](#), this occurred before the close of the seventy years of the captivity.

The son of Ahasuerus - Or the son of Astyages. See Introduction to Dan. 6 Section II. It was no unusual thing for the kings of the East to have several names, and one writer might refer to them under one name, and another under another.

Of the seed of the Medes - Of the race of the Medes. See as above.

Which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans - By conquest. He succeeded Belshazzar, and was the immediate predecessor of Cyrus. Cyaxares II ascended the throne of Media, according to the common chronology, 561 b.c. Babylon was taken by Cyrus, acting under the authority of Cyaxares, 538 b.c., and, of course, the reign of Cyaxares, or Darius, over Babylon commenced at that point, and that would be reckoned as the "first year" of his reign. He died 536 b.c., and Cyrus succeeded him; and as the order to rebuild the temple was in the first year of Cyrus, the time referred to in this chapter, when Daniel represents himself as meditating on the close of the captivity, and offering this prayer, cannot long have preceded that order. He had ascertained that the period of the captivity was near its close, and he naturally inquired in what way the restoration of the Jews to their own land was to be effected, and by what means the temple was to be rebuilt.

[Daniel 9:2](#)

dan 9:2

I Daniel understood by books - By the sacred books, and especially by the writings of Jeremiah. It has been made a ground of objection to the genuineness of Daniel that he mentions "books" in this place (ספרים *sephârîym*) as if there were at that time a collection of the sacred books, or as if they had been enrolled together in a volume. The objection is, that the writer speaks as if the canon of the Scriptures was completed, or that he uses such language as the Hebrews did when the canon of the Scriptures was finished, and thus

betrays himself. See Bertholdt, "Commentary" p. 78. Compare DeWette, "Einl." Section 13. This objection has been examined by Hengstenberg, "Beitrag." pp. 32-35. It is sufficient to reply to it, that there is every probability that the Jews in Babylon would be in possession of the sacred books of their nation, and that, though the canon of the Scriptures was not yet completed, there would exist private collections of those writings. The word used here by Daniel is just such as he would employ on the supposition that he referred to a private collection of the writings of the prophets. Compare Lengerke, in loc. See the Introduction, where the objection is examined.

The number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah - The number of the years in respect to which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah; that is, which he had revealed to Jeremiah. The "books" referred to, therefore, were evidently a collection of the writings of Jeremiah, or a collection which embraced his writings.

That he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem - That Jerusalem would so long lie waste. This was expressly declared by Jeremiah [Jer 25:11-12](#) : "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity," etc. So also [Jer 29:10](#) : "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." The time of the desolation and of the captivity, therefore, was fixed and positive, and the only difficulty in determining when it would "close," was in ascertaining the exact year when it "commenced." There were several occurrences which might, perhaps, be regarded as the beginning of the desolations and the captivity - the "terminus a quo" - and, according as one or another of them was fixed on, the close would be regarded as nearer or more remote.

Daniel, it seems, by close study, had satisfied his own mind on that subject, and had been able to fix upon some period that was undoubtedly the proper beginning, and hence, compute

the time when it would close. The result showed that his calculation was correct, for, at the time he expected, the order was given by Cyrus to rebuild the city and temple. When he instituted this inquiry, and engaged in this solemn act of prayer, it would have been impossible to have conjectured in what way this could be brought about. The reigning monarch was Cyaxares II, or, as he is here called, Darius, and there was nothing in "his" character, or in anything that he had done, that could have been a basis of calculation that he would favor the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the city, and there was then no probability that Cyrus would so soon come to the throne, and nothing in his character, as known, that could be a ground of hope that he would voluntarily interpose, and accomplish the Divine purposes and promises in regard to the holy city. It was probably such circumstances as these which produced the anxiety in the mind of Daniel, and which led him to offer this fervent prayer; and his fervent supplications should lead us to trust in God that he will accomplish his purposes, and should induce us to pray with fervour and with faith when we see no way in which he will do it. In all cases he can as easily devise a way in answer to prayer, as he could remove Cyaxares from the throne, and incline the heart of Cyrus to undertake the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple.

[Daniel 9:3](#)

dan 9:3

And I set my face unto the Lord God - Probably the meaning is, that he turned his face toward Jerusalem, the place where God had dwelt; the place of his holy abode on earth. See the notes at [Dan 6:10](#). The language, however, would not be inappropriate to denote prayer without such a supposition. We turn to one whom we address, and so prayer may be described by "setting the face toward God." The essential idea here is, that he engaged in a set and formal prayer; he engaged in earnest devotion. He evidently set apart a time for this, for he prepared himself by fasting, and by putting on sackcloth and ashes.

To seek by prayer and supplications - To seek his favor; to pray that he would accomplish his purposes. The words "prayer and supplications," which are often found united,

would seem to denote "earnest" prayer, or prayer when mercy was implored - the notion of "mercy" or "favor" implored entering into the meaning of the Hebrew word rendered "supplications."

With fasting - In view of the desolations of the city and temple; the calamities that had come upon the people; their sins, etc.; and in order also that the mind might be prepared for earnest and fervent prayer. The occasion was one of great importance, and it was proper that the mind should be prepared for it by fasting. It was the purpose of Daniel to humble himself before God, and to recal the sins of the nation for which they now suffered, and fasting was an appropriate means of doing that.

And sackcloth - Sackcloth was a coarse kind of cloth, usually made of hair, and employed for the purpose of making sacks, bags, etc. As it was dark, and coarse, and rough, it was regarded as a proper badge of mourning and humiliation, and was worn as such usually by passing or girding it around the loins. See the notes at [Isa 3:24](#); [Job 16:15](#).

And ashes - It was customary to cast ashes on the head in a time of great grief and sorrow. The principles on which this was done seem to have been,

(a) that the external appearance should correspond with the state of the mind and the heart, and

(b) that such external circumstances would have a tendency to produce a state of heart corresponding to them - or would produce true humiliation and repentance for sin.

Compare the notes at [Job 2:8](#). The practical truth taught in this verse, in connection with the preceding, is, that the fact that a thing is certainly predicted, and that God means to accomplish it, is an encouragement to prayer, and will lead to prayer. We could have no encouragement to pray except in the purposes and promises of God, for we have no power ourselves to accomplish the things for which we pray, and all must depend on his will. When that will is known it is the very thing to encourage us in our approaches to him, and is all the assurance

that we need to induce us to pray.

Daniel 9:4

dan 9:4

And I prayed unto the Lord my God - Evidently a set and formal prayer. It would seem probable that; he offered this prayer, and then re corded the substance of it afterward. We have no reason to suppose that we have the whole of it, but we have doubtless its principal topics.

And made my confession - Not as an individual, or not of his own sins only, but a confession in behalf of the people, and in their name. There is no reason to suppose that what he here says did "not" express their feelings. They had been long in captivity - far away from their desolate city and temple. They could not but be sensible that these calamities had come upon them on account of their sins; and they could not but feel that the calamities could not be expected to be removed but by confession of their sins, and by acknowledging the justice of the Divine dealings toward them. When we have been afflicted - when we are called to pass through severe trials - and when, borne down by trial, we go to God, and pray that the evil may be removed, the first thing that is demanded is, that we should confess our sins, and acknowledge the justice of God in the judgments that have come upon us. If we attempt to vindicate and justify ourselves, we can have no hope that the judgment will be averted. Daniel, therefore, in the name of the people, began his prayer with the humble and penitent acknowledgment that all that they had suffered was deserved.

O Lord, the great and dreadful God - A God great, and to be feared or venerated - הנורא hanôrâ'. This does not mean "dreadful" in the sense that there is anything stern or unamiable in his character, but mainly that he is to be regarded with veneration.

Keeping the covenant and mercy - Keeping his covenant and showing mercy. This is often ascribed to God, that he is faithful to his covenant; that is, that he is faithful to his promises to his people, or to those who sustain a certain relation to him, and who are faithful to "their" covenant vows. If there is alienation and estrangement, and want of

faithfulness on either side, it does not begin with him. He is faithful to all his promises, and his fidelity may always be assumed as a basis of calculation in all our intercourse with him. See the word "covenant," in Cruden's "Concordance." The word mercy seems to be added here to denote that mercy enters into his dealings with us even in keeping the covenant. We are so sinful and so unfaithful ourselves, that if "he" is faithful to his covenant, it must be by showing mercy to us.

To them that love him ... - The conditions of the covenant extend no farther than this, since, in a compact of any kind, one is bound to be faithful only while the terms are maintained by the other party. So God binds himself to show favor only while we are obedient, and we can plead his covenant only when we are obedient, when we confess our sins and plead his promises in this sense - that he has assured us that he will restore and receive us if we are penitent. It was this which Daniel pleaded on this occasion. He could not plead that his people had been obedient, and had thus any claims to the Divine favor; but he could cast himself and them on the mercy of a covenant-keeping God, who would remember his covenant with them if they were penitent, and who would graciously pardon.

[Daniel 9:5](#)

dan 9:5

We have sinned - Though Daniel was alone, he spake in the name of the people in general - doubtless recounting the long series of crimes in the nation which had preceded the captivity, and which were the cause of the ruin of the city and temple.

And have committed iniquity ... - These varied forms of expression are designed to give "intensity" to what he says. It is equivalent to saying that they had sinned in every way possible. The mind, in a state of true repentance, dwells on its sins, and recounts the various forms in which iniquity has been done, and multiplies expressions of regret and sorrow on account of transgression.

From thy precepts - Thy commands; thy laws.

Thy judgments - Thy laws - the word "judgments" in the

Scripture denoting what God judges to be right for us to do, as well as what it is right for him to inflict.

[Daniel 9:6](#)

dan 9:6

Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets - Who called upon us to turn from our sins; who made known the will of God, and who proclaimed that these judgments would come upon us if we did not repent.

Which spake in thy name to our kings ... - To all classes of the people, calling on kings and rulers to turn from their idolatry, and the people to forsake their sins, and to seek the Lord. It was a characteristic of the prophets that they spared no classes of the nation, but faithfully uttered all the word of God. Their admonitions had been unheeded, and the people now saw clearly that these calamities had come upon them because they had "not" hearkened to their voice.

[Daniel 9:7](#)

dan 9:7

O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee - Margin, "or, thou hast." The Hebrew is, "to thee is righteousness, to us shame, etc." The state of mind in him who makes the prayer is that of ascribing righteousness or justice to God. Daniel feels and admits that God has been right in his dealings. He is not disposed to blame him, but to take all the shame and blame to the people. There is no murmuring or complaining on his part as if God had done wrong in any way, but there is the utmost confidence in him, and in his government. This is the true feeling with which to come before God when we are afflicted, and when we plead for his mercy and favor. God should be regarded as righteous in all that he has done, and holy in all his judgments and claims, and there should be a willingness to address him as holy, and just, and true, and to take shame and confusion of face to ourselves. Compare [Psa 51:4](#).

But unto us confusion of faces - Hebrew, "shame of faces;" that is, that kind of shame which we have when we feel that we are guilty, and which commonly shows itself in the countenance.

As at this day - As we actually are at this time. That is, he felt that at that time they were a down-trodden, an humbled, a condemned people. Their country was in ruins; they were captives in a far distant land, and all on which they had prided themselves was laid waste. All these judgments and humiliating things he says they had deserved, for they had grievously sinned against God.

To the men of Judah - Not merely to the tribe of Judah, but to the kingdom of that name. After the revolt of the ten tribes - which became known as the kingdom of Ephraim, because Ephraim was the largest tribe, or as the kingdom of Israel - the other portion of the people, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were known as the kingdom of Judah, since Judah was by far the larger tribe of the two. This kingdom is referred to here, because Daniel belonged to it, and because the ten tribes had been carried away long before and scattered in the countries of the East. The ten tribes had been carried to Assyria. Jerusalem always remained as the capital of the kingdom of Judah, and it is to this portion of the Hebrew people that the prayer of Daniel more especially pertains.

And to the inhabitants of Jerusalem - Particularly to them, as the heaviest calamities had come upon them, and as they had been prominent in the sins for which these judgments had come upon the people.

And unto all Israel - All the people who are descendants of Israel or Jacob, wherever they may be, embracing not only those of the kingdom of Judah properly so called, but all who pertain to the nation. They were all of one blood. They had had a common country. They had all revolted, and a succession of heavy judgments had come upon the nation as such, and all had occasion for shame and confusion of face.

That are near, and that are far off - Whether in Babylon, in Assyria, or in more remote countries. The ten tribes had been carried away some two hundred years before this prayer was offered by Daniel, and they were scattered in far distant lands.

Through all the countries whither thou hast driven them ... - In Babylonia, in Assyria, in Egypt, or in other lands. They were

scattered everywhere, and wherever they were they had common cause for humiliation and shame.

[Daniel 9:8](#)

dan 9:8

O Lord, to us belongeth confusion ... - To all of us; to the whole people, high and low, rich and poor, the rulers and the ruled. All had been partakers of the guilt; all were involved in the calamities consequent on the guilt. As all had sinned, the judgments had come upon all, and it was proper that the confession should be made in the name of all.

[Daniel 9:9](#)

dan 9:9

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses - Not only does righteousness belong to him in the sense that he has done right, and that he cannot be blamed for what he has done, but mercy and forgiveness belong to him in the sense that he only can pardon, and that these are attributes of his nature.

Though we have rebelled against him - The word used here and rendered "though" (כִּי kîy) may mean either "though" or "for." That is, the passage may mean that mercy belongs to God, and we may hope that he will show it, "although" we have been so evil and rebellious; or it may mean that it belongs to him, and he only can show it, "for" we have rebelled against him; that is, our only hope now is in his mercy, "for" we have sinned, and forfeited all claims to his favor. Either of these interpretations makes good sense, but the latter would seem to be most in accordance with the general strain of this part of the prayer, which is to make humble and penitent confession. So the Latin Vulgate "quia." So Theodotion, ὅτι hoti. So Luther and Lengerke, "denn." In the same way, the passage in [Psa 25:11](#) is rendered, "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for (כִּי kîy) it is great" - though this passage will admit of the other interpretation, "although it is great."

[Daniel 9:10](#)

dan 9:10

Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord - The commands of God as made known by the prophets, [Dan 9:6](#).

Daniel 9:11

dan 9:11

Yea, all Israel have transgressed ... - Embracing not only the tribe and the kingdom of Judah, but the whole nation. The calamity, therefore, had come upon them all.

Even by departing - By departing from thy commandments; or by rebellion against thee.

That they might not obey thy voice - By refusing to obey thy voice, or thy commands.

Therefore the curse is poured upon us - As rain descends, or as water is poured out. The "curse" here refers to what was so solemnly threatened by Moses in case the nation did not obey God. See Deut. 28:15-68.

And the oath that is written in the law of Moses ... - The word here rendered "oath" (שְׁבוּעָה shebû'âh) means, properly, a "swearing," or "an oath;" and hence, either an oath of promise as in a covenant, or an oath of cursing or imprecation - that is, a curse. It is evidently used in the latter sense here. See Gesenius, "Lexicon" Daniel saw clearly that the evils which had been threatened by Moses Deut. 28 had actually come upon the nation, and he as clearly saw that the cause of all these calamities was that which Moses had specified. He, therefore, frankly and penitently confessed these sins in the name of the whole people, and earnestly supplicated for mercy.

Daniel 9:12

dan 9:12

And he hath confirmed his words ... - By bringing upon the people all that he had threatened in case of their disobedience. Daniel saw that there was a complete fulfillment of all that he had said would come upon them. As all this had been threatened, he could not complain; and as he had confirmed his words in regard to the threatening, he had the same reason to think that he would in regard to his promises. What Daniel here says was true in his time, and in reference to his people will be found to be true at all times, and in reference to all people. Nothing is more certain than that God will "confirm" all the words that he has ever spoken, and that no sinner can

hope to escape on the ground that God will be found to be false to his threatenings, or that he has forgotten them, or that he is indifferent to them.

Against our judges that judged us - Our magistrates or rulers.

For under the whole heaven - In all the world.

Hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem - In respect to the slaughter, and the captivity, and the complete desolation. No one can show that at that time this was not literally true. The city was in a state of complete desolation; its temple was in ruins; its people had been slain or borne into captivity.

[Daniel 9:13](#)

dan 9:13

As it is written in the law of Moses - The word law was given to all the writings of Moses. See the notes at [Luk 24:44](#).

Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God - Margin, "entreated we not the face of." The Hebrew word used here (חָלָהּ châlâh) means, properly, "to be polished;" then to be worn down in strength, to be weak; then to be sick, or diseased; then in Piel (the form used here), to rub or stroke the face of anyone, to soothe or caress, and hence, to beseech, or supplicate. See Gesenius, "Lexicon" Here it means, that, as a people, they had failed, when they had sinned, to call upon God for pardon; to confess their sins; to implore his mercy; to deprecate his wrath. It would have been easy to turn aside his threatened judgments if they had been penitent, and had sought his mercy, but they had not done it. What is here said of them can and will be said of all sinners when the Divine judgment comes upon them.

That we might turn from, our iniquities - That we might seek grace to turn from our transgressions. "And understand thy truth." The truth which God had revealed; equivalent to saying that they might be righteous.

[Daniel 9:14](#)

dan 9:14

Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil - The word here

used and rendered watched - שָׁקַד shâqad - means, properly, "to wake; to be sleepless; to watch." Then it means to watch over anything, or to be attentive to it. [Jer 1:12](#); [Jer 31:28](#); [Jer 44:27](#). - Gesenius, "Lexicon" The meaning here is, that the Lord had not been inattentive to the progress of things, nor unmindful of his threatening. He had never slumbered, but had carefully observed the course of events, and had been attentive to all that they had done, and to all that he had threatened to do. The practical "truth" taught here - and it is one of great importance to sinners - is, that God is not inattentive to their conduct, though he may seem to be, and that in due time he will show that he has kept an unslumbering eye upon them. See the notes at [Isa 18:4](#).

For the Lord our God is righteous in all his works ... - This is the language of a true penitent; language which is always used by one who has right feelings when he reflects on the Divine dealings toward him. God is seen to be righteous in his law and in his dealings, and the only reason why we suffer is that we have sinned. This will be found to be true always; and whatever calamities we suffer, it should be a fixed principle with us to "ascribe righteousness to our Maker," [Job 36:3](#).

[Daniel 9:15](#)

dan 9:15

And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt - In former days. The reference to this shows that it is proper to use "arguments" before God when we plead with him (compare the notes at [Job 23:4](#)); that is, to suggest considerations or reasons why the prayer should be granted. Those reasons must be, of course, such as will occur to our own minds as sufficient to make it proper for God to bestow the blessing, and when they are presented before him, it must be with submission to his higher view of the subject. The arguments which it is proper to urge are those derived from the Divine mercy and faithfulness; from the promises of God; from his former dealings with his people; from our sins and misery; from the great sacrifice made for sin; from the desirableness that his name should be glorified. Here Daniel properly refers to the former Divine interposition in favor of the Hebrew people, and he pleads the fact that God had

delivered them from Egypt as a reason why he should now interpose and save them. The strength of this argument may be supposed to consist in such things as the following:

(a) in the fact that there was as much reason for interposing now as there was then;

(b) in the fact that his interposing then might be considered as a proof that he intended to be regarded as their protector, and to defend them as his people;

(c) in the fact that he who had evinced such mighty power at that time must be able to interpose and save them now, etc.

And hast gotten thee renown - Margin, "made thee a name." So the Hebrew. The idea is, that that great event had been the means of making him known as a faithful God, and a God able to deliver. As he was thus known, Daniel prayed that he would again interpose, and would now show that he was as able to deliver his people as in former times.

As at this day - That is, as God was then regarded. The remembrance of his interposition had been diffused abroad, and had been transmitted from age to age.

We have sinned ... - This turn in the thought shows how deeply the idea of their sinfulness pressed upon the mind of Daniel. The natural and obvious course of thought would have been, that, as God had interposed when his people were delivered from Egyptian bondage, he would now again interpose; but instead of that, the mind of Daniel is overwhelmed with the thought that they had sinned grievously against one who had shown that he was a God so great and glorious, and who had laid them under such obligations to love and serve him.

[Daniel 9:16](#)

dan 9:16

O Lord, according to all thy righteousness - The word righteousness here seems to refer to all that was excellent and glorious in the character of God. The eye of Daniel is fixed upon what he had formerly done; upon his character of justice, and mercy, and goodness; upon the faithfulness of God to his

people, and, in view of all that was excellent and lovely in his character, he pleaded that he would interpose and turn away his anger from his people now. It is the character of God that is the ground of his plea - and what else is there that can give us encouragement when we come before him in prayer.

Let thine anger and thy fury be turned away ... - The anger which had come upon the city, and which appeared to rest, upon it. Jerusalem was in ruins, and it seemed still to be lying under the wrath of God. The word rendered fury is the common one to denote wrath or indignation. It implies no more than anger or indignation, and refers here to the Divine displeasure against their sins, manifested in the destruction of their city.

Thy holy mountain - Jerusalem was built on hills, and the city in general might be designated by this phrase. Or, more probably, there is allusion either to Mount Zion, or to Mount Moriah.

Because for our sins ... - There is, on the part of Daniel, no disposition to blame God for what he had done. There is no murmuring or complaining, as if he had been unjust or severe in his dealings with his people. Jerusalem was indeed in ruins, and the people were captives in a distant land, but he felt and admitted that God was just in all that he had done. It was too manifest to be denied that all these calamities had come upon them on account of their sins, and this Daniel, in the name of the people, humbly and penitently acknowledged.

A reproach to all that are about us - All the surrounding nations. They reproach us with our sins, and with the judgments that have come upon us, as if we were peculiarly wicked, and were forsaken of heaven.

[Daniel 9:17](#)

dan 9:17

Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant - In behalf of the people. He pleaded for his people and country, and earnestly entreated the Lord to be merciful. His argument is based on the confession of sin; on the character of God; on the condition of the city and temple; on the former Divine

interpositions in behalf of the people; and by all these considerations, he pleads with God to have mercy upon his people and land.

And cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary - Upon the temple. That is, that he would look upon it benignly and favorably. The language is common in the Scriptures, when favor and kindness are denoted by lifting up the light of the countenance, and by similar phrases. The allusion is originally, perhaps, to the sun, which, when it shines brightly, is an emblem of favor and mercy; when it is overclouded, is an emblem of wrath.

For the Lord's sake - That is, that he would be propitious for his own sake; to wit, that his glory might be promoted; that his excellent character might be displayed; that his mercy and compassion might be shown. All true prayer has its seat in a desire that the glory of God may be promoted, and the excellence of his character displayed. That is of more consequence than "our" welfare, and the gratification of "our" wishes, and that should be uppermost in our hearts when we approach the throne of grace.

[Daniel 9:18](#)

dan 9:18

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear - Pleading earnestly for his attention and his favor, as one does to a man.

Open thine eyes - As if his eyes had been closed upon the condition of the city, and he did not see it. Of course, all this is figurative, and is the language of strong and earnest pleading when the heart is greatly interested.

And the city which is called by thy name - Margin, "whereupon thy name is called." The margin expresses the sense more literally; but the meaning is, that the city had been consecrated to God, and was called his - the city of Jehovah. It was known as the place of his sanctuary - the city where his worship was celebrated, and which was regarded as his peculiar dwelling place on the earth. Compare [Psa 48:1-3](#); [Psa 87:3](#). This is a new ground of entreaty, that the city belonged to God, and that he would remember the close connection

between the prosperity of that city and the glory of his own name.

[Daniel 9:19](#)

dan 9:19

O Lord, hear ... - The language in this verse does not require any particular explanation. The repetition - the varied forms of expression - indicate a mind intent on the object; a heart greatly interested; an earnestness that cannot be denied. It is language that is respectful, solemn, devout, but deeply earnest. It is not vain repetition, for its force is not in the "words" employed, but in the manifest fervour, earnestness, and sincerity of spirit which pervade the pleading. It is earnest intercession and supplication that God would hear - that he would forgive, that he would hearken and do, that he would not defer his gracious interposition. The sins of the people; the desolation of the city; the promises of God; the reproach that the nation was suffering - all these come rushing over the soul, and prompt to the most earnest pleading that perhaps ever proceeded from human lips.

And these things justified that earnest pleading - for the prayer was that of a prophet, a man of God, a man that loved his country, a man that was intent on the promotion of the Divine glory as the supreme object of his life. Such earnest intercession; such confession of sin; such a dwelling on arguments why a prayer should be heard, is at all times acceptable to God; and though it cannot be supposed that the Divine Mind needs to be instructed, or that our arguments will convince God or influence him as arguments do men, yet it is undoubtedly proper to urge them as if they would, for it may be only in this way that our own minds can be brought into a proper state. The great argument which we are to urge why our prayers should be heard is the sacrifice which has been made for sin by the Redeemer, and the fact that he has purchased for us the blessings which we need; but in connection with that it is proper to urge our own sins and necessities; the wants of our friends or our country; our own danger and that of others; the interposition of God in times past in behalf of his people, and his own gracious promises and purposes. If we have the spirit, the faith, the penitence, the earnestness of Daniel, we may be

sure that our prayers will be heard as his was.

[Daniel 9:20](#)

dan 9:20

And whiles I was speaking ... - In the very time when I was thus pleading.

For the holy mountain of my God - See the notes at [Dan 9:16](#).

[Daniel 9:21](#)

dan 9:21

Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer - How "long" the prayer continued we are not informed. It is probable that we have only the substance of it, and that Daniel has recorded only the topics on which he dwelt more at length. The subject was of great importance, and it is reasonable to suppose that a day had been devoted to an examination of the prophecies, and to solemn prayer.

Even the man Gabriel - Who had the appearance of a man, and hence, so called.

Whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning - That is, in a "former" vision. See the notes at [Dan 8:16](#). It cannot refer to what is mentioned in this (the ninth) chapter, for

(a) he had as yet had no vision, but all that is recorded is a prayer;

(b) there is no intimation that Gabriel had appeared to him at the beginning of the prayer; and

(c) it is declared that at the beginning of the prayer, Gabriel, then evidently in heaven, had received commandment to go to Daniel, and to communicate the message to him, [Dan 9:23](#).

The meaning undoubtedly is, that the personage who now appeared to him he recognized to be the same who had appeared in a former vision on the banks of the Ulai. The proper meaning of the Hebrew here is, "in a vision at the beginning," as in our translation. So the Vulgate, "a principio;" and so Theodotion - ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ en tē archē. The Hebrew word תחלה techillâh means, properly, "beginning," [Hos 1:2](#); [Pro](#)

[9:10](#); but, in connection with the preposition, as here - בתחלה battechillâh - it means also, "before, formerly," [Gen 13:3](#); [Gen 41:21](#); [Gen 43:18](#), [Gen 43:20](#); [Isa 1:26](#).

Being caused to fly swiftly - Margin, "with weariness," or "flight." On the difficult Hebrew expression here - ביעף מעף - mu'âp bîy'âp - Lengerke may be consulted, in loc. The words, according to Gesenius, are derived from יעף yâ'ap, to go swiftly, and then, to be wearied, to faint, either with running, [Jer 2:24](#), or with severe labor, [Isa 40:28](#), or with sorrows, [Isa 50:4](#). If derived from this word, the meaning in Hophal, the form used here, would be, "wearied with swift running," and the sense is, that Gabriel had borne the message swiftly to him, and appeared before him as one does who is wearied with a rapid course. If this be the idea, there is no direct allusion to his "flying," but the reference is to the rapidity with which he had come on the long journey, as if exhausted by his journey. The Latin Vulgate renders it cito volans - quickly flying; Theodotion, πετόμενος petomenos - flying; the Codex Chisianus, τάχει φερόμενος tachei pheromenos - "borne swiftly." The Syriac, "with a swift flying he flew and came from heaven." It cannot be determined with certainty, from the words used here, that the coming of Gabriel was by an act of "flying" as with wings. The common representation of the angels in the Old Testament is not with wings, though the cherubim and Seraphim ([Isa 6:2](#), following.) are represented with wings; and in [Rev 14:6](#), we have a representation of an angel flying. Probably the more exact idea here is that of a rapid course, so as to produce weariness, or such as would naturally produce fatigue.

Touched me - Daniel was doubtless at this time engaged in prayer.

About the time of the evening oblation - The evening sacrifice. This was at the ninth hour of the day, or about three o'clock in the afternoon.

[Daniel 9:22](#)

dan 9:22

And he informed me - Hebrew, Gave me intelligence or understanding. That is, about the design of his visit, and about

what would be hereafter.

And talked with me - Spake unto me.

O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill - Margin, "make thee skillful of." The Hebrew is, literally, "to make thee skillful, or wise, in understanding." The design was to give him information as to what was to occur.

[Daniel 9:23](#)

dan 9:23

At the beginning of thy supplications - We are not informed at what time Daniel began to pray, but as remarked above, it is most natural to suppose that he devoted the day to prayer, and had commenced these solemn acts of devotion in the morning.

The commandment came forth - Margin, "word." That is, the word of God. This evidently means, in heaven; and the idea is, that as soon as he began to pray a command was issued from God to Gabriel that he should visit Daniel, and convey to him the important message respecting future events. It is fair to conclude that he had at once left heaven in obedience to the order, and on this high embassy, and that he had passed over the amazing distance between heaven and earth in the short time during which Daniel was engaged in prayer. If so, and if heaven - the peculiar seat of God, the dwelling-place of angels and of the just - is beyond the region of the fixed stars, some central place in this vast universe, then this may give us some idea of the amazing rapidity with which celestial beings may move. It is calculated that there are stars so remote from our earth, that their light would not travel down to us for many thousand years. If so, how much more rapid may be the movements of celestial beings than even light; perhaps more than that of the lightning's flash - than the electric fluid on telegraphic wires - though "that" moves at the rate of more than 200,000 miles in a second. Compare Dick's "Philosophy of a Future State," p. 220. "During the few minutes employed in uttering this prayer," says Dr. Dick, "this angelic messenger descended from the celestial regions to the country of Babylonia. This was a rapidity of motion surpassing the comprehension of the most vigorous imagination, and far exceeding even the amazing velocity of light." With such a

rapidity it may be our privilege yet to pass from world to world on errands of mercy and love, or to survey in distant parts of the universe the wonderful works of God.

And I am come to show thee - To make thee acquainted with what will yet be.

For thou" art "greatly beloved - Margin, as in Hebrew, "a man of desires." That is, he was one whose happiness was greatly desired by God; or, a man of God's delight; that is, as in our version, greatly beloved. It was on this account that his prayer was heard, and that God sent to him this important message respecting what was to come.

Therefore understand the matter - The matter respecting what was yet to occur in regard to his people.

And consider the vision - This vision - the vision of future things which he was now about to present to his view. From this passage, describing the appearance of Gabriel to Daniel, we may learn,

(a) That our prayers, if sincere, are heard in heaven "as soon" as they are offered. They enter at once into the ears of God, and he regards them at the instant.

(b) A command, as it were, may be at once issued to answer them - "as if" he directed an angel to bear the answer at once.

(c) The angels are ready to hasten down to men, to communicate the will of God. Gabriel came evidently with pleasure on his embassy, and to a benevolent being anywhere there is nothing more grateful than to be commissioned to bear glad tidings to others. Possibly that may be a part of the employment of the righteous forever.

(d) The thought is an interesting one, if we are permitted to entertain it, that good angels may be constantly employed as Gabriel was; that whenever prayer is offered on earth they may be commissioned to bring answers of peace and mercy, or despatched to render aid, and that thus the universe may be constantly traversed by these holy beings ministering to those

who are "heirs of salvation," [Heb 1:1](#), [Heb 1:4](#).

[Daniel 9:24](#)

dan 9:24

Seventy weeks are determined - Here commences the celebrated prophecy of the seventy weeks - a portion of Scripture Which has excited as much attention, and led to as great a variety of interpretation, as perhaps any other. Of this passage, Professor Stuart ("Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy," p. 104) remarks, "It would require a volume of considerable magnitude even to give a history of the ever-varying and contradictory opinions of critics respecting this "locus vexatissimus; "and perhaps a still larger one to establish an exegesis which would stand. I am fully of opinion, that no interpretation as yet published will stand the test of thorough grammatico-historical criticism; and that a candid, and searching, and thorough "critique" here is still a "desideratum." May some expositor, fully adequate to the task, speedily appear!" After these remarks of this eminent Biblical scholar, it is with no great confidence of success that I enter on the exposition of the passage.

Yet, perhaps, though "all" difficulties may not be removed, and though I cannot hope to contribute anything "new" in the exposition of the passage, something may be written which may relieve it of some of the perplexities attending it, and which may tend to show that its author was under the influence of Divine inspiration. The passage may be properly divided into two parts. The first, in [Dan 9:24](#), contains a "general" statement of what would occur in the time specified - the seventy weeks; the second, [Dan 9:25-27](#), contains a "particular" statement of the manner in which that would be accomplished. In this statement, the whole time of the seventy weeks is broken up into three smaller portions of seven, sixty-two, and one - designating evidently some important epochs or periods [Dan 9:25](#), and the last one week is again subdivided in such a way, that, while it is said that the whole work of the Messiah in confirming the covenant would occupy the entire week, yet that he would be cut off in the middle of the week, [Dan 9:27](#).

In the "general" statement [Dan 9:24](#) it is said that there was a

definite time - seventy weeks - during which the subject of the prediction would be accomplished; that is, during which all that was to be done in reference to the holy city, or in the holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, etc., would be effected. The things specified in this verse are "what was to be done," as detailed more particularly in the subsequent verses. The design in this verse seems to have been to furnish a "general" statement of what was to occur in regard to the holy city - of that city which had been selected for the peculiar purpose of being a place where an atonement was to be made for human transgression. It is quite clear that when Daniel set apart this period for prayer, and engaged in this solemn act of devotion, his design was not to inquire into the ultimate events which would occur in Jerusalem, but merely to pray that the purpose of God, as predicted by Jeremiah, respecting the captivity of the nation, and the rebuilding of the city and temple, might be accomplished. God took occasion from this, however, not only to give an implied assurance about the accomplishment of these purposes, but also to state in a remarkable manner the "whole" ultimate design respecting the holy city, and the great event which was ever onward to characterize it among the cities of the world. In the consideration of the whole passage [Dan 9:24-27](#), it will be proper, first, to examine into the literal meaning of the words and phrases, and then to inquire into the fulfillment.

Seventy weeks - שבעים שבועים shâbu'îym shîb'îym. Vulgate, Septuaginta hebdomades. So Theodotion, ἑβδομήκοντα ἑβδομάδες Hebdomēkonta hebdomades. Prof. Stuart ("Hints," p. 82) renders this "seventy sevens;" that is, seventy times seven years: on the ground that the word denoting "weeks" in the Hebrew is not שבעים shâbu'îym, but שבעות shâbu'ôth. "The form which is used here," says he, "which is a regular masculine plural, is no doubt purposely chosen to designate the plural of seven; and with great propriety here, inasmuch as there are many sevens which are to be joined together in one common sum. Daniel had been meditating on the close of the seventy "years" of Hebrew exile, and the angel now discloses to him a new period of "seventy times seven," in which still more important events are to take place. Seventy sevens, or (to use the Greek phraseology), "seventy heptades," are

determined upon thy people.

Heptades of what? Of days, or of years? No one can doubt what the answer is. Daniel had been making diligent search respecting the seventy "years;" and, in such a connection, nothing but seventy heptades of years could be reasonably supposed to be meant by the angel." The inquiry about the "gender" of the word, of which so much has been said (Hengstenberg, "Chris." ii. 297), does not seem to be very important, since the same result is reached whether it be rendered "seventy sevens," or "seventy weeks." In the former case, as proposed by Prof. Stuart, it means seventy sevens of "years," or 490 years; in the other, seventy "weeks" of years; that is, as a "week of years" is seven years, seventy such weeks, or as before, 490 years. The usual and proper meaning of the word used here, however - שָׁבֻעַ shâbû'a is a "seven," ἑβδομάς hebdomas, i. e., a week. - Gesenius, "Lexicon" From the "examples" where the word occurs it would seem that the masculine or the feminine forms were used indiscriminately.

The word occurs only in the following passages, in all of which it is rendered "week," or "weeks," except in [Eze 45:21](#), where it is rendered "seven," to wit, days. In the following passages the word occurs in the masculine form plural, [Dan 9:24-26](#); [Dan 10:2-3](#); in the following in the feminine form plural, [Exo 34:22](#); [Num 28:26](#); [Deu 16:9-10](#), [Deu 16:16](#); [Ch2 8:13](#); [Jer 5:24](#); [Eze 45:21](#); and in the following in the singular number, common gender, rendered "week," [Gen 29:27-28](#), and in the dual masculine in [Lev 12:5](#), rendered "two weeks." From these passages it is evident that nothing certain can be determined about the meaning of the word from its gender. It would seem to denote "weeks," periods of seven days - "hebdomads" - in either form, and is doubtless so used here. The fair translation would be, weeks seventy are determined; that is, seventy times seven days, or four hundred and ninety "days." But it may be asked here, whether this is to be taken literally, as denoting four hundred and ninety days? If not, in what sense is it to be understood? and why do we understand it in a different sense? It is clear that it must be explained literally as denoting four hundred and ninety "days," or that these days must stand for years, and that the period is four

hundred and ninety "years." That this latter is the true interpretation, as it has been held by all commentators, is apparent from the following considerations:

(a) This is not uncommon in the prophetic writings. See the notes at [Dan 7:24-28](#). (See also Editor's Preface to volume on Revelation.)

(b) Daniel had been making inquiry respecting the seventy "years," and it is natural to suppose that the answer of the angel would have respect to "years" also; and, thus understood, the answer would have met the inquiry pertinently - "not seventy years, but a week of years - seven times seventy years." Compare [Mat 18:21-22](#). "In such a connection, nothing but seventy heptades of years could be reasonably supposed to be meant by the angel." - Prof. Stuart's "Hints," etc., p. 82.

(c) Years, as Prof. Stuart remarks, are the measure of all considerable periods of time. When the angel speaks, then, in reference to certain events, and declares that they are to take place during "seventy heptades," it is a matter of course to suppose that he means years.

(d) The circumstances of the case demand this interpretation. Daniel was seeking comfort in view of the fact that the city and temple had been desolate now for a period of seventy years. The angel comes to bring him consolation, and to give him assurances about the rebuilding of the city, and the great events that were to occur there. But what consolation would it be to be told that the city would indeed be rebuilt, and that it would continue seventy ordinary weeks - that is, a little more than a year, before a new destruction would come upon it? It cannot well be doubted, then, that by the time here designated, the angel meant to refer to a period of four hundred and ninety years; and if it be asked why this number was not literally and exactly specified in so many words, instead of choosing a mode of designation comparatively so obscure, it may be replied,

(1) that the number "seventy" was employed by Daniel as the time respecting which he was making inquiry, and that there was a propriety that there should be a reference to that fact in

the reply of the angel - "one" number seventy had been fulfilled in the desolations of the city, there would be "another" number seventy in the events yet to occur;

(2) this is in the usual prophetic style, where there is, as Hengstenberg remarks ("Chris." ii. 299), often a "concealed definiteness." It is usual to designate numbers in this way.

(3) The term was sufficiently clear to be understood, or is, at all events, made clear by the result. There is no reason to doubt that Daniel would so understand it, or that it would be so interpreted, as fixing in the minds of the Jewish people the period when the Messiah was about to appear. The meaning then is, that there would be a period of four hundred and ninety years, during which the city, after the order of the rebuilding should go forth [Dan 9:25](#), until the entire consummation of the great object for which it should be rebuilt: and that then the purpose would be accomplished, and it would be given up to a greater ruin. There was to be this long period in which most important transactions were to occur in the city.

Are determined - The word used here (נחתק nechettak from חתק châtak) occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. It properly means, according to Gesenius, to cut off, to divide; and hence, to determine, to destine, to appoint. Theodotion renders it, sunetmeeteesan - are cut off, decided, defined. The Vulgate renders it, "abbreviate sunt." Luther, "Sind bestimmet" - are determined. The meaning would seem to be, that this portion of time - the seventy weeks - was "cut off" from the whole of duration, or cut out of it, as it were, and set by itself for a definite purpose. It does not mean that it was cut off from the time which the city would naturally stand, or that this time was "abbreviated," but that a portion of time - to wit, four hundred and ninety years - was designated or appointed with reference to the city, to accomplish the great and important object which is immediately specified. A certain, definite period was fixed on, and when this was past, the promised Messiah would come. In regard to the construction here - the singular verb with a plural noun, see Hengstenberg, "Christ. in, loc." The true meaning seems to be, that the seventy weeks are spoken of "collectively," as denoting a period of time; that is, a period

of seventy weeks is determined. The prophet, in the use of the singular verb, seems to have contemplated the time, not as separate weeks, or as particular portions, but as one period.

Upon thy people - The Jewish people; the nation to which Daniel belonged. This allusion is made because he was inquiring about the close of their exile, and their restoration to their own land.

And upon thy holy city - Jerusalem, usually called the holy city, because it was the place where the worship of God was celebrated, [Isa 52:1](#); [Neh 11:1](#), [Neh 11:18](#); [Mat 27:53](#). It is called "thy holy city" - the city of Daniel, because he was here making special inquiry respecting it, and because he was one of the Hebrew people, and the city was the capital of their nation. As one of that nation, it could be called "his." It was then, indeed, in ruins, but it was to be rebuilt, and it was proper to speak of it as if it were then a city. The meaning of "upon thy people and city" (עַל 'al) is, "respecting" or "concerning." The purpose respecting the seventy weeks "pertains" to thy people and city; or there is an important period of four hundred and seventy years determined on, or designated, respecting that people and city.

To finish the transgression - The angel proceeds to state what was the object to be accomplished in this purpose, or what would occur during that period. The first thing, "to finish the transgression." The margin is, "restrain." The Vulgate renders it, ut consummetur proevaricatio. Theodotion, τοῦ συντελεσθῆναι ἁμαρτίαν του suntelesthēnai hamartian - to finish sin. Thompson renders this, "to finish sin-offerings." The difference between the marginal reading ("restrain") and the text ("finish") arises from a doubt as to the meaning of the original word. The common reading of the text is כָּלָא kallē', but in 39 Codices examined by Kennicott, it is כָּלָה. The reading in the text is undoubtedly the correct one, but still there is not absolute certainty as to the signification of the word, whether it means to "finish" or to "restrain." The proper meaning of the word in the common reading of the text (כָּלָא kâlâ') is, to shut up, confine, restrain - as it is rendered in the margin.

The meaning of the other word found in many manuscripts (כָּלָה *kâlâh*) is, to be completed, finished, closed - and in Piel, the form used here, to complete, to finish - as it is translated in the common version. Gesenius ("Lexicon") supposes that the word here is "for" - כָּלָה *kallēh* - meaning to finish or complete. Hengstenberg, who is followed in this view by Lengerke, supposes that the meaning is to "shut up transgression," and that the true reading is that in the text - כָּלָא - though as that word is not used in Piel, and as the Masoretes had some doubts as to the derivation of the word, they gave to it not its appropriate "pointing" in this place - which would have been כָּלָא *keloh* - but the pointing of the other word (כָּלָה *kalēh*) in the margin. According to Hengstenberg, the sense here of "shutting up" is derived from the general notion of "restraining" or "hindering," belonging to the word; and he supposes that this will best accord with the other words in this member of the verse - "to cover," and "to seal up."

The idea according to him is, that "sin, which hitherto lay naked and open before the eyes of a righteous God, is now by his mercy shut up, sealed, and covered, so that it can no more be regarded as existing - a figurative description of the forgiveness of sin." So Lengerke renders it, "Ura einzuschliessen (den) Abfall." Bertholdt, "Bis der Frevel vollbracht." It seems most probable that the true idea here is that denoted in the margin, and that the sense is not that of "finishing," but that of "restraining, closing, shutting up," etc. So it is rendered by Prof. Stuart - "to restrain transgression." - "Com. on Daniel, in loc." The word is used in this sense of "shutting up," or "restraining," in several places in the Bible: [Sa1 6:10](#), "and shut up their calves at home;" [Jer 32:3](#), "Zedekiah had shut him up;" [Psa 88:8](#), "I am shut up, and I cannot come forth;" [Jer 32:2](#), "Jeremiah the prophet was shut up."

The sense of "shutting up," or "restraining," accords better with the connection than that of "finishing." The reference of the whole passage is undoubtedly to the Messiah, and to what would be done sometime during the "seventy weeks;" and the meaning here is, not that he would "finish transgression" - which would not be true in any proper sense, but that he would

do a work which would "restrain" iniquity in the world, or, more strictly, which would "shut it up" - enclose it - as in a prison, so that it would no more go forth and prevail. The effect would be that which occurs when one is shut up in prison, and no longer goes at large. There would be a restraining power and influence which would check the progress of sin. This does not, I apprehend, refer to the particular transgressions for which the Jewish people had suffered in their long captivity, but sin (הַפְּשָׁעָה hapesha') in general - the sin of the world.

There would be an influence which would restrain and curb it, or which would shut it up so that it would no longer reign and roam at large over the earth. It is true that this might not have been so understood by Daniel at the time, for the "language" is so general that it "might" have suggested the idea that it referred to the sins of the Jewish people. This language, if there had been no farther explanation of it, might have suggested the idea that in the time specified - seventy weeks - there would be some process - some punishment - some Divine discipline - by which the iniquities of that people, or their propensity to sin, for which this long captivity had come upon them, would be cohibited, or restrained. But the language is not such as necessarily to confine the interpretation to that, and the subsequent statements, and the actual fulfillment in the work of the Messiah, lead us to understand this in a much higher sense, as having reference to sin in general, and as designed to refer to some work that would ultimately be an effectual check on sin, and which would tend to cohibit, or restrain it altogether in the world. Thus understood, the language will well describe the work of the Redeemer - that work which, through the sacrifice made on the cross, is adapted and designed to restrain sin altogether.

And to make an end of sins - Margin, "to seal up." The difference here in the text and the margin arises from a difference in the readings in the Hebrew. The common reading in the text is חָתַם châthēm - from חָתַם châtham - "to seal, to seal up." But the Hebrew marginal reading is a different word - חָתַם hâthēm, from תָּמַם tâmam - "to complete, to perfect, to finish." The "pointing" in the text in the word חָתַם châtēm is

not the proper pointing of that word, which would have been **חֶתֶם** chetom, but the Masoretes, as is not unfrequently the case, gave to the word in the text the pointing of another word which they placed in the margin. The marginal reading is found in fifty-five manuscripts (Lengerke), but the weight of authority is decidedly in favor of the common reading in the Hebrew text - "to seal," and not to "finish," as it is in our translation.

The marginal reading, "to finish," was doubtless substituted by some transcribers, or rather "suggested" by the Masoretes, because it seemed to convey a better signification to say that "sin would be finished," than to say that it would be "sealed." The Vulgate has followed the reading in the margin - *et finem accipiat peccatum*; Theodotion has followed the other reading, *σφραγίς ἁμαρτίας sphragisai hamartias*. Luther also has it, "to seal." Coverdale, "that sin may have an end." The true rendering is, doubtless, "to seal sin;" and the idea is that of removing it from sight; to remove it from view. "The expression is taken," says Lengerke, "from the custom of sealing up those things which one lays aside and conceals." Thus in [Job 9:7](#), "And sealet up the stars;" that is, he so shuts them up in the heavens as to prevent their shining - so as to hide them from the view. They are concealed, hidden, made close - as the contents of a letter or package are sealed, indicating that no one is to examine them.

See the note at that passage. So also in [Job 37:7](#), referring to winter, it is said, "He sealet up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work." That is, in the winter, when the snow is on the ground, when the streams are frozen, the labors of the farmer must cease. The hands can no more be used in ordinary toil. Every man is prevented from going abroad to his accustomed labor, and is, as it were, "sealed up" in his dwelling. Compare [Jer 32:11](#), [Jer 32:14](#); [Isa 29:11](#); [Sol 4:12](#). The idea in the passage before us is, that the sins of our nature will, as it were, be sealed up, or closed, or hidden, so that they will not be seen, or will not develop themselves; that is, "they will be inert, inefficient, powerless." - Prof. Stuart. The language is applicable to anything that would hide them from view, or remove them from sight - as a book whose writing is

so sealed that we cannot read it; a tomb that is so closed that we cannot enter it and see its contents; a package that is so sealed that we do not know what is within it; a room that is so shut up that we may not enter it, and see what is within.

It is not to be supposed that Daniel would see clearly how this was to be done; but we, who have now a full revelation of the method by which God can remove sin, can understand the method in which this is accomplished by the blood of the atonement, to wit, that "by" that atonement sin is now forgiven, or is treated as if it were hidden from the view, and a seal, which may not be broken, placed on what covers it. The language thus used, as we are now able to interpret it, is strikingly applicable to the work of the Redeemer, and to the method by which God removes sin. In not a few manuscripts and editions the word rendered "sins" is in the singular number. The amount of authority is in favor of the common reading - sins - though the sense is not materially varied. The work would have reference to "sin," and the effect would be to seal it, and hide it from the view.

And to make reconciliation for iniquity - More literally, "and to cover iniquity." The word which is rendered to "make reconciliation" - כָּפַר kâphar - properly means "to cover" (from our English word cover); to cover over, to overlay, as with pitch [Gen 6:14](#); and hence, to cover over sin; that is, to atone for it, pardon it, forgive it. It is the word which is commonly used with reference to atonement or expiation, and seems to have been so understood by our translators. It does not necessarily refer to the means by which sin is covered over, etc., by an atonement, but is often used in the general sense of "to pardon or forgive." Compare the notes at [Isa 6:7](#), and more fully. See the notes at [Isa 43:3](#). Here there is no necessary allusion to the atonement which the Messiah would make in order to cover over sin; that is, the word is of so general a character in its signification that it does not necessarily imply this, but it is the word which would naturally be used on the supposition that it had such a reference. As a matter of fact, undoubtedly, the means by which this was to be done was by the atonement, and that was referred to by the Spirit of inspiration, but this is not essentially implied in the meaning of

the word. In whatever way that should be done, this word would be properly used as expressing it. The Latin Vulgate renders thus, et deleatur iniquitas. Theodotion, ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας apaleipsai tas adikias - "to wipe out iniquities." Luther, "to reconcile for transgression." Here are three things specified, therefore, in regard to sin, which would be done. Sin would be

Restrained,

Sealed up,

Covered over.

These expressions, though not of the nature of a climax, are intensive, and show that the great work referred to pertained to sin, and would be designed to remove it. Its bearing would be on human transgression; on the way by which it might be pardoned; on the methods by which it would be removed from the view, and be kept from rising up to condemn and destroy. Such expressions would undoubtedly lead the mind to look forward to some method which was to be disclosed by which sin could be consistently pardoned and removed. In the remainder of the verse, there are three additional things which would be done as necessary to complete the work: -

To bring in everlasting righteousness;

To seal up the vision and prophecy; and

To anoint the Most Holy.

And to bring in everlasting righteousness - The phrase "to bring in" - literally, "to cause to come" - refers to some direct agency by which that righteousness would be introduced into the world. It would be such an agency as would cause it to exist; or as would establish it in the world. The "mode" of doing this is not indeed here specified, and, so far as the "word" used here is concerned, it would be applicable to any method by which this would be done - whether by making an atonement; or by setting an example; or by persuasion; or by placing the subject of morals on a better foundation; or by the

administration of a just government; or in any other way. The term is of the most general character, and its exact force here can be learned only by the subsequently revealed facts as to the way by which this would be accomplished. The essential idea in the language is, that this would be "introduced" by the Messiah; that is, that he would be its author.

The word "righteousness" here also (צדק tsedek) is of a general character. The fair meaning would be, that some method would be introduced by which men would become "righteous." In the former part of the verse, the reference was to "sin" - to the fact of its existence - to the manner in which it would be disposed of - to the truth that it would be coerced, sealed up, covered over. Here the statement is, that, in contradistinction from that, a method would be introduced by which man would become, in fact, righteous and holy. But the "word" implies nothing as to the method by which this would be done. Whether it would be by a new mode of justification, or by an influence that would make men personally holy - whether this was to be as the result of example, or instruction, or an atoning sacrifice - is not necessarily implied in the use of this word. That, as in the cases already referred to, could be learned only by subsequent developments.

It would be, doubtless, understood that there was a reference to the Messiah - for that is specified in the next verse; and it would be inferred from this word that, under him, righteousness would reign, or that men would be righteous, but nothing could be argued from it as to the methods by which it would be done. It is hardly necessary to add, that, in the prophets, it is constantly said that righteousness would characterize the Messiah and his times; that he would come to make men righteous, and to set up a kingdom of righteousness in the earth. Yet the exact mode in which it was to be done would be, of course, more fully explained when the Messiah should himself actually appear. The word "everlasting" is used here to denote that the righteousness would be permanent and perpetual. In reference to the method of becoming righteous, it would be unchanging - the standing method ever onward by which men would become holy; in reference to the individuals who should become righteous under this system, it would be a

righteousness which would continue forever.

This is the characteristic which is everywhere given of the righteousness which would be introduced by the Messiah. Thus in [Isa 51:6-8](#) : "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation." So [Isa 45:17](#) : "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end."

Compare [Jer 31:3](#). The language used in the passage before us, moreover, is such as could not properly be applied to anything but that righteousness which the Messiah would introduce. It could not be used in reference to the temporal prosperity of the Jews on their return to the holy land, nor to such righteousness as the nation had in former times. The fair and proper meaning of the term is, that it would be "eternal" - what would "endure forever" - עלמים צדק - tse^{deq} 'olâ^{mî}ym. It would place righteousness on a permanent and enduring foundation; introduce that which would endure through all changes, and exist when the heavens would be no more. In the plan itself there would be no change; in the righteousness which anyone would possess under that system there would be perpetual duration - it would exist forever and ever. This is the nature of that righteousness by which men are now justified; this is what all who are interested in the scheme of redemption actually possess. The "way" in which this "everlasting righteousness" would be introduced is not stated here, but is reserved for future revelations. Probably all that the words would convey to Daniel would be, that there would be some method disclosed by which men would become righteous, and that this would not be temporary or changing, but would be permanent and eternal. It is not improper that "we" should understand it, as it

is explained by the subsequent revelations in the New Testament, as to the method by which sinners are justified before God.

And to seal up the vision and prophecy - Margin, as in the Hebrew, "prophet." The evident meaning, however, here is "prophecy." The word seal is found, as already explained, in the former part of the verse - "to seal up sins." The word "vision" (for its meaning, see the notes at [Isa 1:1](#)) need not be understood as referring particularly to the visions seen by Daniel, but should be understood, like the word "prophecy" or "prophet" here, in a general sense - as denoting all the visions seen by the prophets - the series of visions relating to the future, which had been made known to the prophets. The idea seems to be that they would at that time be all "sealed," in the sense that they would be closed or shut up - no longer open matters - but that the fulfillment would, as it were, close them up forever. Till that time they would be open for perusal and study; then they would be closed up as a sealed volume which one does not read, but which contains matter hidden from the view.

Compare the notes at [Isa 8:16](#) : "Bind up the testimony; seal the law among my disciples." See also [Dan 8:26](#); [Dan 12:4](#). In Isaiah [Isa 8:16](#) the meaning is, that the prophecy was complete, and the direction was given to bind it up, or roll it up like a volume, and to seal it. In [Dan 8:26](#), the meaning is, seal up the prophecy, or make a permanent record of it, that when it is fulfilled, the event may be compared with the prophecy, and it may be seen that the one corresponds with the other. In the passage before us, Gesenius ("Lexicon") renders it, "to complete, to finish" - meaning that the prophecies would be fulfilled. Hengstenberg supposes that it means, that "as soon as the fulfillment takes place, the prophecy, although it retains, in other respects, its great importance, reaches the end of its destination, in so far as the view of believers, who stand in need of consolation and encouragement, is no longer directed to it, to the future prosperity, but to what has appeared."

Lengerke supposes that it means to confirm, corroborate, ratify - bekräftigen, bestatigen; that is, "the eternal righteousness will

be given to the pious, and the predictions of the prophets will be confirmed and fulfilled." To seal, says he, has also the idea of confirming, since the contents of a writing are secured or made fast by a seal. After all, perhaps, the very idea here is, that of "making fast," as a lock or seal does - for, as is well known, a seal was often used by the ancients where a lock is with us; and the sense may be, that, as a seal or lock made fast and secure the contents of a writing or a book, so the event, when the prophecy was fulfilled, would make it "fast" and "secure." It would be, as it were, locking it up, or sealing it, forever. It would determine all that seemed to be undetermined about it; settle all that seemed to be indefinite, and leave it no longer uncertain what was meant. According to this interpretation the meaning would be, that the prophecies would be sealed up or settled by the coming of the Messiah. The prophecies terminated on him (compare [Rev 19:10](#)); they would find their fulfillment in him; they would be completed in him - and might then be regarded as closed and consummated - as a book that is fully written and is sealed up. All the prophecies, and all the visions, had a reference more or less direct to the coming of the Messiah, and when he should appear they might be regarded as complete. The spirit of prophecy would cease, and the facts would confirm and seal all that had been written.

And to anoint the Most Holy - There has been great variety in the interpretation of this expression. The word rendered "anoint" - מִשְׁחָה meshocha - infinitive from מָשַׁח mâshach (from the word Messiah, [Dan 9:25](#)), means, properly, to strike or draw the hand over anything; to spread over with anything, to smear, to paint, to anoint. It is commonly used with reference to a sacred rite, to anoint, or consecrate by unction, or anointing to any office or use; as, e. g., a priest, [Exo 28:41](#); [Exo 40:15](#); a prophet, [Kg1 19:16](#); [Isa 61:1](#); a king, [Sa1 10:1](#); [Sa1 15:1](#); [Sa2 2:4](#); [Kg1 1:34](#). So it is used to denote the consecration of a stone or column as a future sacred place, [Gen 31:13](#); or vases and vessels as consecrated to God, [Exo 40:9](#), [Exo 40:11](#); [Lev 8:11](#); [Num 7:1](#). The word would then denote a setting apart to a sacred use, or consecrating a person or place as holy. Oil, or an unguent, prepared according to a specified rule, was commonly employed for this purpose, but the word

may be used in a figurative sense - as denoting to set apart or consecrate in any way "without" the use of oil - as in the case of the Messiah. So far as this word, therefore, is concerned, what is here referred to may have occurred without the literal use of oil, by any act of consecration or dedication to a holy use.

The phrase, "the Most Holy" (קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים qôdesh qādāshîym) has been very variously interpreted. By some it has been understood to apply literally to the most holy place - the holy of holies, in the temple; by others to the whole temple, regarded as holy; by others to Jerusalem at large as a holy place; and by others, as Hengstenberg, to the Christian church as "a" holy place. By some the thing here referred to is supposed to have been the consecration of the most holy place after the rebuilding of the temple; by others the consecration of the whole temple; by others the consecration of the temple and city by the presence of the Messiah, and by others the consecration of the Christian church, by his presence. The phrase properly means "holy of holies," or most holy. It is applied often in the Scriptures to the "inner sanctuary," or the portion of the tabernacle and temple containing the ark of the covenant, the two tables of stone, etc.

See the notes at [Mat 21:12](#). The phrase occurs in the following places in the Scripture: [Exo 26:33-34](#); [Exo 29:37](#); [Exo 30:29](#), [Exo 30:36](#); [Exo 40:10](#); [Lev 2:3](#), [Lev 2:10](#), "et al." - in all, in about twenty-eight places. See the "Englishman's Hebrew Concordance." It is not necessarily limited to the inner sanctuary of the temple, but may be applied to the whole house, or to anything that was consecrated to God in a manner peculiarly sacred. In a large sense, possibly it might apply to Jerusalem, though I am not aware that it ever occurs in this sense in the Scriptures, and in a figurative sense it might be applied undoubtedly, as Hengstenberg supposes, to the Christian church, though it is certain that it is not elsewhere thus used. In regard to the meaning of the expression - an important and difficult one, as is admitted by all - there are five principal opinions which it may be well to notice. The truth will be found in one of them.

(1) That it refers to the consecration by oil or anointing of the temple, that would be rebuilt after the captivity, by Zerubbabel and Joshua. This was the opinion of Michaelis and Jahn. But to this opinion there are insuperable objections:

(a) That, according to the uniform tradition of the Jews, the holy oil was wanting in the second temple. In the case of the first temple there might have been a literal anointing, though there is no evidence of that, as there was of the anointing of the vessels of the tabernacle, [Exo 30:22](#), etc. But in the second temple there is every evidence that there can be, that there was no literal anointing.

(b) The "time" here referred to is a fatal objection to this opinion. The period is seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years. This cannot be doubted (see the notes at the first part of the verse) to be the period referred to; but it is absurd to suppose that the consecration of the new temple would be deferred for so long a time, and there is not the slightest evidence that it was. This opinion, therefore, cannot be entertained.

(2) The second opinion is, that it refers to the re-consecration and cleansing of the temple after the abominations of Antiochus Epiphanes. See the notes at [Dan 8:14](#). But this opinion is liable substantially to the same objections as the other. The cleansing of the temple, or of the sanctuary, as it is said in [Dan 8:14](#), did "not" occur four hundred and ninety years after the order to rebuild the temple [Dan 9:25](#), but at a much earlier period. By no art of construction, if the period here referred to is four hundred and ninety years, can it be made to apply to the re-dedication of the temple after Antiochus had defiled it.

(3) Others have supposed that this refers to the Messiah himself, and that the meaning is, that he, who was most holy, would then be consecrated or anointed as the Messiah. It is probable, as Hengstenberg ("Christ." ii. 321, 322) has shown, that the Greek translators thus understood it, but it is a sufficient objection to this that the phrase, though occurring many times in the Scriptures, is never applied to "persons," unless this be an instance. Its uniform and proper application is

to "things," or "places," and it is undoubtedly so to be understood in this place.

(4) Hengstenberg supposes (pp. 325-328) that it refers to the Christian church as "a" holy place, or "the New Temple of the Lord," "the Church of the New covenant," as consecrated and supplied with the gifts of the Spirit. But it is a sufficient refutation of this opinion that the phrase is nowhere else so used; that it has in the Old Testament a settled meaning as referring to the tabernacle or the temple; that it is nowhere employed to denote a collection of "people," anymore than an individual person - an idea which Hengstenberg himself expressly rejects (p. 322); and that there is no proper sense in which it can be said that the Christian church is "anointed." The language is undoubtedly to be understood as referring to some "place" that was to be thus consecrated, and the uniform Hebrew usage would lead to the supposition that there is reference, in some sense, to the temple at Jerusalem.

(5) It seems to me, therefore, that the obvious and fair interpretation is, to refer it to the temple - as the holy place of God; his peculiar abode on earth. Strictly and properly speaking, the phrase would apply to the inner room of the temple - the sanctuary properly so called (see the notes at [Heb 9:2](#)); but it might be applied to the whole temple as consecrated to the service of God. If it be asked, then, what anointing or consecration is referred to here, the reply, as it seems to me, is, not that it was then to be set apart anew, or to be dedicated; not that it was literally to be anointed with the consecrating oil, but that it was to be consecrated in the highest and best sense by the presence of the Messiah - that by his coming there was to be a higher and more solemn consecration of the temple to the real purpose for which it was erected than had occurred at any time. It was reared as a holy place; it would become eminently holy by the presence of him who would come as the anointed of God, and his coming to it would accomplish the purpose for which it was erected, and with reference to which all the rites observed there had been ordained, and then, this work having been accomplished, the temple, and all the rites pertaining to it, would pass away.

In confirmation of this view, it may be remarked, that there are repeated allusions to the coming of the Messiah to the second temple, reared after the return from the captivity - as that which would give a peculiar sacredness to the temple, and which would cause it to surpass in glory all its ancient splendor. So in [Hag 2:7](#), [Hag 2:9](#) : "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. - The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." So [Mal 3:1-2](#) : "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap," etc.

Compare [Mat 12:6](#) : "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." Using the word "anoint," therefore, as denoting to consecrate, to render holy, to set apart to a sacred use, and the phrase "holy of holies" to designate the temple as such, it seems to me most probable that the reference here is to the highest consecration which could be made of the temple in the estimation of a Hebrew, or, in fact, the presence of the Messiah, as giving a sacredness to that edifice which nothing else did give or could give, and, therefore, as meeting all the proper force of the language used here. On the supposition that it was designed that there should be a reference to this event, this would be such language as would have been not unnaturally employed by a Hebrew prophet. And if it be so, this may be regarded as the probable meaning of the passage. In this sense, the temple which was to be reared again, and about which Daniel felt so solicitous, would receive its highest, its truest consecration, as connected with an event which was to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy.

(D) Simultaneously with this event, as the result of this, we are to anticipate such a spread of truth and righteousness, and such a reign of the saints on the earth, as would be properly symbolized by the coming of the Son of man to the ancient of

days to receive the kingdom, [Dan 7:13-14](#). As shown in the interpretation of those verses, this does not necessarily imply that there would be any visible appearing of the Son of man, or any personal reign (see the note at these verses), but there would be such a making over of the kingdom to the Son of man and to the saints as would be properly symbolized by such a representation. That is, there would be great changes; there would be a rapid progress of the truth; there would be a spread of the gospel; there would be a change in the governments of the world, so that the power would pass into the hands of the righteous, and they would in fact rule. From that time the "saints" would receive the kingdom, and the affairs of the world would be put on a new footing. From that period it might be said that the reign of the saints would commence; that is, there would be such changes in this respect that that would constitute an epoch in the history of the world - the proper beginning of the reign of the saints on the earth - the setting up of the new and final dominion in the world. If there should be such changes - such marked progress - such facilities for the spread of truth - such new methods of propagating it - and such certain success attending it, all opposition giving way, and persecution ceasing, as would properly constitute an epoch or era in the world's history, which would be connected with the conversion of the world to God, this would fairly meet the interpretation of this prophecy; this occurring, all would have taken place which could be fairly shown to be implied in the vision.

(E) We are to expect a reign of righteousness on the earth. On the character of what we are fairly to expect from the words of the prophecy, see the notes at [Dan 7:14](#). The prophecy authorizes us to anticipate a time when there shall be a general prevalence of true religion; when the power in the world shall be in the hands of good men - of men fearing God; when the Divine laws shall be obeyed - being acknowledged as the laws that are to control men; when the civil institutions of the world shall be pervaded by religion, and moulded by it; when there shall be no hinderance to the free exercise of religion, and when in fact the reigning power on the earth shall be the kingdom which the Messiah shall set up. There is nothing more certain in the future than such a period, and to that all

things are tending. Such a period would fulfill all that is fairly implied in this wonderful prophecy, and to that faith and hope should calmly and confidently look forward. For that they who love their God and their race should labor and pray; and by the certain assurance that such a period will come, we should be cheered amidst all the moral darkness that exists in the world, and in all that now discourages us in our endeavors to do good.

[Daniel 9:25](#)

dan 9:25

Know, therefore, and understand - Hengstenberg renders this, "and thou wilt know and understand;" and supposes that the design of Gabriel is to awaken the attention and interest of Daniel by the assurance that, if he would give attention, he would understand the subject by the explanation which he was about to give. So also Theodotion renders it in the future tense. The Hebrew is in the future tense, and would probably convey the idea that he might, or would know and understand the matter. So Lengerke renders it, "Und so mogest du wissen," etc. The object is doubtless to call the attention of Daniel to the subject, with the assurance that he might comprehend the great points of the communication which he was about to make respecting the seventy weeks. In the previous verse, the statement was a general one; in this, the angel states the time when the period of the seventy weeks was to commence, and then that the whole period was to be broken up or divided into three smaller portions or epochs, each evidently marking some important event, or constituting an important era. The first period of seven weeks was evidently to be characterized by something in which it would be different from what would follow, or it would reach to some important epoch, and then would follow a continuous period of sixty-two weeks, after which, during the remaining one week, to complete the whole number of seventy, the Messiah would come and would be cut off, and the series of desolations would commence which would result in the entire destruction of the city.

That from the going forth of the commandment - Hebrew, "of the word" - דָּבָר dâbâr. It is used, however, as in [Dan 9:23](#), in the sense of commandment or order. The expression "gone forth" (מֵצֵא môtâ') would properly apply to the "issuing" of an

order or decree. So in [Dan 9:23](#) - דָּבַר יֵצֵא yâtsâ' dâbâr - "the commandment went forth." The word properly means a going forth, and is applied to the rising sun, that goes forth from the east, [Psa 19:6](#) (7); then a "place" of going forth, as a gate, a fountain of waters, the east, etc., [Eze 42:11](#); [Isa 41:18](#); [Psa 75:6](#) (7). The word here has undoubted reference to the promulgation of a decree or command, but there is nothing in the words to determine "by whom" the command was to be issued. So far as the "language" is concerned, it would apply equally well to a command issued by God, or by the Persian king, and nothing but the circumstances can determine which is referred to. Hengstenberg supposes that it is the former, and that the reference is to the Divine purpose, or the command issued from the "heavenly council" to rebuild Jerusalem. But the more natural and obvious meaning is, to understand it of the command' actually issued by the Persian monarch to restore and build the city of Jerusalem. This has been the interpretation given by the great body of expositors, and the reasons for it seem to be perfectly clear:

(a) This would be the interpretation affixed to it naturally, if there were no theory to support, or if it did not open a chronological difficulty not easy to settle.

(b) This is the only interpretation which can give anything like definiteness to the passage. Its purpose is to designate some fixed and certain period from which a reckoning could be made as to the time when the Messiah would come. But, so far as appears, there was no such definite and marked command on the part of God; no period which can be fixed upon when he gave commandment to restore and build Jerusalem; no exact and settled point from which one could reckon as to the period when the Messiah would come. It seems to me, therefore, to be clear, that the allusion is to some order to rebuild the city, and as this order could come only from one who had at that time jurisdiction over Jerusalem, and Judea, and who could command the resources necessary to rebuild the ruined city, that order must be one that would emanate from the reigning power; that is, in fact, the Persian power - for that was the power that had jurisdiction at the close of the seventy years' exile. But, as there were several orders or commands in

regard to the restoration of the city and the temple, and as there has been much difficulty in ascertaining the exact chronology of the events of that remote period, it has not been easy to determine the precise order referred to, or to relieve the whole subject from perplexity and difficulty. Lengerke supposes that the reference here is the same as in [Dan 9:2](#), to the promise made to Jeremiah, and that this is the true point from which the reckoning is to be made. The exact edict referred to will be more properly considered at the close of the verse. All that is necessarily implied here is, that the time from which the reckoning is to be commenced is some command or order issued to restore and build Jerusalem.

To restore - Margin, "build again." The Hebrew is, properly, "to cause to return" - להשיב lehâshîyb. The word might be applied to the return of the captives to their own land, but it is evidently used here with reference to the city of Jerusalem, and the meaning must be, "to restore it to its former condition." It was evidently the purpose to cause it to return, as it were, to its former splendour; to reinstate it in its former condition as a holy city - the city where the worship of God would be celebrated, and it is this purpose which is referred to here. The word, in Hiphil, is used in this sense of restoring to a former state, or to renew, in the following places: [Psa 80:3](#), "Turn us again - השיבנו hâshîybēnû - and cause thy face to shine." So [Psa 80:7](#), [Psa 80:19](#). [Isa 1:26](#), "And I will "restore" thy judges as at the first," etc. The meaning here would be met by the supposition that Jerusalem was to be put into its former condition.

And to build Jerusalem - It was then in ruins. The command, which is referred to here, must be one to build it up again - its houses, temple, walls; and the fair sense is, that some such order would be issued, and the reckoning of the seventy weeks must "begin" at the issuing of this command. The proper interpretation of the prophecy demands that "that" time shall be assumed in endeavoring to ascertain when the seventy weeks would terminate. In doing this, it is evidently required in all fairness that we should not take the time when the Messiah "did" appear - or the birth of the Lord Jesus, assuming that to be the "terminus ad quem" - the point to which the

seventy weeks were to extend - and then reckon "backward" for a space of four hundred and ninety years, to see whether we cannot find some event which by a possible construction would bear to be applied as the "terminus a quo," the point from which we are to begin to reckon; but we are to ascertain when, in fact, the order was given to rebuild Jerusalem, and to make "that" the "terminus a quo" - the starting point in the reckoning. The consideration of the fulfillment of this may with propriety be reserved to the close of the verse.

Unto the Messiah - The word Messiah occurs but four times in the common version of the Scriptures: [Dan 9:25-26](#) : [Joh 1:41](#); [Joh 4:25](#). It is synonymous in meaning with the word "Christ," the Anointed. See the notes at [Mat 1:1](#). Messiah is the Hebrew word; Christ the Greek. The Hebrew word (מָשִׁיחַ *mâshîyach*) occurs frequently in the Old Testament, and, with the exception of these two places in Daniel, it is uniformly translated "anointed," and is applied to priests, to prophets, and to kings, as being originally set apart to their offices by solemn acts of anointing. So far as the "language" is concerned here, it might be applied to anyone who sustained these offices, and the proper application is to be determined from the connection. Our translators have introduced the article - "unto the Messiah." This is wanting in the Hebrew, and should not have been introduced, as it gives a definiteness to the prophecy which the original language does not necessarily demand.

Our translators undoubtedly understood it as referring to him who is known as the Messiah, but this is not necessarily implied in the original. All that the language fairly conveys is, "until an anointed one." Who "that" was to be is to be determined from other circumstances than the mere use of the language, and in the interpretation of the language it should not be assumed that the reference is to any particular individual. That some eminent personage is designated; some one who by way of eminence would be properly regarded as anointed of God; some one who would act so important a part as to characterize the age, or determine the epoch in which he should live; some one so prominent that he could be referred to as "anointed," with no more definite appellation; some one who would be understood to be referred to by the mere use of

this language, may be fairly concluded from the expression used - for the angel clearly meant to imply this, and to direct the mind forward to some one who would have such a prominence in the history of the world.

The object now is merely to ascertain the meaning of the "language." All that is fairly implied is, that it refers to some one who would have such a prominence as anointed, or set apart to the office of prophet, priest, or king, that it could be understood that he was referred to by the use of this language. The reference is not to the anointed one, as of one who was already known or looked forward to as such - for then the article would have been used; but to some one who, when he appeared, would have such marked characteristics that there would be no difficulty in determining that he was the one intended. Hengstenberg well remarks, "We must, therefore, translate "an anointed one, a prince," and assume that the prophet, in accordance with the uniform character of his prophecy, chose the more indefinite, instead of the more definite designation, and spoke only of AN anointed one, a prince, instead of the anointed one, the prince - κατ' ἐξοχήν kat' exochēn - and left his hearers to draw a deeper knowledge respecting him, from the prevailing expectations, grounded on earlier prophecies of a future great King, from the remaining declarations of the context, and from the fulfillment, the coincidence of which with the prophecy must here be the more obvious, since an accurate date had been given." - Christol. ii. 334, 335.

The Vulgate renders this, *Usque ad Christum ducem* - "even to Christ the leader," or ruler. The Syriac, "to the advent of Christ the king." Theodotion, ἕως Χριστοῦ ἡγουμένου *heōs Christou hēgoumenou* - "Christ the leader," or ruler. The question whether this refers to Christ will be more appropriately considered at the close of the verse. The inquiry will then occur, also, whether this refers to his birth, or to his appearance as the anointed one - his taking upon himself publicly the office. The language would apply to either, though it would perhaps more properly refer to the latter - to the time when he should appear as such - or should be anointed, crowned, or set apart to the office, and be fully instituted in it.

It could not be demonstrated that either of these applications would be a departure from the fair interpretation of the words, and the application must be determined by some other circumstances, if any are expressed. What those are in the case will be considered at the close of the verse.

The Prince - נָגִיד *nāgîyd*. This word properly means a leader, a prefect, a prince. It is a word of very general character, and might be applied to any leader or ruler. It is applied to an overseer, or, as we should say, a "secretary" of the treasury, [Ch1 26:24](#); [Ch2 31:12](#); an overseer of the temple, [Ch1 9:11](#); [Ch2 31:13](#); of the palace, [Ch2 28:7](#); and of military affairs, [Ch1 13:1](#); [Ch2 32:21](#). It is also used absolutely to denote a prince of a people, any one of royal dignity, [Sa1 9:16](#); [Sa1 10:1](#); [Sa1 13:14](#). - Gesenius. So far as this word, therefore, is concerned, it would apply to any prince or leader, civil or military; any one of royal dignity, or who should distinguish himself, or make himself a leader in civil, ecclesiastical, or military affairs, or who should receive an appointment to any such station. It is a word which would be as applicable to the Messiah as to any other leader, but which has nothing in itself to make it necessary to apply it to him. All that can be fairly deduced from its use here is, that it would be some prominent leader; some one that would be known without anymore definite designation; someone on whom the mind would naturally rest, and someone to whom when he appeared it would be applied without hesitation and without difficulty. There can be no doubt that a Hebrew, in the circumstances of Daniel, and with the known views and expectations of the Hebrew people, would apply such a phrase to the Messiah.

Shall be seven weeks - See the notes at [Dan 9:24](#). The reason for dividing the whole period into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, is not formally stated, and will be considered at the close of the verse. All that is necessary here in order to an explanation of the language, and of what is to be anticipated in the fulfillment, is this:

- (a) That, according to the above interpretation [Dan 9:24](#), the period would be forty-nine years.
- (b) That this was to be the "first" portion of the whole time, not

time that would be properly taken out of any part of the whole period.

(c) That there was to be some event at the end of the forty-nine years which would designate a period, or a natural division of the time, or that the portion which was designated by the forty-nine years was to be distinctly characterized from the next period referred to as sixty-two weeks, and the next period as one week.

(d) No intimation is given in the words as to the nature of this period, or as to what would distinguish one portion from the others, and what that was to be is to be learned from subsequent explanations, or from the actual course of events. If one period was characterized by war, and another by peace; one in building the city and the walls, and the other by quiet prosperity; one by abundance, and the other by famine; one by sickness, and the other by health - all that is fairly implied by the words would be met. It is foretold only that there would be something that would designate these periods, and serve to distinguish the one from the other.

And threescore and two weeks - Sixty-two weeks; that is, as above explained [Dan 9:24](#), four hundred and thirty-four years. The fair meaning is, that there would be something which would characterize that long period, and serve to distinguish it from what preceded it. It is not indeed intimated what that would be, and the nature of the case seems to require that we should look to the events - to the facts in the course of the history to determine what that was. Whether it was peace, prosperity, quiet, order, or the prevalence of religion as contrasted with the former period, all that the words fairly imply would be fulfilled in either of them.

The street shall be built again - This is a general assertion or prediction, which does not seem to have any special reference to the "time" when it would be done. The fair interpretation of the expression does not require us to understand that it should be after the united period of the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, nor during either one of those periods; that is, the language is not such that we are necessarily required to affix it to any one period. It seems to be a general assurance designed

to comfort Daniel with the promise that the walls and streets of Jerusalem, now desolate, would be built again, and that this would occur some time during this period. His mind was particularly anxious respecting the desolate condition of the city, and the declaration is here made that it would be restored. So far as the languages - the grammatical construction is concerned, it seems to me that this would be fulfilled if it were done either at the time of the going forth of the commandment, or during either of the periods designated, or even after these periods.

It is, however, most natural, in the connection, to understand it of the "first" period - the seven weeks, or the forty-nine years - since it is said that "the commandment would go forth to restore, and to build Jerusalem;" and since, as the whole subsequent period is divided into three portions, it may be presumed that the thing that would characterize the first portion, or what would first be done, would be to execute the commandment - that is, to restore and build the city. These considerations would lead us, therefore, to suppose that the thing which would characterize the first period - the forty-nine years - would be the rebuilding of the city; and "the time" - a time which, considering the extent and entireness of the ruins, the nature of the opposition that might be encountered, the difficulty of collecting enough from among the exiles to return and do it, the want of means, and the embarrassments which such an undertaking might be supposed to involve, cannot, probably, be regarded as too long.

The word rendered "street" - רחוב *rechôb* - means a "street," so called from its "breadth," and would properly, therefore, be applied to a wide street. Then it denotes a market-place, or a forum - the broad open place at the gates of Oriental cities where public trials were held, and things exposed for sale, [Ch2 32:6](#). In [Ezr 10:9](#), the word refers to the area or court before the temple: "And all the people sat in the street (ברחוב *bîrechôb*) of the house of God," etc. Compare [Neh 8:1](#), [Neh 8:3](#), [Neh 8:16](#). The reference in this place, therefore, may be to that area or court; or it may be to any place of concourse, or any thoroughfare. It is such language as would be naturally used to denote that the city would be restored to its former

condition. The phrase "shall be built again" is, in the margin, "return and be builded." This is in accordance with the Hebrew. That is, it would be restored to its former state; it would, as it were, come back and be built up again. Hengstenberg renders it "a street is restored and built." The phrase properly implies that it would assume its former condition, the word "built" here being used in the sense of "made," as we speak of "making a road." Lengerke renders it, *wird wieder hergestellt* - "shall be again restored." Theodotion renders it, ἐπιστρέψει *epistrepsei* - "it shall return," understanding it as meaning that there would be a return, to wit, from the exile. But the more correct meaning undoubtedly is, that the street would return to its former state, and be rebuilt.

And the wall - Margin, "ditch." Hengstenberg renders this, "and firmly is it determined;" maintaining that the word חָרָץ *chârûts* here means fixed, determined, resolved on, and that the idea is, the purpose that the city should be rebuilt was firmly resolved on in the Divine mind, and that the design of what is here said was to comfort and animate the returned Hebrews in their efforts to rebuild the city, in all the discouragements and troubles which would attend such an undertaking. The common interpretation, however, has been that it refers to a ditch, trench, or wall, that would be constructed at the time of the rebuilding of the city. So the Vulgate, "muri, walls." So Theodotion, τεῖχος *teichos* - wall. The Syriac renders it, "Jerusalem, and the villages, and the streets." Luther, Mauren, walls. Lengerke renders it, as Hengstenberg does, "and it is determined." Maurer understands the two expressions, "street and wall," to be equivalent to "within and without" - meaning that the city would be thoroughly and entirely rebuilt.

The Hebrew word חָרָץ *chârûts* means, properly, what is cut in, or dug out, from חָרַץ *chârats* - to cut in. The word is translated "sharp-pointed things" in [Job 41:30](#); "gold, fine gold, choice gold," in [Psa 68:13](#); [Pro 3:14](#); [Pro 8:10](#), [Pro 8:19](#); [Pro 16:16](#); [Zac 9:3](#); a threshing instrument, [Isa 28:27](#); [Amo 1:3](#); sharp (referring to a threshing instrument), [Isa 41:15](#); "wall," [Dan 9:25](#); and "decision," [Joe 3:14](#). It does not elsewhere occur in the Scriptures. The notion of "gold" as connected with the

word is probably derived from the fact of its being dug for, or eagerly sought by men. That idea is, of course, not applicable here. Gesenius supposes that it here means a "ditch or trench" of a fortified city. This seems to me to be the probable signification. At all events, this has the concurrence of the great body of interpreters; and this accords well with the connection. The word does not properly mean "wall," and it is never elsewhere so used. It need not be said that it was common, if not universal, in walled cities to make a deep ditch or trench around them to prevent the approach of an enemy, and such language would naturally be employed in speaking of the rebuilding of a city. Prof. Stuart renders it, "with broad spaces, and narrow limits."

Even in troublous times - Margin, "strait of." Hengstenberg, "in a time of distress." Lengerke, Im Druck der Zeiten - in a pressure of times. Vulgate, In angustia temporum. Theodotion, in the Septuagint, renders it, "And these times shall be emptied out" (Thompson) - καὶ ἐκκενωθήσονται οἱ καιροὶ καὶ ekkenōthēsontai hoi kairoi. The proper meaning of the Hebrew word (קִצָּץ tsôq) is, distress, trouble, anguish; and the reference is, doubtless, to times that would be characterized by trouble, perplexity, and distress. The allusion is clearly to the rebuilding of the city, and the use of this language would lead us to anticipate that such an enterprise would meet with opposition or embarrassment; that there would be difficulty in accomplishing it; that the work would not be carried on easily, and that a considerable time would be necessary to finish it.

Having gone through with an investigation of the meaning of the words and phrases of this verse, we are now prepared to inquire more particularly what things are referred to, and whether the predictions have been fulfilled. The points which it is necessary to examine are the following: - To whom reference is made by the Messiah the Prince; the time designated by the going forth of the commandment - or the "terminus a quo;" the question whether the whole period extends to the "birth" of him here referred to as the Messiah the Prince, or to his assuming the office or appearing as such; the time embraced in the first seven weeks - and the fulfillment - or the question whether, from the time of the going forth of

the commandment to the appearing of the Messiah, the period of the four hundred and ninety years can be fairly made out. These are evidently important points, and it need not be said that a great variety of opinions has prevailed in regard to them, and that they are attended with no little difficulty.

I. To whom reference is made as the Messiah the Prince. In the exposition of the meaning of the words, we have seen that there is nothing in the language itself to determine this. It is applicable to anyone who should be set apart as a ruler or prince, and might be applied to Cyrus, to any anointed king, or to him who is properly designated now as the Messiah - the Lord Jesus. Compare the notes at [Isa 45:1](#). It is unnecessary to show that a great variety of opinions has been entertained, both among the Jewish rabbis and among Christian commentators, respecting the question to whom this refers. Among the Jews, Jarchi and Jacchiades supposed that it referred to Cyrus; Ben Gersom, and others, to Zerubbabel; Aben Ezra to Nehemiah; rabbi Azariah to Artaxerxes. Bertholdt, Lengerke, Maurer, and this class of expositors generally, suppose that the reference is to Cyrus, who is called the Messiah, or the "Anointed," in [Isa 45:1](#).

According to this interpretation, it is supposed that the reference is to the seventy years of Jeremiah, and that the meaning is, that "seven weeks," or forty-nine years, would elapse from the desolation of the city until the time of Cyrus. See Maurer, in loc. Compare also Lengerke, pp. 444, 445. As specimens of the views entertained by those who deny the reference of the passage to the Messiah, and of the difficulties and absurdities of those views, we may notice those of Etchhorn and Bertholdt. Eichhorn maintains that the numbers referred to are round numbers, and that we are not to expect to be able to make out an exact conformity between those numbers and the events. The "commandment" mentioned in [Dan 9:25](#) he supposes refers to the order of Cyrus to restore and rebuild the city, which order was given, according to Usher, A.M. 3468. From this point of time must the "sevenweeks," or the forty-nine years, be reckoned; but, according to his view, the reckoning must be "backward and forward;" that is, it is seven weeks, or forty-nine years,

backward to Nebuchadnezzar, who is here called "Messiah the Prince," who destroyed the temple and city, A.M. 3416 - or about fifty-two years before the going forth of the edict of Cyrus. From that time, the reckoning of the sixty-two weeks must be commenced.

But again, this is not to be computed literally from the time of Nebuchadnezzar; but since the Jews, in accordance with [Jer 25:11-12](#), reckoned seventy years, instead of the true time, the point from which the estimate is to begin is the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, and this occurred, according to Usher, A.M. 3397. Reckoning from this point onward, the sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, would bring us to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (A.M. 3829). At the end of the sixty-two weeks, in the first year of Antiochus Epiphanes, the high priest, Onias III (the Messiah of [Dan 9:26](#)), was displaced - "cut off" - יכרת yîkârêth - and Jason was appointed in his place, and Menelaus the year after removed him. Titus Onias had properly no successor, etc. This absurd opinion Bertholdt (p. 605, following) attempts to set aside - a task which is very easily performed, and then proposes his own - a hypothesis not less absurd and improbable. According to his theory (p. 613, following), the seventy years have indeed a historical basis, and the time embraced in them extends from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is divided into three periods:

(a) The seven first hebdomads extend from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to king, Cyrus, who gave the exiles permission to return to their land. This is the period during which Jerusalem must lie waste [Dan 9:2](#); and after the close of this, by the favor of Cyrus [Dan 9:25](#), the promise of Jeremiah ([Dan 9:25](#) - דבר dâbâr - "commandment"), that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, goes forth.

(b) The following sixty-two weeks extend from the return of the exiles to the beginning of the troubles and persecutions under Antiochus. This is the period of the rebuilding of Jerusalem [Dan 9:25](#).

(c) The last period of one week extends from the time of the oppressions and wrongs commenced under Antiochus, to the

death of Antiochus. See this view fully explained and illustrated in Bertholdt, "ut supra." The great mass of Christian interpreters, however, have supposed that the reference is to the Messiah properly so called - the promised Saviour of the world - the Lord Jesus. In support of this opinion, the following considerations may be suggested, which seem to me to be conclusive:

(1) The language itself is such as is properly applicable to him, and such as would naturally suggest him. It is true, as we see in [Isa 45:1](#), that the term Messiah may be applied to another, as it is there to Cyrus (see the note at the meaning of the word in that place, and in the exposition of this verse), but it is also true that if the term stands by itself, and with no explanation, it would naturally suggest him who, by way of eminence, is known as the Messiah. In [Isa 45:1](#), it is expressly limited to Cyrus, and there can be no danger of mistake. Here there is no such limitation, and it is natural, therefore, to apply it in the sense in which among the Hebrews it would be obviously understood. Even Bertholdt admits the force of this. Thus (p. 563) he says: "That at the words משיח נגיד *mâshîyach nâgîyd* (Messiah the Prince) we should be led to think of the Messiah, Jesus, and at those, [Dan 9:26](#), ואין משיח יכרת *yîkârêth mâshîyach ve'ëyn lô* (shall be cut off but not for himself), of his crucifixion, though not absolutely necessary, is still very natural."

(2) This would be the interpretation which would be given to the words by the Jews. They were so much accustomed to look forward to a great prince and deliverer, who would be by way of eminence the Anointed of the Lord, that, unless there was some special limitation or designation in the language, they would naturally apply it to the Messiah, properly so called. Compare [Isa 9:6-7](#). Early in the history of the Jews, the nation had become accustomed to the expectation that such a deliverer would come, and its hopes were centered on him. In all times of national trouble and calamity; in all their brightest visions of the future, they were accustomed to look to him as one who would deliver them from their troubles, and who would exalt their people to a pitch of glory and of honor, such as they had never known before. Unless, therefore, there was

something in the connection which would demand a different interpretation, the language would be of course applied to the Messiah. But it cannot be pretended that there is anything in the connection that demands such a limitation, nor which forbids such an application.

(3) So far as the ancient versions throw any light on the subject, they show that this is the correct interpretation. So the Latin Vulgate, *usque ad Christum ducem*. So the Syriac, "unto Messiah, the most holy" - literally, "holy of holies." So Theodotion - ἕως Χριστοῦ *heōs Christou* - where there can be little doubt that the Messiah was understood to be referred to. The same is found in the Arabic. The Codex Chisianus is in utter confusion on this whole passage, and nothing can be made of it.

(4) All the circumstances referred to in connection with him who is here called "Messiah the Prince" are such as to be properly applicable to the work which the Lord Jesus came to do, and not to Cyrus, or Antiochus, or any other leader or ruler. See the notes at [Dan 9:24](#). To no other one, according to the interpretation which the passage in that verse seems to demand, can the expressions there used be applied. In that exposition it was shown that the verse is designed to give a general view of what would be accomplished, or of what is expressed more in detail in the remaining verses of the vision, and that the language there used can be applied properly to the work which the Lord Jesus came to accomplish. Assuredly to no one else can the phrases "to restrain transgression," "to seal up sins," "to cover over iniquity," "to bring in everlasting righteousness," "to seal up the vision and prophecy," and "to consecrate the most holy place," be so well applied. The same is true of the language in the subsequent part of the prophecy, "Messiah shall be cut off," "not for himself ... shall confirm the covenant ... cause the oblation to cease." Any one may see the perplexities in which they are involved by adopting another interpretation, by consulting Bertholdt, or Lengerke on the passage.

(5) The expression used here ("prince" - נַגִּיד *nāgîyd* - is applied to the Messiah beyond all question in [Isa 4:4](#) : "I have given

him for a witness to the people, a leader - נָגִיד nāgîyd - and a commander to the people."

(6) The perplexity attending any other interpretation is an additional proof of this point. In full illustration of this, it is necessary only to refer to the views of Bertholdt and Eichhorn as above exhibited. Whatever may be said about the difficulties on the supposition that it refers to the Lord Jesus - the true Messiah - no one can undertake to reconcile the applications which they have proposed with any belief of the inspiration of the passage. These considerations seem to me to make it clear that the prophecy had reference to the Messiah properly so called - the hope and the expectation of the Jewish people. There can be no doubt that Daniel would so understand it; there can be no doubt that it would be so applied by the Jews.

II. The next question is, From what point are we to reckon in computing the time when the Messiah would appear - the "terminus a quo?" It is important to fix this, for the whole question of the fulfillment depends on it, and "honesty" requires that it should be determined without reference to the time to which four hundred and ninety years would reach - or the "terminus ad quem." It is clearly not proper to do as Prideaux does, to assume that it refers to the birth of Christ, and then to reckon backward to a time which may be made to mean the "going forth of the commandment." The true method, undoubtedly, would be to fix on a time which would accord with the expression here, with no reference to the question of the fulfillment for in that way only can it be determined to be a true "prophecy," and in that way only would it be of any use to Daniel, or to those who succeeded him. It need hardly be said, that a great variety of opinions have been maintained in regard to the time designated by the "going forth of the commandment." Bertholdt (pp. 567, 568) mentions no less than thirteen opinions which have been entertained on this point, and in such a variety of sentiment, it seems almost hopeless to be able to ascertain the truth with certainty. Now, in determining this, there are a few points which may be regarded as certain. They are such as these:

(a) That the commandment referred to is one that is issued by some prince or king having authority, and not the purpose of God. See the notes above on the first part of the verse.

(b) That the distinct command would be to "restore and build Jerusalem." This is specified, and therefore would seem to be distinguished from a command to build the temple, or to restore that from its state of ruin. It is true that the one might appear to be implied in the other, and yet this does not necessarily follow. For various causes it might be permitted to the Jews to rebuild their temple, and there might be a royal ordinance commanding that, while there was no purpose to restore the city to its former power and splendor, and even while there might be strong objections to it. For the use of the Jews who still resided in Palestine, and for those who were about to return, it might be a matter of policy to permit them to rebuild their temple, and even to aid them in it, while yet it might be regarded as perilous to allow them to rebuild the city, and to place it in its former condition of strength and power.

It was a place easily fortified; it had cost the Babylonian monarch much time, and had occasioned him many losses, before he had been able to conquer and subdue it, and, even to Cyrus, it might be a matter of very questionable policy to allow it to be built and fortified again. Accordingly we find that, as a matter of fact, the permission to rebuild the temple, and the permission to rebuild the city, were quite different things, and were separately granted by different sovereigns, and that the work was executed by different persons. The former might, without impropriety, be regarded as the close of the captivity - or the end of the "seventy years" of Jeremiah - for a permission to rebuild the temple was, in fact, a permission to return to their own country, and an implied purpose to aid them in it, while a considerable interval might, and probably would elapse, before a distinct command was issued to restore and rebuild the city itself, and even then a long period might intervene before it would be completed.

Accordingly, in the edict published by Cyrus, the permission to rebuild the temple is the one that is carefully specified: "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath

given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to "build him an house" at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and "build the house of the Lord God of Israel" (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem," [Ezr 1:2-3](#). In this order there is nothing said of the restoration of the city, and that in fact occurred at a different time, and under the direction of different leaders. The first enterprise was to rebuild the temple; it was still a question whether it would be a matter of policy to allow the city to be rebuilt, and that was in fact accomplished at a different time. These considerations seem to make it certain that the edict referred to here was not what was issued by "Cyrus," but must have been a subsequent decree bearing particularly on the rebuilding of the city itself. It is true that the command to rebuild the temple would imply that either there were persons residing amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, or in the land of Palestine, who were to worship there, and that there would be inhabitants in Jerusalem, probably those who would go from Babylon - for otherwise the temple would be of no service, but still this might be, and there be no permission to rebuild the city with any degree of its ancient strength and splendor, and none to surround it with walls - a very material thing in the structure of an ancient city.

(c) This interpretation is confirmed by the latter part of the verse: "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." If the word rendered "wall" means "trench or ditch," as I have supposed, still it was a trench or ditch which was designed as a "defense" of a city, or which was excavated for making a wall, for the purpose of fortifying a walled city in order to make it stronger, and the expression is one which would not be applied to the mere purpose of rebuilding the temple, nor would it be used except in a command to restore the city itself. We are, then, in the fair interpretation of the passage, required now to show that such a command went forth from the Persian king to "restore and rebuild" the city itself - that is, a permission to put it into such a condition of strength as it was before.

In order to see how this interpretation accords with the facts in

the case, and to determine whether such a period can be found as shall properly correspond with this interpretation, and enable us to ascertain the point of time here referred to - the "terminus a quo" - it is proper to inquire what are the facts which history has preserved. For this purpose, I looked at this point of the investigation into Jahn's "Hebrew Commonwealth," (pp. 160-177), a work not written with any reference to the fulfillment of this prophecy, and which, indeed, in the portion relating to this period of the world, makes no allusion whatever to Daniel. The inquiry which it was necessary to settle was, whether under any of the Persian kings there was any order or command which would properly correspond with what we have ascertained to be the fair meaning of the passage. A very brief synopsis of the principal events recorded by Jahn as bearing on the restoration of the Jews to their own country, will be all that is needful to add to determine the question before us.

The kings of the Persian universal monarchy, according to Ptolemy, were ten, and the whole sum of their reign two hundred and seven years - from the time of Cyaxares II to the time of Alexander the Great. But Ptolemy's specific object being chronology, he omitted those who continued not on the throne a full year, and referred the months of their reign, partly to the preceding, and partly to the succeeding monarch. The whole number of sovereigns was in reality fourteen, as appears by the following table:

b.c.	Years	Months	538	Cyaxares II reigned	2	0	536	Cyrus	7	0
			529	Cambyses	7	5	522	Smerdis	0	7
			521	Darius Hystaspis	36	0	485	Xerxes I	21	0
			464	Artaxerxes Longimanus	40	3	424	Xerxes II	0	2
			424	Sogdianus	0	7	423	Darius Nothus	19	0
			404	Artaxerxes Mnemon	46	0	358	Darius Ochus	21	0
			337	Arses	0	2	335	Darius Codomanus	0	4

Under the reign of this last prince, 331 b.c., the kingdom was entirely subdued by Alexander the Great.

In respect to the question whether any order or command was issued pertaining to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem that corresponds with the meaning of the prediction as above explained, the following facts will probably furnish all the

knowledge which can be obtained:

(a) Cyaxares II Of course there was nothing in the time of Cyaxares II, the Darius of Daniel [Dan 6:1](#); [Dan 9:1](#), as it was under him that Babylon was conquered, and there was no movement toward a restoration of the Jews to their own land commenced by him, the first movement of that kind being under Cyrus.

(b) Cyrus. What was the nature of the order issued by him we have seen above. It was a command to build the temple, and was limited to that, and involved no reference to the city. The command, as we have seen above, did not extend to that, and there were probably good reasons why it was not contemplated that it should be rebuilt in its former strength, and fortified as it was before. The purpose to fortify the city, or to encompass it by a wall or ditch, or even to build it at all, could not have been brought within the order of Cyrus, as recorded in Ezra, and that is the only form of the order which we have. The language of Daniel, therefore, seems to have been chosen of design when he says that the command would be issued to rebuild the city, not the temple. At any rate, such is the language, and such was not the order of Cyrus.

(c) Cambyses. After the death of Cyrus the Samaritans wrote to Cambyses (called, by Ezra, Ahasuerus) against the Jews. We are not informed what effect this letter produced, but we can easily judge from the character of this degenerate son of Cyrus, as it is represented in history. He was a "thoughtless, gluttonous, furious warrior, who was considered as raving mad even by his own subjects." - Jahn. He madly invaded Egypt, and on his return learned that Smerdis, his brother, had usurped the throne in his absence; and died of a wound received from the falling of his sword from its sheath, as he was mounting his horse. No order is mentioned during his reign pertaining to the rebuilding either of the city or the temple.

(d) Smerdis. He retained the throne about seven months. In the Bible he has the name of Artaxerxes. Compare, respecting him, Ctesias, x.; Justin, i. 9; Herod. iii. 61-67. "To this monarch the Samaritans again addressed themselves,

complaining that the Jews were building (that is, fortifying) the city of Jerusalem, which they had never thought of doing; and in consequence of this false accusation, Smerdis issued a positive prohibition of their work." - Jahn. Two things, therefore, may be remarked respecting this reign:

(1) the order or commandment referred to by Daniel could not have been issued during this reign, since there was an express "prohibition" against the work of building and fortifying the city; and

(2) this confirms what is said above about the improbability that any order would have been issued by Cyrus to rebuild and fortify the city itself.

It could not but have been foreseen that such an order would be likely to excite opposition from the Samaritans, and to cause internal dissensions and difficulties in Palestine, and it is not probable that the Persian government would allow the rebuilding of a city that would lead to such collisions.

(e) Darius Hystaspis. He reigned thirty-six years. He was a mild and benevolent ruler. "As Smerdis was a mere usurper, his prohibition of rebuilding the temple was of no authority." - Jahn. In the second year of his reign, Haggai and Zechariah appeared, who plied the governor Zerubbabel, the high priest Joshua, and the whole people, with such powerful appeals to the Divine commands, that the building of the house of God was once more resumed. Upon this, Tatnai, the Persian governor on the west side of the Euphrates, came with his officers to call the Jews to an account, who referred him to the permission of Cyrus, and the Jews were suffered to proceed. The whole matter was, however, made known to Darius, and he caused search to be made among the archives of the state in reference to the alleged decree of Cyrus. The edict of Cyrus was found, which directed that a temple should be built at Jerusalem at the royal expense, and of much larger dimensions than the former. A copy of this was sent to Tatnai, and he was commanded to see that the work should be forwarded, and that the expenses should be defrayed from the royal treasury, and that the priests should be supplied with whatever was necessary to keep up the daily sacrifice. The work was,

therefore, pressed on with renewed vigour, and in the sixth year of his reign the temple was completed and consecrated. The remainder of his reign was spent in unnecessary wars with Scythia, Thrace, India, and Greece. He suffered an overthrow at Marathon, and was preparing for a more energetic campaign in Greece when he died, and left his dominion and his wars to Xerxes. No order was issued during his reign for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. All his edicts pertain to the original grant of Cyrus - the permission to build the temple.

(f) Xerxes I. The career of Xerxes is well known. He was distinguished for gluttony, voluptuousness, and cruelty. He is celebrated for his invasion of Greece, for the check which he met at Thermopylae, and for the overthrow of his naval forces at Salamis by Themistocles. In the twenty-first year of his reign he was murdered by Artabanus, commander of his life-guard. He died in the year 464 b.c. According to Jalm, it is probable that "the Artaxerxes of Ezra, who is mentioned next after Darius Hystaspis, and the Ahasuerus of Esther, are names of Xerxes I." If so, it was under him that the second caravan of Jews went to Judea, under the direction of Ezra Ezra 7 Xerxes, if he was the prince referred to, gave Ezra an ample commission in regard to the temple at Jerusalem, granting him full power to do all that was necessary to maintain public worship there, and committing to him the vessels of gold and silver in Babylon, pertaining to the temple, etc. The decree may be found in [Ezr 7:13-26](#). This decree, however, relates wholly to the temple - the "house of God." There was no order for rebuilding the city, and there is no evidence that anything material was done in building the city, or the walls. Respecting this reign, John remarks, "The Hebrew colony in Judea seems never to have been in a very flourishing condition. The administration of justice was particularly defective, and neither civil nor religious institutions were firmly established. Accordingly, the king gave permission anew for all Hebrews to emigrate to Judea," p. 172. Ezra made the journey with the caravan in three months; deposited the precious gifts in the temple, caused the Scriptures to be read and explained; commenced a moral reformation, but did nothing, so far as appears, in reconstructing the city - for his commission did not extend to that.

(g) Artaxerxes Longimanus. According to Jahn, he began to reign 464 b.c., and reigned forty years and three months. It was during his reign that Nehemiah lived, and that he acted as governor of Judea. The colony in Judea, says Jahn, which had been so flourishing in the time of Ezra, had greatly declined, in consequence of the fact that Syria and Phoenicia had been the rendezvous of the armies of Artaxerxes. "Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of Artaxerxes, learned the unhappy state of the Hebrews, b.c. 444, from a certain Jew named Hanani, who had come from Judea to Shushan with a caravan. Of the regulations introduced by Esra b.c. 478 there was little remaining, and, amid the confusions of war, the condition of the Jews continually grew worse. This information so affected Nehemiah that the king observed his melancholy, and inquiring its cause, he appointed him governor of Judea, "with full power to fortify Jerusalem," and thus to secure it from the disasters to which unprotected places are always exposed in time of war.

Orders were sent to the royal officers west of the Euphrates to "assist in the fortification of the city," and to furnish the requisite timber from the king's forest; probably on Mount Libanus, near the sources of the river Kadisha, as that was the place celebrated for its cedars. Thus commissioned, Nehemiah journeyed to Judea, accompanied by military officers and cavalry," pp. 175, 176. Jahn further adds, "as soon as Nehemiah, on his arrival in Palestine, had been acknowledged governor of Judea by the royal officers, he made known his preparations for fortifying Jerusalem to the elders who composed the Jewish council. All the heads of houses, and the high priest Eliashib, engaged zealously in the work. The chiefs of the Samaritans, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, endeavored to thwart their undertaking by insults, by malicious insinuations that it was a preparation for revolt, by plots, and by threats of a hostile attack. The Jews, notwithstanding, proceeded earnestly in their business, armed the laborers, protected them still further by a guard of armed citizens, and at length happily completed the walls of their city."

We have reached a point, then, in the history of the kings of Persia, when there was a distinct order to restore and fortify

Jerusalem, and when there was an express expedition undertaken to accomplish this result. In the history of these kings, as reported by Jahn, this is the first order that would seem to correspond with the language of Daniel - "the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," and the assertion that "the street should be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." It may be well, therefore, to pause here, and to look more distinctly at this order of Artaxerxes Longimanus, and inquire into its conformity with the language of Daniel. The circumstances, then, as stated in the book of Nehemiah, are these:

(a) Nehemiah learned from Hanani the state of his brethren in Judea, and the fact that the "walls of the city were broken down, and that the gates were burned with fire," and that the people who were at Jerusalem were in a state of "great affliction and reproach," and gave himself to weeping, and fasting, and prayer, on that account, [Neh 1:1-11](#).

(b) On coming into the presence of Artaxerxes, to perform the usual duty of presenting the wine to the king, the king saw the sadness and distress of Nehemiah, and inquired the cause, [Neh 2:1-2](#). This, Nehemiah [Neh 2:1](#) is careful to remark occurred in the twentieth year of his reign.

(c) He states distinctly, that it was because Jerusalem was still in ruins: "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" [Neh 2:3](#).

(d) The request of Nehemiah, in accordance with the language in Daniel, was, that he might be permitted to go to Jerusalem and "rebuild the city:" "And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it," [Neh 2:5](#).

(e) The edict of Artaxerxes contemplated the same thing which is foretold by the angel to Daniel "And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which pertained to the house, and for the wall of the city," etc., [Neh 2:8](#).

(f) The work which Nehemiah did, under this edict, was what is supposed in the prediction in Daniel. His first work was to go forth by night to survey the state of the city: "And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, etc., and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire," [Neh 2:13](#). His next work was to propose to rebuild these walls again: "Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach," [Neh 2:17](#). The next work was to rebuild those walls, a full description of which we have in Neh. 3:1-32; 4:1-23. The city was thus fortified. It was built again according to the purpose of Nehemiah, and according to the decree of Artaxerxes. It took its place again as a fortified city, and the promised work of restoring and rebuilding it was; complete.

(g) The building of the city and the walls under Nehemiah occurred in just such circumstances as are predicted by Daniel. The angel says, "The wall shall be built again, even in troublous times." Let anyone read the account of the rebuilding in Nehemiah - the description of the "troubles" which were produced by the opposition of Sanballat and those associated with him Neh. 4, and he will see the striking accuracy of this expression - an accuracy as entire as if it had been employed after the event in describing it, instead of having been used before in predicting it.

It may confirm this interpretation to make three remarks:

(1) After this decree of Artaxerxes there was no order issued by Persian kings pertaining to the restoration and rebuilding of the city. Neither Xerxes II, nor Sogdianus, nor Darius Nothus, nor Artaxerxes Mnemon, nor Darius Ochus, nor Arses, nor Darius Codomanus, issued any decree that corresponded at all with this prediction, or any that related to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. There was no occasion for any, for the work was done.

(2) a second remark is, that, in the language of Hengstenberg, "Until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, the new city of Jerusalem was an open, thinly inhabited village, exposed to all

aggressions from its neighbors, sustaining the same relation to the former and the latter city as the huts erected after the burning of a city for the first protection from rain and wind do to those which are still uninjured, or which have been rebuilt." - Christ. ii. 381. This is quite apparent from the remarks which have been already made respecting the state of the city. The want of any permission to rebuild the city and the walls; the fact that the permission to return extended only to a right-to rebuild the temple; the improbabilities above stated, that the rebuilding of the city in its strength would be allowed when they first returned, and the account which Nehemiah gives of the condition of Jerusalem at the time when he asked leave to go and "build" it, all tend to confirm this supposition. See Hengstenberg, as above, pp. 381-386.

(3) A third remark is, that a confirmation of this may be found in the book of Ecclesiasticus, showing how Nehemiah was regarded in respect to the rebuilding of the city: "And among the elect was Neemias, whose renown is great, who raised up for us the walls that were fallen, and set up the gates and the bars, and raised up our ruins again," Ecclesiasticus 49:13. On the other hand, Joshua and Zerubbabel are extolled only as rebuilders of the temple: "How shall we magnify Zorobabel? even he was as a signet on the right hand:" "so was Jesus the son of Josedec: who in their time builded "the house" and set up a "holy temple" to the Lord," Ecclesiasticus 49:11, 12. These considerations make the case clear, it seems to me, that the time referred to - the "terminus a quo" - according to the fair interpretation, was the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. To this we are conducted by the proper and necessary exposition of the language, and by the orders actually issued from the Persian court in regard to the temple and city.

If it should be objected - the only objection of importance that has been alleged against it - that this would not meet the inquiry of Daniel; that he was seeking for the time when the captivity would cease, and looking for its termination as predicted by Jeremiah; that it would not console him to be referred to a period so remote as is here supposed - the time of the rebuilding of the city; and, still more, that, not knowing that time, the prophecy would afford him no basis of

calculation as to the appearing of the Messiah, it may be replied:

(a) That the prediction contained all the consolation and assurance which Daniel sought - the assurance that the city "would be rebuilt," and that an order "would go forth" for its restoration.

(b) That the angel does not profess to answer the precise point of the inquiry which Daniel had suggested. The prayer of Daniel was the occasion of uttering a higher prophecy than the one which he had been contemplating.

(c) It is not necessary to suppose that the design was that "Daniel" should be able to compute the exact time when the Messiah would appear. It was sufficient for him if he had the assurance that he would appear, and if he were furnished with a basis by which it might be calculated when he would appear, after the order to rebuild the city had gone forth.

(d) At any rate, the prophecy must have appeared to Daniel to have a much more important meaning than would be implied merely by a direct answer to his prayer - pertaining to the close of the exile. The prophecy indubitably stretched far into future years. Daniel must have seen at once that it contained an important disclosure respecting future events, and, as it implied that the exile would close, and that the city would be rebuilt, and as he had already a sufficient intimation when the exile would close, from the prophecies of Jeremiah, we may suppose that the mind of Daniel would rest on this as more than he had desired to know - a revelation far beyond what he anticipated when he set apart this day for special prayer.

The only remaining difficulty as to the time referred to as the beginning of the seventy weeks - "the terminus a quo" - is that of determining the exact chronology of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes - the point from which we are to reckon. The time, however, varies only a few years according to the different estimates of chronology, and not so as materially to affect the result. The following are the principal estimates:

Jahn 444 b.c. Hengstenberg 454 b.c. Hales 414 b.c. Calmet

449 b.c. Usher 454 b.c. It will be seen from this, that the difference in the chronology is, at the greatest, but ten years, and in such a matter, where the ancient records are so indefinite, and so little pains were taken to make exact-dates, it cannot perhaps be expected that the time could be determined with exact accuracy. Nor, since the numbers used by the angel are in a sense "round" numbers - "seventy weeks," "sixty-two weeks," "one week," is it necessary to suppose that the time could be made out with the exactness of a year, or a month - though this has been often attempted. It is sufficient if the prediction were so accurate and determinate that there could be no doubt, in general, as to the time of the appearing of the Messiah, and so that when he appeared it should be manifest that he was referred to. Hengstenberg, however, supposes that the chronology can be made out with literal accuracy. See Christ. ii. 394-408.

Taking the dates above given as the "terminus a quo" of the prophecy - the time from which to reckon the beginning of the sixty-nine weeks to the "Messiah the Prince" - or the four hundred and eighty-three years, we obtain, respectively, the following results:

The period of b.c. 414, the period of Jahn and Hales, would extend to a.d. 39.

That of b.c. 455, the period of Hengstenberg and Usher, to a.d. 29.

That of b.c. 449, the period of Calmet, to a.d. 31.

It is remarkable how all these periods terminate at about the time when the Lord Jesus entered on his work, or assumed, at his baptism, the public office of the Messiah - when he was thirty years of age. It is undeniable that, whichever reckoning be correct, or whatever computation we may suppose to have been employed by the Jews, the expectation would have been excited in the public mind that the Messiah was about to appear at that time. Perhaps the real truth may be seen in a stronger light still by supposing that if a sagacious impostor had resolved to take upon himself the office of the Messiah, and had so shaped his plans as to meet the national

expectations growing out of this prediction of Daniel, he would have undoubtedly set up his claims at about the time when the Lord Jesus publicly appeared as the Messiah. According to the common chronologies, there would not have been a variance of more than nine years in the calculation, and, perhaps, after all, when we consider how little the chronology of ancient times has been regarded or settled, it is much more to be wondered at that there should be so great accuracy than that the time is not more certainly determined. If, notwithstanding the confusion of ancient dates, the time is so nearly determined with accuracy, is it not rather to be presumed that if the facts of ancient history could be ascertained, the exact period would be found to have been predicted by the angel?

III. The next point properly is, what is the time referred to by the phrase "unto the Messiah the Prince" - the "terminus ad quem." Here there can be but two opinions - what refers it to his birth, and that which refers it to his public manifestation as the Messiah, or his taking the office upon himself. The remarks under the last head have conducted us to the probability that the latter is intended. Indeed, it is morally certain that this is so, if we have ascertained the "terminus a quo" with accuracy. The only question then is, whether this is the fair construction, or whether the language can properly be so applied. We have seen, in the interpretation of the phrase above, that the grammatical construction of the language is such as might, without impropriety, be applied to either event. It remains only to look at the probabilities that the latter was the design. It may be admitted, perhaps, that before the event occurred, there might have been some uncertainty on the subject, and that with many, on reading the prophecy, the supposition would be that it referred to the birth of the Messiah. But a careful consideration of all the circumstances of the passage might even then have led to different expectation, and might have shown that the probabilities were that it was the public manifestation of the Messiah that was intended. Those may be regarded as stronger now, and may be such as to leave no reasonable doubt on the mind; that is, we may now see what would not be likely to have been seen then - as in the case of all the prophecies. Among these

considerations are the following:

(a) Such an interpretation may be, after all, the most probable. If we conceive of one who should have predicted the appearance or coming of Jenghis Khan, or Alaric, or Attila, as conquerors, it would not be unnatural to refer this to their public appearing in that character, as to the time when they became known as such, and still more true would this be of one who should be inaugurated or set apart to a public office. If, for example, there had been a prophecy of Gregory the Great, or Leo X, as "Popes," it would be most natural, unless there was a distinct reference to their birth, to refer this to their election and consecration as Popes, for that would in fact be the period when they appeared as such.

(b) In the case of this prophecy, there is no allusion to the birth of the Messiah. It is not "to his birth," or "to his incarnation," but "unto the Messiah the Prince;" that is, most manifestly, when he appeared as such, and was in fact such. In many instances in the prophecies there are allusions to the birth of the Messiah; and so numerous and accurate had they become, that there was a general expectation of the event at about the time when he was actually born. But, in the passage before us, the language is what would be used on the supposition that the designed reference was to his entering as Messiah on the functions of his office, and not such as would have been so naturally employed if the reference had been to his birth.

(c) His taking upon himself the office of the Messiah by baptism and by the descent of the Holy Spirit on him was, in fact, the most prominent event in his work. Before that, he had passed his life in obscurity. The work which he did as Messiah was commenced at that time, and was to be dated from that period. In fact, he was not the Messiah, as such, until he was set apart to the office - any more than an heir to a crown is king until he is crowned, or an elected chief-magistrate is president before he has taken the oath of office. The position which he occupied was, that he was designated or destined for the office of the Messiah, but had not, in fact, entered on it, and could not as yet be spoken of as such.

(d) This is the usual method of recording the reign of a king -

not from his birth, but from his coronation. Thus, in the table above, respecting the Persian kings, the periods included are those from the beginning of the reign, not from the birth to the decease. So in all statutes and laws, as when we say the first of George III, or the second of Victoria, etc.

(e) To these considerations may be added an argument stated by Hengstenberg, which seems to make the proof irrefragable. It is in the following words: "After the course of seventy weeks shall the whole work of salvation, to be performed by the Messiah, be completed; after sixty-nine weeks, and, as it appears from the more accurate determination in [Dan 9:27](#), in the middle of the seventieth, he shall be cut off. As now, according to the passage before us, sixty-nine weeks shall elapse before the Messiah, there remains from that event to the completion of salvation only a period of seven, until his violent death, of three and a half years; a certain proof that 'unto the Messiah' must refer, not to his birth, but to the appearance of the Messiah as such." - Christ. ii. 337.

IV. The next question then is, whether, according to this estimate, the time can be made out with any degree of accuracy. The date of the decrees of Artaxerxes are found to be, according to the common reckoning of chronologists, either 444, or 454, or 449 b.c. The addition of 483 years to them we found also to reach, respectively, to 39 a.d., to 29 a.d., and to 34 a.d. One of these (29) varies scarcely at all from the time when the Saviour was baptized, at thirty years of age; another (34) varies scarcely at all from the time when he was put to death; and either of them is so accurate that the mind of anyone who should have made the estimate when the command to build the city went forth, would have been directed with great precision to the expectation of the true time of his appearance; and to those who lived when he did appear, the time was so accurate that, in the reckoning of any of the prevailing methods of chronology, it would have been sufficiently clear to lead them to the expectation that he was about to come. Two or three remarks, however, may be made in regard to this point.

(a) One is, that it is now, perhaps, impossible to determine

with precise accuracy the historical period of events so remote. Time was not then measured as accurately as it is now; current events were not as distinctly recorded; chronological tables were not kept as they are now; there was no uniform method of determining the length of the year, and the records were much less safely kept. This is manifest, because, even in so important an event as the issuing of the commend to rebuild the city in the time of Artaxerxes - an event which it would be supposed was one of sufficient moment to have merited an exact record, at least among the Jews. There is now, among the best chronologists, a difference of ten years as to the computation of the time.

(b) There is a variation arising from the difference of the lunar or the solar year - some nations reckoning by the one, and some by the other - and the difference between them, in the period now under consideration, would be greater than what now occurs in the ordinary reckonings of chronology.


(c) Until the exact length of the year, as then understood, is ascertained, there can be no hope of fixing the time with the exactness of a month or a day; and if the usual and general understanding of the length of the year be adopted, then the time here referred to would be so intelligible that there would be no difficulty in ascertaining at about what time the Messiah was to appear, or when he did appear in determining that it was he. This was all that was really necessary in regard to the prophecy.

(d) Yet it has been supposed that the time can be made out, even under these disadvantages, with almost entire accuracy. The examination in the case may be seen at length in Hengstenberg, Chris. ii. 394-408. It is agreed on all hands that the commencement of the reign of Xerxes occurred in the year 485 before Christ, and that Ariaxerxes died in 423. The difference concerns only the beginning of the reign of Ariaxerxes. If that occurred in the year 464 b.c., then the problem is solved, for then the decree of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes would occur 444 b.c.; and if 483 be added to that, the result is 29 a.d. - a difference, then, even in reckoning whole years and round numbers, of only one year between that

and the time when Jesus was baptized by John. The full proof of this point, about the beginning of the reign of Ariaxerxes, may be seen in Hengstenberg, as above. The argument, though long, is so important, and so clear, that it may without impropriety be inserted in this place:

"According to the prophecy, the "terminus a quo," the twentieth year of Ariaxerxes, is separated from the "terminus ad quem," the public appearance of Christ, by a period of sixty-nine weeks of years, or four hundred and eighty-three years. If, now, we compare history with this, it must appear, even to the most prejudiced, in the highest degree remarkable, that, among all the current chronological determinations of this period, not one differs over ten years from the testimony of the prophecy. This wonder must rise to the highest pitch, when it appears from an accurate examination of these determinations, that the only one among them which is correct makes the prophecy and history correspond with each other even to a year.

"Happily, to attain this end, we are not compelled to involve ourselves in a labyrinth of chronological inquiries. We find ourselves, in the main, on sure ground. All chronologists agree, that the commencement of the reign of Xerxes falls in the year 485 before Christ, the death of Artaxerxes, in the year 423. The difference concerns only the year of the commencement of the reign of Ariaxerxes. Our problem is completely solved, when we have shown that this falls in the year 474 before Christ. For then the twentieth year of Ariaxerxes is the year 455 before Christ, according to the usual reckoning. :

299 U. C. Add to this, 483 years, - - - - 782 U. C.  We should probably have been saved the trouble of this investigation, had not the error of an acute man, and the want of independence in his successors, darkened what was in itself clear. According to Thucydides, Ariaxerxes began to reign shortly before the flight of Themistocles to Asia. Deceived by certain specious arguments, hereafter to be examined, Dodwell, in the "Annal. Thucydides," placed both events in the year 465 before Christ. The thorough refutation of Vitringa, in the cited treatise,

remained, strange as it may appear, unknown to the philologists and historians, even as it seems to those of Holland, as Wesseling. The view of Dodwell, adopted also by Corsini in the "Fasta Attica," became the prevailing one, at which we cannot wonder, when we consider how seldom, in modern times, chronological investigations in general have been fundamental and independent; when e. g., we observe that Poppo, a generally esteemed recent editor of Thucydides, in a thick volume, entitled, "In Thucydidem Commentarii politici, geograph., chronologici," furnishes, in reference to the last, nothing more than a reprint of the school edition of the chronological tables collected from Dodwell, excusing himself with an "odio quodam inveterato totius hujus discipline"! Clinton also ("Fasti Hellenici, lat. vert. Kruger," Leipz., 1830), though he clearly perceives that Dodwell has confused the whole chronology of this period (compare, e. g., p. 248-253), has not been able to free himself from him in the most important points, though he successfully opposed him in several; and thus the confusion only becomes still greater, since now neither the actual chronological succession of events, nor the one ingeniously invented by Dodwell, any longer remains.

Nevertheless, the truth is advanced by this increased confusion. For now the harmony introduced by Dodwell into the fictitious history is destroyed. The honor, however, of having again discovered the true path, belongs to Kriiger alone, who, after more than a hundred years, as an entirely independent inquirer, coincides with Vitranga, in the same result, and in part in the employment of the same arguments. In the acute treatise, "Ueber den Cimonischen Frieden (in the Archiv f. Philologie und Padagog. von Seebode," I. 2, p. 205, ff.) he places the death of Xerxes in the year 474 or 473, and the flight of Themistocles a year later. This treatise may serve to shame those who reject in the mass the grounds of our opinion (to the establishment of which we now proceed), with the remark, that the author has only found what he sought. Whoever does not feel capable of entering independently upon the investigation, should at least be prevented from condemning, by the circumstance, that a learned man, who has no other design in view than to elucidate a chronologically

confused period of Grecian history, gives, for the event which serves to determine the "terminus a quo" of our prophecy, the precise year, which places prophecy and fulfillment in the most exact harmony.

"We examine first the grounds which seem to favor the opinion, that the reign of Artaxerxes commenced in the year 465.

(1) 'The flight of Themistocles must precede the transfer of the dominion of Greece from Athens to Sparta by several years. For this happened during the siege of Byzantium, when the treasonable efforts of Pausanias first commenced; the flight of Themistocles, however, was a consequence of the complaint, which was raised against him, out of the documents found after the death of Pausanias. But Isocrates says, in the "Panathenaikos," that the dominion of the Lacedaemonians had endured ten years. The expedition of Xerxes, taken as the "terminus a quo," this transfer falls in the year 470.' But we may spare ourselves the labor which Vitranga takes to invalidate this alleged testimony of Isoerates, since all recent scholars, in part independent of one another, agree that Isocrates speaks of a ten years' dominion, not before, but after that of the Athenians; compare Corny on "Pan." c. 19; Dahlmann, "Forschungen," I. p. 45; Kruger, p. 221; Clinton, p. 250, ff.

(2) That Themistocles in the year 472 was still in Athens, Corsini infers (Fasti Att. III. p. 180) from AEl. lib. 9, c. 5. According to this, Themistocles sent back Hiero, who was coming to the Olympic games, asserting that, whoever had not taken part in the greatest danger, could not be a sharer of the joy. (The fact is also related by Plutarch.) Now as Hiero, Ol. 75, 3 (478), began to reign, only the Ol. 77 (472) could be intended. But who does not at once perceive that the reference to the games of the Ol. 76 (476) was far more obvious, since the occurrence pre-supposed that the μέγιστος τῶν κινδύνων megistos tōn kindunōn was still fresh in remembrance?

(3) according to this supposition, Xerxes would reign only eleven years; Artaxerxes, on the contrary, fifty-one. This is in opposition to the testimony of the "Can. Ptolem." (compare

thereon Ideler, I. p. 109, ff.), which gives to Xerxes twenty-one, and to Artaxerxes forty-one years, and of Ctesias, who gives to Artaxerxes forty-two years, and of some other writers; compare the passages in Bahr on Ctesias, p. 181. "Ceteris paribus," this argument would be wholly decisive. But when other weighty authorities are opposed to it, it is not of itself sufficient to outweigh them. The canon has high authority, only where it rests on astronomical observations, which is here not the case. Otherwise it stands on the same ground as all other historical sources. The whole error was committed, as soon as only an *ιά* *ia* in an ancient authority was confounded with a *κά* *ka*; for when a reign of twenty-one years had thus been attributed to Xerxes, the shortening of the reign of Artaxerxes to forty-one years necessarily followed. Wesseling (on Diod. 12, 64) attributes forty-five years to Artaxerxes, thus without hesitation rejecting the authority of the canon. To these arguments, already adduced by others, we subjoin the following.

(4) It seems to be evident from Ctesias, chapter 20, that Artaxerxes was born a considerable time after the commencement of the reign of Xerxes. Ctesias, after relating it, proceeds - *γαμει δὲ Ξέρξης Ὀνόφα θυγατέρα Ἀμιστριν καὶ γίνεται αὐτῷ παῖς Δαρεϊαῖος, καὶ ἕτερος ματὰ δύο ἔτη Ὑστασπης, καὶ ἔτι Ἀρταξέρξης* *gamei de Xerxēs Onofa thugatera Amistrin kai ginetai autō pais Dareiaios, kai heteros meta duo etē Ustaspē, kai eti Artaxerxēs.* If he relates the events in the true chronological order, Artaxerxes in the year 474 b.c. could at most have been seven years old. On the contrary, however, all accounts agree, that at the death of Xerxes, although still young (compare Justin, 3, 1), he was yet of a sufficient age to be capable of reigning himself. We must not be satisfied with the answer that it is very improbable that Xerxes, who was born at the beginning of the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Darius (compare Herod. 7, 2), and was already thirty-four or thirty-five years old at his death, was not married until so late a period. Ctesias himself frees us from the embarrassment into which we were thrown by his inaccuracy. According to chapter 22, Megabyzus was already married, before the expedition against Greece, with a daughter of Xerxes, who, already mentioned (chapter 20), if Ctesias is

there chronologically accurate, could not have been born before that time. According to chapter 28, Megabyzus, immediately after the return of Xerxes from Greece, complained to him of the shameful conduct of this wife of his.

(5) There can be no doubt that the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther is the same as Xerxes. But the twelfth year of this king is there expressly mentioned, [Est 3:7](#), and the events related in the following context fall, in part, about the end of the same year. But this difficulty vanishes, as soon as we include the years of the co-regency of Xerxes with Darius. According to the fall account in Herodotus 7, chapters 2-4, Xerxes, two years before the death of Darius, was established by him as king: compare e. g., chapter 4 - ἀπέδεξε δὲ βασιλῆα Πέρσησι Δαρείου Ξέρξεα *apedexe de basilēa Persēsi Dareios Xerxea*. Of the custom of the Hebrew writers to include the years of a co-regency, where it existed, we have a remarkable example in the account concerning Nebuchadnezzar (compare *Bietr. I. p. 63*). But we find even in the book of Esther itself plain indications of this mode of reckoning. The account of the great feast *Est. 1* is placed in its true light by this supposition. The occasion of it was the actual commencement of the reign of Xerxes, though we need not on this account exclude, what has hitherto been regarded as the exclusive object, consultations with the nobles respecting the expeditions about to be undertaken. What is related [Est 2:16](#) then falls precisely in the time of the return of Xerxes from Greece, while otherwise, and this is attended with difficulty, about two years after that event.

"We now proceed to lay down the positive grounds for our view; and in the first place, the immediate, and then the mediate proofs, which latter are far more numerous and strong, since they show that the flight of Themistocles, which must precede the reign of Artaxerxes, cannot possibly be placed later than 473 before Christ.

"To the first class belong the following:

1. It must appear very strange to those who assume a twenty-one years' reign of Xerxes, that the whole period from the eleventh year is a complete "tabula rasa." The Biblical accounts stop short at the close of the tenth year. Ctesias

relates only one inconsiderable event after the Grecian war (chapter 28), which occurred immediately after its termination. No later writer has ventured to introduce anything into the ten years, which, according to our view, the permutation of an ι (i) and κ (k) adds to his age.

"2. We possess a twofold testimony, which places the return of Xerxes from Greece, and his death, in so close connection, that, without rejecting it, we cannot possibly assume a fifteen years' reign after this return, but are rather compelled to place his death not beyond the year 474. The first is that of Aelian, Var. Hist. 13, 3: εἶτα ἐπανελθὼν, αἴσχιστα ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθανεν, ἀποσφαγεῖς νύκτωρ ἐν τῇ εὐνῇ ὑπὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ eita epanelthōn, aischista anthrōpōn apethanen, aposphageis nuktōr en tē eunē hupo tou huiou. The second, that of Justin, 3, 1: 'Xerxes rex Persarum, terror antea gentium, bello in Graeciam infeliciter gesto, etiam suis contemptui essecoepit. Quippe Artabanus proefectus ejus, deficiente quotidie regis majestate, in spem regni adductus, cum septem robustissimis filiis,' etc.

"3. The testimonies of Justin, I. c., respecting the age of his sons at his death, are not reconcilable with the twenty-one years' reign of Xerxes: 'Securior de Artaxerxe, puero admodum, fingit regem a Dario, qui erat adolescens, quo maturius regno potiretur occisum.' If Xerxes reigned twenty-one years, his firstborn, Darius, according to a comparison of Ctesias (chapter 22), could not at his death have been an adolescens, but at least thirty-one years old. On the contrary, if eleven years' reign be assumed, these determinations are entirely suitable. Darius was then toward twenty-one years old; Artaxerxes, according to Ctesias (chapter 20), near four years younger than Darius, about seventeen. This determination shows also that it cannot be objected against a fifty-one years'reign of Artaxerxes that it would give him too great an age. The suggestion can be refuted by the simple remark, that the length of his life remains exactly the same, whether he reigned fifty-one or forty-one years. If he ascended the throne at seventeen, his life terminated at sixty-eight.

"4. According to the most numerous and weighty testimonies, the peace of Cimon was probably concluded after the battle of

the Eurymedon (before Christ 470). Now, as all agree that this peace was concluded with Artaxerxes, the commencement of his reign must, in any event, be placed before 470. Compare Kruger, 1. c., p. 218.

"5. The history of Nehemiah is scarcely reconcilable with the supposition that Artaxerxes reigned only forty-seven years. After Nehemiah had accomplished all that is related in Neh. 1-12, he returned to Persia to discharge the duties of his office, at court. This happened, according to [Neh 13:6](#), in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. The time of his return is not accurately determined. It says merely, after a considerable time, the ימים לקץ leqēts yāmîym. That his absence, however, must have continued a whole series of years, appears from the relation of that which took place in the meantime. The law against marriage with foreign women, to the observance of which the people had bound themselves anew, [Neh 10:30](#), was first violated during his absence; then again, by a decree of the people, executed in all severity, [Neh 13:1-3](#); and then again broken, as appears from the fact that Nehemiah, at his return, according to [Neh 13:23](#), found a great many foreign women in the colony.

That these marriages had already existed for some time appears from [Neh 13:24](#), where it is said that the children of them had spoken half in the language of Ashdod, and could not speak Hebrew. A long absence is also implied in the other abuses which Nehemiah, according to [Neh 13:10](#), following, found on his return. He saw the fruits of the former labors almost destroyed. The same is also evident from the prophecies of Malachi, which were delivered exactly in the time between the two periods of Nehemiah's presence at Jerusalem: compare Vitranga's excellent Dissert. de AEtate Mal., in his Obss. ss. vi. 7, t. 2, p. 353, following The condition of the people appears here, as it could have been only after they had already been deprived, for a considerable time, of their two faithful leaders, Ezra, who, having arrived thirteen years earlier, had cooperated for a considerable time with Nehemiah, and Nehemiah himself.

But, if we consider barely the first-mentioned fact, the

marriages with foreign women, it will be evident that a longer period than nine years would be required. For each change there will then only three years be allowed; and as this is undeniably too little for the third, according to [Neh 13:24](#), the two first must be still more shortened, which is inadmissible. Besides, we do not even have nine years for these events, if the reign of Artaxerxes is fixed at forty-one years. For the relation of Nehemiah pre-supposes that Artaxerxes was yet living at the time of its composition. This, however, cannot be placed in the time immediately after the return of Nehemiah, since it must have been preceded by the abolition of all these abuses. If, however, we are conducted by the authority of Nehemiah, which is liable to no exception, since he was contemporary and closely connected with Artaxerxes, a few years over forty-one, we have gained much. For then the only objection to our determination, the testimony of the canon, is completely set aside.

"We must premise a remark, before we bring forward our indirect proofs, in order to justify the connection in which we place the commencement of the reign of Artaxerxes with the flight of Themistocles. This connection has not, indeed, the unanimous testimony of the ancient writers in its favor. The vouchers for it are, Thucydides (chapter 137), where it is said of Themistocles, who had come into Asia, ἐσπέμπει γράμματα ἐς βασιλέα Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν Ξέρξου, νεωστὶ βασιλεύοντα *espemtei grammata, es basilea Artaxerxēn ton Xerxou, neōsti basileuonta*, and Charon of Lampsacus, who, according to Plutarch (Them. chapter 27), makes him in like manner fly to Artaxerxes. On the contrary: others, as Ephorus, Dinon, Klitarch, and Heraclides (compare Plut. 1. c.), represent him as going to Xerxes. If, now, we examine these testimonies, according to the authorities of the witnesses the decision will unquestionably be in favor of that of Thucydides and Charon. Thucydides was contemporary with Ariaxerxes, and was born about the time of the flight of Themistocles. This prince of Greek historians gives (chapter 97) as the cause why he relates the events between the Median and Peloponnesian war, that all his predecessors had passed over these events in silence, and that the only one who touched upon them, Hellanicus, βραχέως τε καὶ τοῖς χρόνοις οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἐπεμνήσθη *bracheōs te kai*

tois chronois ouk akribōs epemnēsthē them, from which it is evident, first, how little certain are the accounts of this period in later authors, because they can have no credible contemporary voucher, since he could not have been unknown to Thucydides; and, secondly, that Thucydides himself claims to be regarded as a careful and accurate historian of this period, and therefore must be esteemed such, because so honest a man would assume nothing to himself which did not belong to him. The other witness, Charon, was the less liable to err, since, at the very time of this event, he was a writer of history, and even lived in Asia. On the other hand, the oldest witnesses for the opposite supposition lived more than a century after the event. Ephorus (see on his Akrisic, Dahlmann) out-lived the dominion of Alexander in Asia; Dinon was father of Kiltarch, who accompanied Alexander.

"In weighing these grounds, the authority of Thucydides and Charon was unhesitatingly followed in ancient times. Plutarch (1. c.) does this, with the remark, that the testimony of Thucydides agrees better with the chronological works. Nepos says: 'Scio plerosque ita scripsisse, Themistoclem Xerxe regnante in Asiam transiisse: sed ego potissimum Thucydidi credo, quod aetate proximus de his, qui illorum temporum historias reliquerunt et ejusdem civitatis fuit.' Suidas, and the Scholiast on Aristoph. "Equites," from which the former borrowed verbatim his second article on Themistocles, makes him flee, πρὸς τὸν Ἀρταξέρξην, τὸν Ξέρξου τοῦ Πέρσου παῖδα pros ton Artaxerxēn, ton Xerxou tou Persou paida, without even mentioning the other supposition. And in this respect, we have the less fear of contradiction, since, as far as we know, all modern critics, without exception, follow Thucydides and Charon. We only still remark that the opposite view can the more easily be rejected, since its origin can so readily be explained, either from the fact that this event fell on the border of the reign of Xerxes and of Artaxerxes, or from a simple confounding of the two names, the assumption of which is more easy the more frequently it occurs; we find it even in Aristotle, the contemporary of those writers, Pol. 5, 8, and twice in Ctesias, chapter 35, where Bahr would make a change in opposition to all the manuscripts, and chapter 44. Compare Bahr on the passage, and Reimarus on Dio Cass. II. p. 1370.

Finally, the error might arise also from the circumstance that the flight of Themistocles was placed in the right year; but twenty-one years were attributed to Xerxes, from which it necessarily follows that he took refuge with Xerxes. This last opinion is favored by the coincidence of several contemporary writers in the same error, which presupposes some plausible reason for it.

"We now proceed to lay down our indirect proofs.

(1) we begin with the testimony which gives precisely the year of the flight of Themistocles, that of Cicero, *Lael.* chapter 12. It is true, Corsini, 1. c. 3, p. 180, asserts, that Cicero speaks of the year in which Themistocles was banished from Athens; but we need only examine the passage to be convinced of the contrary: 'Themistocles - fecit idem, quod viginti annis ante apud nos fecerat Coriolanus.' The flight of Coriolanus to the Volci falls in the year 263 u. c., 492 b.c. The flight of Themistocles is accordingly placed by Cicero in the year 472, a year later than by us, which is of no importance, since the round number twenty was the more suitable to the object of Cicero, as the more accurate nineteen, for the chronologists. If Dodwell's view were correct, there would be the space of twenty-seven years between the two events.

"2. Diodorus Siculus, who (11, 55) places the flight of Themistocles in Ol. 77, 2 (471 b.c.), in any event favors our determination, which ascends only two years higher, far more than the opposite one. We remark, however, that he also places in the same year the residence of Themistocles at Magnesia, and his death; and thus it is evident that, whether by mistake or design, he compresses the events in the life of Themistocles, which filled up some years, into the year of his death. If this took place in the year 471, the flight must be dated at least as far back as 473. Our determination differs only a single year from that of Eusebius, who relates the flight of Themistocles in Ol. 77, 1.

"3. But what forms the chief argument, the whole series of transactions, as they have been recorded in accurate order, especially by Thucydides, compels us without reserve to place the flight of Themistocles not be. low the year 473. That the

expedition of the allied Greeks under the direction of Pausanias, against Cyprus and Byzantium, the capture of the latter city, and the transfer of the supremacy from the Lacedaemonians to the Athenians, occasioned by the insolence of Pausanias, fall in the year 477, we may regard as established beyond dispute by Clinton, p. 270, following. The view of O. Muller (Dorier, ii. p. 498), who distributes these events into a period of five years, is contradicted by the expression ἐν τῇδε τῇ ἡγεμονίᾳ en tēde tē hēgemonia of Thucydides, chapter 94, whereby the capture of Byzantium is brought into the same year with the expedition against Cyprus. That these words cannot be connected with what follows, without a change of the text in opposition to all critical authority, is shown by Poppo. Moreover, the very last of these events is placed, by the unanimous testimony of antiquity, in the year 477.

Clinton shows, p. 249, that all reckonings of the time of the supremacy of the Athenians, setting out from this, year, differ from one another only in reference to the assumed termination. Also, Thucydides chapter 128, the expedition against Cyprus, and that against Byzantium, are connected as immediately succeeding each other. If, however, Dodwell were compelled by the force of the arguments to acknowledge that these events, which he compresses into one year, do not, as he assumes (p. 61), belong to the year 470, but to the year 477, he would surely be compelled, perceiving it to be impossible to lengthen out the thread of the events until the year 465, to give up the whole hypothesis. The dissatisfaction of the allies was followed by the recall of Pausanias. That this belongs still to the same year plainly appears, partly from the nature of the case itself, since it pre-supposes a continuance of supremacy, partly from Thucydides, chapter 95: ἐν τούτῳ δε οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι μετεπέμποντο Πausανίαν ἀνακρινούντες ὧν περὶ ἐπυνθάνοντο en toutō de hoi Lakedaimonioi metepemponto Pausanian anakrinountes hōn peri epunthanonto.

Pausanias having come to Sparta, and been there set at liberty, now betook himself privately in a galley to Byzantium. This cannot have happened long afterward, for Thucydides, chapter 128, immediately subjoins it, and what is of the most

importance, Pausanias finds the fleet still at Byzantium. That his residence there did not long continue appears from the account of Thucydides, chapter 131, that he was forcibly expelled thence by the Athenians. He now retired to the colony in Troas; from there he was recalled to Sparta, after it had been reported that he kept up an understanding with the barbarians. The Ephori threw him into prison, but soon after released him. At this time his intercourse with Themistocles took place, who, being at the time already expelled from Athens, resided at Argos, and thence made excursions into the rest of the Peloponnesus. That Pausanias then for the first time drew Themistocles into his plan, when the latter had been driven from Athens, is asserted by Plutarch, and a personal intercourse between them is rendered certain by all accounts.

That there was no considerable period between this release of Pausanias and his death is clear. Pausanias was not condemned, because there was no certain proof against him. It is, however, psychologically improbable that he did not soon afford it, that he prudently kept himself from giving open offence for a series of years, when we consider that he was deprived of all prudence by his haughtiness, arising to madness; that he himself rendered the execution of his treasonable plan impossible; that, according to Thucydides, chapter 130, he went about in a Median dress, and caused himself to be accompanied on a journey through Thrace with Median and Egyptian satellites, spread a Persian table, made difficult the access to his person, gave free course to his passions, of whom Thucydides himself very significantly remarks, καὶ κατέχειν τὴν διάνοιαν οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἀλλ' ἔργοις βραχέσι προὔδηλου, ἃ τῇ γνώμῃ γνώμη μειζόνως ἐρέπειτα ἔμελλε πράξειν kai katechein tēn dianoiān ouk ēdunato all' ergois brachesi proudēlou, ha tē gnōmē meizonōs erepeita emelle praxein, and of whose senseless arrogance the same historian, chapter 132, gives an example, even out of the time immediately after the battle of Platea. The discovery was effected by him who was to bring to Artabazus the last letters to the king.

With what haste the transactions were carried on, and that by no means a space of four years was consumed, is evident from

the fact that the king, in order to accelerate them, had expressly sent Artabazus to Asia Minor. His death immediately followed the discovery (compare Thucydides 133). We surely do not assume too little when we give to these events a period of three years. That we need not go beyond this is shown by Dio. dorus, who compresses all these events into the year 477 (Ol. 75, 4). How could he have done this, or how could such an error have arisen, if the beginning and end had been separated from each other by a period of eight or nine years?. How impossible it was for him, with his sources, to place the destruction of Pausanias far beyond this time appears from his fiction, which can in no other way be explained, of a twofold accusation of Themistocles. If, now, we must place the death of Pausanias about the year 474, and in no event later, the flight of Themistocles cannot be placed farther back than the year 473.

For Themistocles, at the death of Pausanias, had already been a considerable time in the Peloponnesus. His accusation followed immediately after the event (compare Thucydides, I. 135); and the combined interests of the Lacedemonians, to whom nothing could be more desirable than to have the Athenians share their disgrace, and of the enemies of Themistocles at Athens (Plut. Them. c. 23: κατεβόων μὲν αὐτοῦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, κατηγοροῦν δ' οἱ φθονοῦντες τῶν πολιτῶν kateboōn men autou Lakedaimonioi, katēgoroun d' hoi phthonountes tōn politōn, would cause the decision to be hastened as much as possible. Themistocles, persecuted both by the Athenians and Lacedemonians, now flees from the Peloponnesus to Corcyra. Being denied a residence there, he retires to the opposite continent. In danger of being overtaken by his persecutors (Thucydides chapter 136: καὶ διωκόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν προστεταγμένων κατὰ πύστιν ἢ χωροίη kai diōkomenos hupo tōn prostetagmenōn kata pustin ē chōroiē, he sees himself compelled to flee to Admetus, the king of the Molossians. Nor can he have long resided there, for, according to Thucydides, chapter 137, he was sent forward by Admetus, as soon as his persecutors came. And how can we suppose that they would have been long behind him? How long could his place of residence have remained a secret? It is expressly said by Thucydides, that the coming of his persecutors, and the

flight of Themistocles to Asia, very soon happened (ὕστερον οὐ πολλῶν husteron ou pollō). It is true, that if we could credit the account of Stesimbrotus, in Plut. chapter 24, we must assume that the residence of Themistocles with Admetus continued some months, for he related that his friends brought to him there his wife and children, whom they had secretly conducted out of Athens. But that no dependence is to be placed upon this is evident from the absurd fiction of Stesimbrotus that immediately follows, which to the surprise even of Plutarch (εἴτ' οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἐπιλαθόμενος τούτων, ἢ τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα ποιῶν ἐπιλαθόμενον, πλεῖσαι φησιν, κ.τ.λ. eit' ouk oid' hopōs epilathomenos toutōn, ē ton Themistoklea poiōn epilathomenon, pleisai phēsin, etc.) he brings forward, without observing that the one fable does away the other - namely, that Themistocles was sent by Admetus to Sicily, and had desired of Hiero his daughter in marriage, with the promise to bring Greece under subjection to him.

Plutarch designates Stesimbrotus as a shameless liar, Pericles, chapter 13. That the sons of Themistocles remained in Athens is manifest from a relation in Suidas, and the testimony of Thucydides, chapter 137, and of Plutarch, that the gold was first sent to Themistocles by his friends after his arrival in Asia, to enable him to reward the service of the captain who brought him to Asia, shows at the same time the incorrectness of the assertion of Stesimbrotus, and confirms the opinion that Themistocles remained in no one place of his flight long enough for his friends to send to him there the necessary gold. Themistocles was conducted by Admetus to Pidna, and from there he betook himself in a boat directly to Asia. This, accordingly, since between the death of Pausanias, and the coming of Themistocles into Asia there could at most be only a year, can at latest have happened in the year 473, perhaps in 474; and even in the former case we are completely justified in placing the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes, which still cannot have immediately coincided with the coming of Themistocles, in the year 474.

"4. On the supposition that the commencement of the reign of Artaxerxes, and the flight of Themistocles, fall in 465, an extravagant old age must be attributed to Charon of

Lampsacus. According to Suidas, he was still flourishing under the first Darius, Ol. 69, 504 b.c. Since now, in his history, he mentions the flight of Themistocles to Artaxerxes, this being placed in 465, he must have been employed in writing history at least forty years. This is not, indeed, absolutely impossible; but, in a doubtful case, it must be rejected as the more improbable alternative. 'Historice enim, non sunt explicandae - says Vitranga (Proll. in, Zach. p. 29) - ex raris et insolentibus exemplis, sed ex communi vivendi lege et ordine. Si res secus se habeat, in ipsa historia ascribitur ne fallat incautos.' Compare his farther excellent remarks on this subject. That this argument is not without force, is evident even from the efforts of some advocates of the false chronology to set it aside by cutting the knot. Suidas, after he has cited the above-mentioned determination of the time of Charon, as he found it in his more ancient authorities, subjoins, μάλλον δὲ ἢν ἐπὶ τῶν Περσικῶν mallon de ēn epi tōn Persikōn. Creuzer, on the Fragm. Historr. Groec., p. 95, rejects this date without farther examination, because it gives too great an age to Charon.

"5. According to Thucydides 1, 136, Themistocles, on his passage to Asia, fell in with the Athenian fleet, which was besieging Naxos. This siege of Naxos, however, according to the testimony of Thucydides, chapter 100, which makes all other arguments superfluous, happened before the great victory of the Athenians on the Eurymedon, which, according to Diodorus, belongs to the year 470, and cannot be placed later, because this was the first considerable undertaking of the Athenians against the Persians, the war with whom formed the only ground for the important requisitions which they made upon their allies. Compare Thucydides i. 94. Hitherto, since the supremacy had passed over to the Athenians, scarcely anything had been done against the Persians, except the taking of the unimportant AEGon. Thucydides also leads us to about the same year as that given by Diodorus, who connects the defection of Thasos (467) with χρόνω ὕστερον chronō husteron, which cannot stand where events immediately succeed each other. Even for these reasons, the siege of Naxos and the flight of Themistocles, do not fall after 471. If, however, we consider that Naxos was the first confederate city

with which the Athenians were involved in discord (compare Thucydides, p. 1, 98) - which, from the nature of the case, as is rendered especially clear by the remarks of Thucydides and a comparison of the later historians, could scarcely have first happened after seven years - and if we farther consider the way in which Thucydides (chapter 98) connects the events, from the transfer of the supremacy until the capture of Naxos, with one another, we shall, without hesitation, place the latter some years earlier, in the year 474 or 473.

"6. The flight of Themistocles falls at least three years earlier than the battle on the Eurymedon, because in all probability he was dead before the latter event. His death, however, must have been some years subsequent to his coming into Asia (compare Thucydides chapter 138). One year passed in learning the language, and some time, in any event, was required for what is implied in ταύτης ἤρχε τῆς χώρας, δίντος, κ.τ.λ. tautēs ērche tēs chōras, dontos, etc. Thucydides relates that, according to the account of some, Themistocles took poison, ἀδύνατον νομίσαντα εἶναι ἐπιτελέσαι βασιλεῖ αὐτοῦ ὑπέσχετο adunaton nomisanta einai epitelesai basilei a hupeschetō. This pre-supposes that Themistocles was compelled to fulfill his promises; and had this not been the case at his death, the report that Thucydides only in this instance relied upon himself could not have arisen. Plutarch expressly connects the death of Themistocles with the expedition of Cimon. This is done by several writers, with the mention of the most special circumstances (compare the passages in Staveren on Nep. Them. 10) all of which may be regarded, as they are by Cicero (Brut. chapter 11) and Nepos, as fictitious, and yet the historical basis on which alone everything depends, "the fact" that Thucydides died before the battle on the Eurymedon is firmly established.

"7. Kruger (1. c. p. 218) has shown that the account of Plutarch, that Themistocles reached an age of sixty-five years, forbids us to place his death beyond the year 470, and therefore his flight beyond the year 473. According to an account which has internal evidence of credibility, in AElian, Var. Hist. iii. 21, Themistocles, as a small boy coming from school, declined going out of the way of the tyrant Pisistratus.

Assuming that this happened in the last year of Pisistratus, 529 b.c., and that Themistocles was at that time six years old, he must have been born in 535, and died in 470. Nor is it a valid objection that, according to Plutarch, Themistocles was still living at the time of the Cyprian expedition of Cimon (449 b.c.), and was still young at the battle of Marathon. For the former rests on a manifest confounding of the former event with the victory over the Persian fleet at Cyprus, which is supposed to have immediately preceded the victory on the Eurymedon (compare Diodor. 11, 60; Dahlmann, Forschungen, i. p. 69), and the latter merely on a conclusion drawn from this error. 'Whoever,' remarks Dahlmann, p. 71, 'reads without prejudice the passage, Thucydides 1, 138, will perceive that the death of Themistocles followed pretty soon after his settlement in Persia; probably in the second year, if Thucydides is worthy of credit.'

"Until all these arguments are refuted, it remains true that the Messianic interpretation of the prophecy is the only correct one, and that the alleged pseudo-Daniel, as well as the real Daniel, possessed an insight into the future, which could have been given only by the Spirit of God; and hence, as this favor could have been shown to no deceiver, the genuineness of the book necessarily follows, and the futility of all objections against it is already manifest."

V. The only remaining point of inquiry on this verse is, as to the division of the whole period of sixty-nine weeks into two smaller portions of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; that is, of the four hundred and eighty-three years into one period of four hundred and thirty-four years, and one of forty-nine years. This inquiry resolves itself into another, Whether, after the issuing of the command in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, there was a period of forty-nine years that was in any manner distinguished from what followed, or any "reason" why an epoch should be made there? If the command in the twentieth of Artaxerxes was in the year 454 b.c., then the subtraction of forty-nine years from this would make the year 405 b.c. the marked period; that is, about that time some important change would occur, or a new series of affairs would commence which would properly separate the previous period from what

followed.

Now, the fair interpretation of this passage respecting the seven weeks, or forty-nine years, undoubtedly is, that that time would be required in rebuilding the city, and in settling its affairs on a permanent foundation, and that, from the close of that time, another period of sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, would elapse to the appearing of the Messiah. It is true that this is not distinctly specified in the text, and true that in the text the phrase "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times," is not limited expressly to either period, but it is also said in the next verse, that the period of sixty-two weeks would be terminated by the appearing of the Messiah, or by his being cut off, and, therefore, it is fair to presume that the previous period of seven weeks was to be characterized particularly as the "troublous times" in which the street and the wall were to be built again. The inquiry now is, Whether that time was actually occupied in rebuilding and restoring the city? In regard to this, it may be remarked,

(1) That there is a strong "probability" that a considerable time would be necessary to rebuild the walls of the city, and to restore Jerusalem to a condition like that in which it was before the captivity. We are to remember that it had been long lying in ruins; that the land was desolate; that Jerusalem had no commercial importance to make its growth rapid; that there were few in the city on whom reliance could be placed in rebuilding it; that a large portion of the materials for rebuilding it was to be brought from a distance; that the work was opposed with much determination by the Samaritans; that it was necessary, as Nehemiah informs us, in building the walls, that the workmen should have a weapon of defense in one hand while they labored with the other, and that those who were engaged on it were mostly poor. When these things are considered, it is at least not improbable that the period of forty-nine years would be required before it could be said that the work was fully completed.

(2) a more material question, however, is, whether the facts in the case confirm this, or whether there was such a termination

of the rebuilding of the city at about that period, that it could be said that the time occupied was seven weeks rather than, for example, six, or five, or nine. It may not be necessary so to make this out as to determine the precise year, or the termination of forty-nine years. but in a general division of the time, it is necessary, undoubtedly, so to determine it as to see that that time should have been designated, rather than one equally general at the close of one week, or two, or six, or nine, or any other number. Now that that was the period of the completion of the work contemplated by the decree issued under Artaxerxes, and the work undertaken by Nehemiah, it is not difficult to show:

(a) It is reasonable to presume that the time referred to in the seven weeks would be the rebuilding of the city, and the restoration of its affairs to its former state - or the completion of the arrangements to restore the nation from the effects of the captivity, and to put it on its former footing. This was the main inquiry by Daniel; this would be a marked period; this would be that for which the "commandment would go forth;" and this would constitute a natural division of the time.

(b) As a matter of fact, the completion of the work undertaken by Nehemiah, under the command of the Persian kings, reached to the period here designated; and his last act as governor of Judea, in restoring the people, and placing the affairs of the nation on its former basis, occurred at just about the period of the forty-nine years after the issuing of the command by Artaxerxes Longimanus. That event, as is supposed above, occurred 454 b.c. The close of the seven weeks, or of the forty-nine years, would therefore be 405 b.c. This would be about the last year of the reign of Darius Nothus. See the table above. Nehemiah was twice governor of Judea, and the work of restoration which he undertook was not completed until his being the second time in that office. The first time he remained twelve years in office, for he received his commission in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and in the thirty-second year he returned again to him, [Neh 13:6](#). This, according to the computation above, would bring it down to 442 b.c. How long he then remained with the king of Persia he does not definitely state himself, but says it was "certain days,"

[Neh 13:6](#). After this, he again obtained permission of the king to return to Jerusalem, and went back the second time as governor of Judea, [Neh 13:6-7](#). The time from his first return to Persia, after the twelve years that he spent in Judea to the year 405 b.c., would be thirty-seven years. According to this, the close of the "seven weeks," and the completion of the enterprise of "rebuilding and restoring" the city, must have been at the end of that thirty-seven years. In reference to this, it may be remarked,

(1) That Nehemiah is known to have lived to a great age (Josephus); yet, supposing he was thirty years old when he was first appointed governor of Judea, and that the time referred to at the close of the "seven weeks," or forty-nine years, was the completion of his work in the restoration of the affairs of Jerusalem, the whole period would only reach to the seventy-ninth year of his age.

(2) The last act of Nehemiah in restoring the city occurred in the fifteenth year of the reign of Darius Notbus - according to Prideaux (Con. II. 206, following) - that is, 408 b.c. This would make, according to the common computation of chronology, a difference from the estimate above of only three years, and, perhaps, considering that the time of "seven weeks" is a reckoning in round numbers, this would be an estimate of sufficient accuracy. But, besides this, it is to be remembered that the exact chronology to a year or a month cannot be made out with absolute certainty; and taking all the circumstances into consideration, it is remarkable that the period designated in the prophecy coincides so nearly with the historical record. The only remaining inquiries, therefore, are, whether the last act of Nehemiah referred to occurred at the time mentioned - the 15th of Darius Nothus, or 408 b.c. - and whether that was of sufficient prominence and importance to divide the two periods of the prophecies, or to be a proper closing up of the work of restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem. What he did in his office as governor of Judea, at his second visitation to Jerusalem, is recorded in Neh. 13:7-31.

The particular acts which he performed consisted in removing certain abuses which had been suffered to grow up in his

absence respecting the temple service, by which the temple had become greatly polluted [Neh 13:7-14](#); in restoring the Sabbath to its proper observance, which had become greatly disregarded [Neh 13:15-22](#); and in constraining those Jews who had contracted unlawful marriages to separate themselves from their wives [Neh 13:23-31](#). These acts were necessary to put the affairs of the temple, and the condition of the city, on their former basis. The last of these acts - the separation of those who had contracted unlawful marriages from their wives, is that which designates the close of the "seven weeks," and respecting which the date is to be sought. This is stated in the book of Nehemiah [Neh 13:28](#) to have occurred in the time of "one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite." That is, it occurred when Joiada was high priest.

But, according to the "Chr. Alexandrinum," Joiada succeeded his father in the office in the eleventh year of Darius Nothus, and Prideaux supposes, without improbability, that this event may have occurred as long as four years after he entered on the office of high priest, which would bring it to the fifteenth of Darius Nothus, or 408 b.c. Compare Jahn, Heb. Com. pp. 179-182; and Prideaux, Con. ii. 206-210. The time, then, if this be the event referred to, is sufficiently accurate to make it coincide with the prophecy - sufficiently so to divide the previous period from what succeeded it. **The event itself was of sufficient importance to have a place here.** It was, in fact, finishing what was necessary to be done in order to a completion of the purpose to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem." It was in fact "the restoration of Jewish affairs under the Persian edict," or what was accomplished in fact under that edict in placing the Jewish affairs on the proper basis - the basis on which they were substantially before the captivity.

This was the termination of that captivity in the fullest sense, and divided the past from the future - or constituted a "period or epoch" in the history of the Jewish people. It remains only to add, on this verse - and the remark will be equally applicable to the exposition of the two remaining verses of the chapter - that on the supposition that this had been written after the coming of the Messiah, and it had been designed to frame

what would seem to be a prophecy or prediction of these events, the language here Would be such as would have been appropriately employed. From the time of the going forth of the command to rebuild the city, the whole duration would have been accurately divided into two great portions - that requisite for the completion of the work of restoring the city, and that extending to the coming of the Messiah, and the former would have been made to terminate where it is now supposed the period of "seven weeks," or forty-nine years, did actually terminate. If this would have been the correct apportionment in a "historic" review, it is correct as a "prophetic" review.

[Daniel 9:26](#)

dan 9:26

And after threescore and two weeks - After the completion of the last period of four hundred and thirty-four years. The angel had shown in the previous verse what would be the characteristic of the first period of "seven weeks" - that during that time the wall and the street would be built in circumstances of general distress and anxiety, and he now proceeds to state what would occur in relation to the remaining sixty-two weeks. The particular thing which would characterize that period would be, that the Messiah would be cut off, and that the series of events would commence which would terminate in the destruction of the city and the temple. He does not say that this would be immediately on the termination of the sixty-two weeks, but he says that it would be "after" אַחֲרָי 'achārēy - "subsequent" to the close of that period. The word does not mean necessarily immediately, but it denotes what is to succeed - to follow - and would be well expressed by the word "afterward:" [Gen 15:14](#); [Gen 23:19](#); [Gen 25:26](#), et al. See Gesenius, Lexicon The natural meaning here would be, that this would be the "next event" in the order of events to be reckoned; it would be that on which the prophetic eye would rest subsequent to the close of the period of sixty-two weeks. There are two circumstances in the prophecy itself which go to show that it is not meant that this would immediately follow:

(a) One is, that in the previous verse it is said that the "sixty-

two weeks" would extend "unto the Messiah;" that is, either to his birth or to his manifestation as such; and it is not implied anywhere that he would be "cut off" at once on his appearing, nor is such a supposition reasonable, or one that would have been embraced by an ancient student of the prophecies;

(b) the other is, that, in the subsequent verse, it is expressly said that what he would accomplish in causing the oblation to cease would occur "in the midst of the week;" that is, of the remaining one week that would complete the seventy. This could not occur if he were to be "cut off" immediately at the close of the sixty-two weeks.

The careful student of this prophecy, therefore, would anticipate that the Messiah would appear at the close of the sixty-two weeks, and that **he would continue during a part, at least, of the remaining one week before he would be cut off.** This point could have been clearly made out from the prophecy before the Messiah came.

Shall Messiah - Notes, [Dan 9:25](#).

Be cut off - The word used here (כרת *kârath*) means, properly, to cut, to cut off, as a part of a garment, [Sa1 24:5](#) (6), 11 (12); a branch of a tree, [Num 13:23](#); the prepuce, [Exo 4:25](#); the head, [Sa1 17:51](#); [Sa1 5:4](#); to cut down trees, [Deu 19:5](#); [Isa 14:8](#); [Isa 44:14](#); [Jer 10:3](#); [Jer 22:7](#). Then it means to cut off persons, to destroy, [Deu 20:20](#); [Jer 11:19](#); [Gen 9:11](#); [Psa 37:9](#); [Pro 2:22](#); [Pro 10:31](#), et al. scep. The phrase, "that soul shall be cut off from his people," "from the midst of the people," "from Israel," "from the congregation," etc., occurs frequently in the Scriptures (compare [Gen 17:14](#); [Lev 7:20-21](#); [Num 15:30](#); [Num 19:13](#), [Num 19:20](#); [Exo 12:19](#), et al.), and denotes the punishment of death in general, without defining the manner. "It is never the punishment of exile." - Gesenius, Lexicon The proper notion or meaning here is, undoubtedly, that of being cut off by death, and would suggest the idea of a "violent" death, or a death by the agency of others.

It would apply to one who was assassinated, or murdered by a mob, or who was appointed to death by a judicial decree; or it might be applied to one who was cut down in battle, or by the

pestilence, or by lightning, or by shipwreck, but it would not naturally or properly be applied to one who had lived out his days, and died a peaceful death. We always now connect with the word the idea of some unusual interposition, as when we speak of one who is cut down in middle life. The ancient translators understood it of a violent death. So the Latin "Vulgate, occidetur Christus;" Syriac, "the Messiah shall be slain," or put to death. It need not be here said that this phrase would find a complete fulfillment in the manner in which the Lord Jesus was put to death, nor that this is the very language in which it is proper now to describe the manner in which he was removed. He was cut off by violence; by a judicial decree; by a mob; in the midst of his way, etc. If it should be admitted that the angel meant to describe the manner of his death, he could not have found a single word that would have better expressed it.

But not for himself - Margin, "and shall have nothing." This phrase has given rise to not a little discussion, and not a little diversity of opinion. The Latin Vulgate is, "et non erit ejus populus, qui eum negaturus est" - "and they shall not be his people who shall deny him." Theodotion (in the Septuagint), καὶ κρίμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ kai krima ouk estin en autō - "and there is no crime in him." Syriac, "And it is not with him." The Hebrew is וְאֵין לוֹ ve'ēyn lô - and the interpretation turns on the meaning of the word אֵין 'ēyn. Hengstenberg maintains that it is never used in the sense of אֵל lo' (not), but that it always conveys the idea of "nothing," or "non-existence," and that the meaning here is, that, then, "there was nothing to him;" that is, that he ceased to have authority and power, as in the cutting off of a prince or ruler whose power comes to an end.

Accordingly he renders it, "and is not to him;" that is, his dominion, authority, or power over the covenant people as an anointed prince, would cease when he was cut off, and another one would come and desolate the sanctuary, and take possession. Bertholdt renders it, Ohne Nachfolger von den Seinigen zu haben - "without any successors of his own" - meaning that his family, or that the dynasty would be cut off, or would end with him. He maintains that the whole phrase denotes "a sudden and an unexpected death," and that it here

means that he would have no successor of his own family. He applies it to Alexander the Great. Lengerke renders it, Und nicht ist vorhanden, der ihm, angehoret - and explains the whole to mean, "The anointed one (as the lawful king) shall be cut off, but it shall not then be one who belongs to his family (to wit, upon the throne), but a Prince shall come to whom the crown did not belong, to whom the name anointed could not properly belong."

Maurer explains it, "There shall be to him no successor or lawful heir." Prof. Stuart renders it, "One shall be cut off, and there shall be none for it" (the people). C. B. Michaelis, "and not to be will be his lot." Jacch. and Hitzig, "and no one remained to him." Rosch, "and no one was present for him." Our translation - "but not for himself" - was undoubtedly adopted from the common view of the atonement - that the Messiah did not die for himself, but that his life was given as a ransom for others. There can be no doubt of that fact to those who hold the common doctrine of the atonement, and yet it maybe doubted whether the translators did not undesignedly allow their views of the atonement to shape the interpretation of this passage, and whether it can be fairly made out from the Hebrew. The ordinary meaning of the Hebrew word יָא 'ēyn is, undoubtedly, "nothing, emptiness" - in the sense of there being nothing (see Gesenius, Lexicon); and, thus applied, the sense here would be, that after he was cut off, or in consequence of his being cut off, what he before possessed would cease, or there would be "nothing" to him; that is, either his life would cease, or his dominion would cease, or he would be cut off as the Prince - the Messiah. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by what is immediately said, that another would come and would destroy the city and the sanctuary, or that the possession would pass into his hands.

It seems probable to me that this is the fair interpretation. The Messiah would come as a "Prince." It might be expected that he would come to rule - to set up a kingdom. But he would be suddenly cut off by a violent death. The anticipated dominion over the people as a prince would not be set up. It would not pertain to him. Thus suddenly cut off, the expectations of such a rule would be disappointed and blasted. He would in fact set

up no such dominion as might naturally be expected of an anointed prince; he would have no successor; the dynasty would not remain in his hands or his family, and soon the people of a foreign prince would come and would sweep all away. This interpretation does not suppose that the real object of his coming would be thwarted, or that he would not set up a kingdom in accordance with the prediction properly explained, but that such a kingdom as would be expected by the people would not be set up.

He would be cut off soon after he came, and the anticipated dominion would not pertain to him, or there would be "nothing" of it found in him, and soon after a foreign prince would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary. This interpretation, indeed, will take this passage away as a proof-text of the doctrine of the atonement, or as affirming the design of the death of the Messiah, but it furnishes a meaning as much in accordance with the general strain of the prophecy, and with the facts in the work of the Messiah. For it was a natural expectation that when he came he would set up a kingdom - a temporal reign - and this expectation was extensively cherished among the people. He was, however, soon cut off, and all such hopes at once perished in the minds of his true followers (compare [Luk 24:21](#)), and in the minds of the multitudes who, though not his true followers, began to inquire whether he might not be the predicted Messiah - the Prince to sit on the throne of David. But of such an anticipated dominion or rule, there was "nothing" to him.

All these expectations were blighted by his sudden death, and soon, instead of his delivering the nation from bondage and setting up a visible kingdom, a foreign prince would come with his forces and would sweep away everything. Whether this would be the interpretation affixed to these words before the advent of the Messiah cannot now be determined. We have few remains of the methods in which the Hebrews interpreted the ancient prophecies, and we may readily suppose that they would not be disposed to embrace an exposition which would show them that the reign of the Messiah, as they anticipated it, would not occur, but that almost as soon as he appeared, he would be put to death, and the dominion pass away, and the

nation be subjected to the ravages of a foreign power. "And the people of the prince that shall come." Margin, "And they (the Jews) shall be no more his people; or, the Prince's (Messiah's) future people." This seems to be rather an explanation of the meaning, than a translation of the Hebrew. The literal rendering would be, "and the city, and the sanctuary, the people of a prince that comes, shall lay waste." On the general supposition that this whole passage refers to the Messiah and his time, the language used here is not difficult of interpretation, and denotes with undoubted accuracy the events that soon followed the "cutting off" of the Messiah. The word "people" (עַם 'am) is a word that may well be applied to subjects or armies - such a people as an invading prince or warrior would lead with him for purposes of conquest. It denotes properly

(a) a people, or tribe, or race in general; and then

(b) the people as opposed to kings, princes, rulers (compare λαός laos, the people as opposed to chiefs in Homer, Iliad ii. 365, xiii. 108, xxiv. 28): and then as soldiers, [Jdg 5:2](#). Hence, it may be applied, as it would be understood to be here, to the soldiers of the prince that should come.

Of the prince that shall come - The word "prince" here (נָגִיד nāgîyd) is the same which occurs in [Dan 9:25](#), "Messiah the prince." It is clear, however, that another prince is meant here, for

(a) it is just said that that prince - the Messiah - would be "cut off," and this clearly refers to one that was to follow;

(b) the phrase "that is to come" (הַבָּא habbâ') would also imply this.

It would naturally suggest the idea that he would come from abroad, or that he would be a foreign prince - for he would "come" for the purposes of destruction. No one can fail to see the applicability of this to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman power, after the Lord Jesus was put to death. If that was the design of the prophecy, or if it be admitted that the prophecy contemplated that, the language could not have been

better chosen, or the prediction more exact. No one can reasonably doubt that, if the ancient Hebrews had understood the former part of the prophecy, as meaning that the true Messiah would be put to death soon after his appearing, they could not fail to anticipate that a foreign prince would soon come and lay waste their city and sanctuary.

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary - The "holy place" - the temple. This is the termination of the prophecy. It begins with the command to "rebuild and restore" the city, and ends with its destruction. The time is not fixed, nor is there in the prophecy any direct intimation when it would occur, unless it be found in the general declaration in [Dan 9:24](#), that "seventy weeks were determined upon the people and the city." The whole scope of the prophecy, however, would lead to the supposition that this was soon to occur after the Messiah should be "cut off." The series of events under the Romans which led to the destruction of the city and temple, in fact, began very soon after the death of the Lord Jesus, and ceased only when the temple was wholly demolished, and the city was rased to its foundations.

And the end thereof - Hebrew, "its end," or "his end" - קצוֹ qîtsô. It is not certain as to what the word "it" (יֵהוּ) here refers. It may be either the end of the city, or of the prince, or of the prophecy, so far as the grammatical construction is concerned. As the principal and immediate subject of the prophecy, however, is the city, it is more natural to refer it to that. Hengstenberg renders it, "it will end," supposing, with Vitringa, that it refers to the subject of the discourse: "the thing - the whole affair - all that is here predicted in this series of events - will end with a flood." This accords well with the whole design of the prophecy.

With a flood - בַּשֶּׁטֶף basheteph. That is, it shall be like an overflowing flood. The word used here means a "gushing, outpouring," as of rain, [Job 38:25](#); of a torrent, [Pro 27:4](#); an overflowing, inundation, flood, [Psa 32:6](#); [Nah 1:8](#). Hence, it would appropriately denote the ravages of an army, sweeping everything away. It would be like a sudden inundation, carrying everything before it. No one can doubt that this

language is applicable in every respect to the desolations brought upon Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

And unto the end of the war desolations are determined - Margin, "it shall be cut off by desolations." Hengstenberg renders this, "and unto the end is war, a decree of ruins." So Lengerke - and his aufs Ende Krieg und Beschluss der Wusten. Bertholdt renders it, "and the great desolations shall continue unto the end of the war." The Latin Vulgate renders it, et post finem belli statuta desolatio - "and after the end of the war desolation is determined." Prof. Stuart translates it, "and unto the end shall be war, a decreed measure of desolations." The literal meaning of the passage is, "and unto the end of the war desolations are decreed," or determined. The word rendered "determined" (חָרַץ chârats) means, properly, to cut, cut in, engrave; then to decide, to determine, to decree, to pass sentence. See the notes at [Dan 9:24](#). Here the meaning naturally is, that such desolations were settled or determined as by a decree or purpose. There was something which made them certain; that is, it was a part of the great plan here referred to in the vision of the seventy weeks, that there should be such desolations extending through the war. The things which would, therefore, be anticipated from this passage would be,

(a) that there would be war. This is implied also in the assurance that the people of a foreign prince would come and take the city.

(b) That this war would be of a "desolating" character, or that it would in a remarkable manner extend and spread ruin over the land. All wars are thus characterized; but it would seem that this would do it in a remarkable manner.

(c) That these desolations would extend through the war, or to its close. There would be no intermission; no cessation. It is hardly necessary to say that this was, in fact, precisely the character of the war which the Romans waged with the Jews after the death of the Saviour, and which ended in the destruction of the city and temple; the overthrow of the whole Hebrew polity; and the removal of great numbers of the people to a distant and perpetual captivity. No war, perhaps, has been

in its progress more marked by desolation; in none has the purpose of destruction been more perseveringly manifested to its very close. The "language" here, indeed, might apply to many wars - in a certain sense to all wars; to none, however, would it be more appropriate than to the wars of the Romans with the Jews.

[Daniel 9:27](#)

dan 9:27

And he shall confirm the covenant - literally, "he shall make strong" - והגביר *vehîgebîyr*. The idea is that of giving strength, or stability; of making firm and sure. The Hebrew word here evidently refers to the "covenant" which God is said to establish with his people - so often referred to in the Scriptures as expressing the relation between Him and them, and hence used, in general, to denote the laws and institutions of the true religion - the laws which God has made for his church; his promises to be their protector, etc., and the institutions which grow out of that relation. The margin reads it, more in accordance with the Hebrew, "a," meaning that he would confirm or establish "a covenant" with the many. According to this, it is not necessary to suppose that it was any existing covenant that it referred to, but that he would ratify what was understood by the word "covenant;" that is, that he would lead many to enter into a true and real covenant with God. This would be fulfilled if he should perform such a work as would bring the "many" into a relation to God corresponding to what was sustained to him by his ancient people; that is, bring them to be his true friends and worshippers.

The meaning of the expression here cannot be mistaken, that during the time specified, "he" (whoever may be referred to) would, for "one week" - pursue such a course as would tend to establish the true religion; to render it more stable and firm; to give it higher sanctions in the approbation of the "many," and to bring it to bear more decidedly and powerfully on the heart. Whether this would be by some law enacted in its favor; or by protection extended over the nation; or by present example; or by instruction; or by some work of a new kind, and new influences which he would set forth, is not mentioned, and beforehand perhaps it could not have been well anticipated in

what way this would be. There has been a difference of opinion, however, as to the proper nominative to the verb "confirm" - הגביר הַגְבִּיר - whether it is the Messiah, or the foreign prince, or the "one week." Hengstenberg prefers the latter, and renders it, "And one week shall confirm the covenant; with many."

So also Lengerke renders it. Bertholdt renders it "he," that is, "he shall unite himself firmly with many for one week" - or, a period of seven years, ein Jahrsiebend lang. It seems to me that it is an unnatural construction to make the word "week" the nominative to the verb, and that the more obvious interpretation is to refer it to some person to whom the whole subject relates. It is not usual to represent time as an agent in accomplishing a work. In poetic and metaphorical language, indeed, we personate time as cutting down men, as a destroyer, &c., but this usage would not justify the expression that "time would confirm a covenant with many." That is, evidently, the work of conscious, intelligent agent; and it is most natural, therefore, to understand this as of one of the two agents who are spoken of in the passage. These two agents are the "Messiah," and the "prince that should come."

But it is not reasonable to suppose that the latter is referred to, because it is said [Dan 9:26](#) that the effect and the purpose of his coming would be to "destroy the city and the sanctuary." He was to come "with a flood," and the effect of his coming would be only desolation. The more correct interpretation, therefore, is to refer it to the Messiah, who is the principal subject of the prophecy; and the work which, according to this, he was to perform was, during that "one week," to exert such an influence as would tend to establish a covenant between the people and God. The effect of his work during that one week would be to secure their adhesion to the "true religion;" to confirm to them the Divine promises, and to establish the principles of that religion which would lead them to God. Nothing is said of the mode by which that would be done; and anything, therefore, which would secure this would be a fulfillment of the prophecy. As a matter of fact, if it refers to the Lord Jesus, this was done by his personal instructions, his example, his sufferings and death, and the arrangements which

he made to secure the proper effect of his work on the minds of the people - all designed to procure for them the friendship and favor of God, and to unite them to him in the bonds of an enduring covenant.

With many - לרבים - *lârabîym*. Or, for many; or, unto many. He would perform a work which would pertain to many, or which would bear on many, leading them to God. There is nothing in the word here which would indicate who they were, whether his own immediate followers, or those who already were in the covenant. The simple idea is, that this would pertain to "many" persons, and it would be fulfilled if the effect of his work were to confirm "many" who were already in the covenant, or if he should bring "many" others into a covenant relation with God. Nothing could be determined from the meaning of the word used here as to which of these things was designed, and consequently a fair fulfillment would be found if either of them occurred. If it refers to the Messiah, it would be fulfilled if in fact the effect of his coming should be either by statute or by instructions to confirm and establish those who already sustained this relation to God, or if he gathered other followers, and confirmed them in their allegiance to God.

For one week - The fair interpretation of this, according to the principles adopted throughout this exposition, is, that this includes the space of seven years. See the notes at [Dan 9:24](#). This is the one week that makes up the seventy - seven of them, or forty-nine years, embracing the period from the command to rebuild the city and temple to its completion under Nehemiah; sixty-two, or four hundred and thirty-four years, to the public appearing of the Messiah, and this one week to complete the whole seventy, or four hundred and ninety years "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," etc., [Dan 9:24](#). It is essential, therefore, to find something done, occupying these seven years, that would go to "confirm the covenant" in the sense above explained. In the consideration of this, the attention is arrested by the announcement of an important event which was to occur "in the midst of the week," to wit, in causing the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, showing that there was to

be an important change occurring during the "week," or that while he would be, in fact, confirming the covenant through the week in some proper sense, the sacrifice and oblation would cease, and therefore the confirming of the many in the covenant must depend on something else than the continuation of the sacrifice and oblation. In regard to this language, as in respect to all the rest of the prophecy, there are, in fact, just two questions: one is, what is fairly to be understood by the words, or what is the proper interpretation, independent of anything in the result; the other is, whether anything occurred in what is regarded as the fulfillment which corresponds with the language so interpreted.

(1) The first inquiry then, is, What is the fair meaning of the language? Or what would one who had a correct knowledge of the proper principles of interpretation understand by this? Now, in regard to this, while it may be admitted, perhaps, that there would be some liability to a difference of view in interpreting it with no reference to the event, or no shaping of its meaning by the event, the following things seem to be clear:

(a) that the "one week," would comprise seven years, immediately succeeding the appearance of the Messiah, or the sixty-two weeks, and that there was something which he would do in "confirming the covenant," or in establishing the principles of religion, which would extend through that period of seven years, or that that would be, in some proper sense, "a period" of time, having a beginning - to wit, his appearing, and some proper close or termination at the end of the seven years: that is, that there would be some reason why that should be a marked period, or why the whole should terminate there, and not at some other time.

(b) That in the middle of that period of seven years, another important event would occur, serving to divide that time into two portions, and especially to be known as causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease; in some way affecting the public offering of sacrifice, so that from that time there would be in fact a cessation.

(c) And that this would be succeeded by the consummation of

the whole matter expressed in the words, "and for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate," etc. It is not said, however, that this latter would immediately occur, but this would be one of the events that would pertain to the fulfillment of the prophecy. There is nothing, indeed, in the prediction to forbid the expectation that this would occur at once, nor is there anything in the words which makes it imperative that we should so understand it. It may be admitted that this would be the most natural interpretation, but it cannot be shown that that is required. It may be added, also, that this may not have pertained to the direct design of the prophecy - which was to foretell the coming of the Messiah, but that this was appended to show the end of the whole thing. When the Messiah should have come, and should have made an atonement for sin, the great design of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple would have been accomplished, and both might pass away. Whether that would occur immediately or not might be in itself a matter of indifference; but it was important to state here that it would occur, for that was properly a completion of the design of rebuilding the city, and of the purpose for which it had ever been set apart as a holy city.

(2) The other inquiry is whether there was that in what is regarded as the fulfillment of this, which fairly corresponds with the prediction. I have attempted above (on [Dan 9:25](#)) to show that this refers to the Messiah properly so called - the Lord Jesus Christ. The inquiry now is, therefore, whether we can find in his life and death what is a fair fulfillment of these reasonable expectations. In order to see this, it is proper to review these points in their order:

(a) The period, then, which is embraced in the prophecy, is seven years, and it is necessary to find in his life and work something which would be accomplished during these seven years which could be properly referred to as "confirming the covenant with many." The main difficulty in the case is on this point, and I acknowledge that this seems to me to be the most embarrassing portion of the prophecy, and that the solutions which can be given of this are less satisfactory than those that pertain to any other part. Were it not that the remarkable clause "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and

oblation to cease," were added, I admit that the natural interpretation would be, that he would do this personally, and that we might look for something which he would himself accomplish during the whole period of seven years. That clause, however, looks as if some remarkable event were to occur in the middle of that period, for the fact that he would tense the sacrifice and oblation to cease - that is, would bring the rites of the temple to a close - shows that what is meant by "confirming the covenant" is different from the ordinary worship under the ancient economy. No Jew would think of expressing himself thus, or would see how it was practicable to "confirm the covenant" at the same time that all his sacrifices were to cease. The confirming of the covenant, therefore, during that "one week," must be consistent with some work or event that would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease in the middle of that period.

(b) The true fulfillment, it seems to me, is to be found in the bearing of the work of the Saviour on the Hebrew people - the ancient covenant people of God - for about the period of seven years after he entered on his work. Then the particular relation of his work to the Jewish people ceased. It may not be practicable to make out the exact time of "seven years" in reference to this, and it may be admitted that this would not be understood from the prophecy before the things occurred; but still there are a number of circumstances which will show that this interpretation is not only plausible, but that it has in its very nature strong probability in its favor. They are such as these:

(1) The ministry of the Saviour himself was wholly among the Jews, and his work was what would, in their common language, be spoken of as "confirming the covenant;" that is, it would be strengthening the principles of religion, bringing the Divine promises to bear on the mind, and leading men to God, etc.

(2) This same work was continued by the apostles as they labored among the Jews. They endeavored to do the same thing that their Lord and Master had done, with all the additional sanctions, now derived from his life and death. The

whole tendency of their ministry would have been properly expressed in this language: that they endeavored to "confirm the covenant" with the Hebrew people; that is, to bring them to just views of the character of their natural covenant with God; to show them how it was confirmed in the Messiah; to establish the ancient promises; and to bring to bear upon them the sanctions of their law as it was now fulfilled, and ratified, and enlarged through the Messiah. Had the Saviour himself succeeded in this, or had his apostles, it would have been, in fact, only "confirming the ancient covenant" - the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the covenant established under Moses, and ratified by so many laws and customs among the people. The whole bearing of the Saviour's instructions, and of his followers, was to carry out and fulfill the real design of that ancient institution - to show its true nature and meaning, and to impress it on the hearts of men

(3) This was continued for about the period here referred to; at least for a period so long that it could properly be represented in round numbers as "one week," or seven years. The Saviour's own ministry continued about half that time; and then the apostles prosecuted the same work, laboring with the Jews for about the other portion, before they turned their attention to the Gentiles, and before the purpose to endearour to bring in the Jewish people was abandoned. They remained in Jerusalem; they preached in the synagogues; they observed the rites of the temple service; they directed their first attention everywhere to the Hebrew people; they had not yet learned that they were to turn away from the "covenant people," and to go to the Gentiles. It was a slow process by which they were led to this. It required a miracle to convince Peter of it, and to show him that it was right to go to Cornelius Acts 10, as a representative of the Gentile people, and it required another miracle to convert Saul of Tarsus, "the apostle of the Gentiles," and to prepare him for the work of carrying the gospel to the pagan world, and a succession of severe persecutions was demanded to induce the apostles to leave Jerusalem, and to go abroad upon the face of the earth to convey the message of salvation.

Their first work was among the Jewish people, and they would have remained among them if they had not been driven away

by these persecutions, and been thus constrained to go to other lands. It is true that it cannot be shown that this was a period of exactly "half a week," or three years and a half after the ascension of the Saviour, but, in a prophecy of this nature, it was a period that might, in round numbers, be well expressed by that; or the whole might be properly described by "seventy weeks," or four hundred and ninety years, and the last portion after the appearing of the Messiah as one of these weeks. There has been much needless anxiety to make out the exact time to a month or a day in regard to this prophecy - not remembering its general design, and not reflecting how uncertain are all the questions in ancient chronology. Compare the sensible remarks of Calvin on [Dan 9:25](#).

(4) When this occurred; when the apostles turned away from the Hebrew people, and gave themselves to their labors among the Gentiles, the work of "confirming the covenant" with those to whom the promises had been made, and to whom the law was given, ceased. They were regarded as "broken off" and left, and the hope of success was in the Gentile world. See the reasoning of the apostle Paul in Rom. 11. Jerusalem was given up soon after to destruction, and the whole work, as contemplated in this prophecy, ceased. The object for which the city and temple were rebuilt was accomplished, and here was a proper termination of the "prophecy." It was not necessary, indeed, that these should be at once destroyed, but they were henceforth regarded as having fulfilled the work designed, and as being now left to ruin. The ruin did not at once occur, but the sacrifices thenceforward offered were without meaning, and the train of events was constantly preparing that would sweep away city and temple together. I suppose, therefore, that this last "one week" embraced the period from the beginning of the ministry of the Saviour to that when the direct and exclusive efforts to bring the principles of his religion to bear on the Hebrew people, as carrying out the design of the covenant made by God with their fathers, and confirmed with so many promises, ceased, and the great effort was commenced to evangelize the pagan world. Then was the proper close of the seventy weeks; what is added is merely a statement of the winding up of the whole affair in the destruction of the city and temple. That occurred, indeed, some

years after; but at this period all that was material in regard to that city had taken place, and consequently that was all that was necessary to specify as to the proper termination of the design of rebuilding the city and the temple.

And in the midst of the week - The word here rendered "in the midst" - חֶמֶשׁ chētsîy - means, properly, half, the half part, [Exo 24:6](#); [Num 12:12](#); then the middle, or the midst, [Jdg 16:3](#). The Vulgate renders it, in dimidio; the Greek, ἐν τῷ ἡμίσει en tō hēmisei. Hengstenberg, "the half." So Lengerke, die Halfte; Luther, mitten. The natural and obvious interpretation is what is expressed in our translation, and that will convey the essential idea in the original. It refers to something which was to occur at about the middle portion of this time, or when about half of this period was elapsed, or to something which it would require half of the "one week," or seven years, to accomplish. The meaning of the passage is fully met by the supposition that it refers to the Lord Jesus and his work, and that the exact thing that was intended by the prophecy was his death, or his being "cut off," and thus causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease.

Whatever difficulties there may be about the "precise" time of our Lord's ministry, and whether he celebrated three passovers or four after he entered on his public work, it is agreed on all hands that it lasted about three years and a half - the time referred to here. Though a few have supposed that a longer period was occupied, yet the general belief of the church has coincided in that, and there are few points in history better settled. On the supposition that this pertains to the death of the Lord Jesus, and that it was the design of the prophecy here to refer to the effects of that death, this is the very language which would have been used. If the period of "a week" were for any purpose mentioned, then it would be indispensable to suppose that there would be an allusion to the important event - in fact, the great event which was to occur in the middle of that period, when the ends of the types and ceremonies of the Hebrew people would be accomplished, and a sacrifice made for the sins of the whole world.

He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease - The

word "he," in this place, refers to the Messiah, if the interpretation of the former part of the verse is correct, for there can be no doubt that it is the same person who is mentioned in the phrase "he shall confirm the covenant with many." The words "sacrifice" and "oblation" refer to the offerings made in the temple. The former word more properly denotes "bloody" offerings; the latter "offerings" of any kind - whether of flour, fruits, grain, etc. See these words explained in the notes at [Isa 1:11](#), [Isa 1:13](#). The word rendered "cease" (יִשְׁבֹּתוּ yashebîyt) means, properly, to rest (from the word Sabbath), and then in Hiphil, to cause to rest, or to cause to cease. It conveys the idea of "putting an end to" - as, for example, "war," [Psa 46:9](#); "contention," [Pro 18:18](#); "exultation," [Isa 16:10](#). - Gesenius. The literal signification here would be met by the supposition that an end would be made of these sacrifices, and this would occur either by their being made wholly to cease to be offered at that time, or by the fact that the object of their appointment was accomplished, and that henceforward they would be useless and would die away.

As a matter of fact, so far as the Divine intention in the appointment of these sacrifices and offerings was concerned, they "ceased" at the death of Christ - in the middle of the "week." Then the great sacrifice which they had adumbrated was offered. Then they ceased to have any significance, no reason existing for their longer continuance. Then, as they never had had any efficacy in themselves, they ceased also to have any propriety as types - for the thing which they had prefigured had been accomplished. Then, too, began a series of events and influences which led to their abolition, for soon they were interrupted by the Romans, and the temple and the altars were swept away to be rebuilt no more. The death of Christ was, in fact, the thing which made them to cease, and the fact that the great atonement has been made, and that there is now no further need of those offerings, is the only philosophical reason which can be given why the Jews have never been able again to rebuild the temple, and why for eighteen hundred years they have found no place where they could again offer a bloody sacrifice. The "sacrifice and the oblation" were made, as the result of the coming of the

Messiah, to "cease" for ever, and no power of man will be able to restore them again in Jerusalem. Compare Gibbon's account of the attempt of Julian to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem: Dec. and Fall, ii. 35-37.

And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate - The marginal reading here is very different, showing clearly the perplexity of the translators: "Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator." There is great variety, also, in the ancient versions in rendering this passage. The Latin Vulgate is, "And there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation." The Greek, "And upon the temple shall be an abomination of desolations." The Syriac, "And upon the extremities of the abomination shall rest desolation." The Arabic, "And over the sanctuary shall there be the abomination of ruin." Luther renders it, "And upon the wings shall stand the abomination of desolation." Lengerke and Hengstenberg render it, "And upon the summit of abomination comes the destroyer." Prof. Stuart, "And the water shall be over a winged fowl of abominations." These different translations show that there is great obscurity in the original, and perhaps exclude the hope of being able entirely to free the passage from all difficulties. An examination of the words, however, may perhaps enable us to form a judgment of its meaning. The "literal" and "obvious" sense of the original, as I understand it, is, "And upon the wing of the abominations one causing desolation" - משמם שקיצים כנף ועל - ve'al kenap shîqqytsîym meshomēm. The word rendered "overspreading" (כנף kânâp) means, properly, a "wing;" so called as "covering," or because it "covers" - from כנף kânâp), to cover, to hide. Then it denotes anything having a resemblance to a wing, as an extremity, a corner, as

(a) of a garment, the skirt, or flap, [Sa1 24:4](#) (5), 11 (12); [Num 15:38](#), and hence, as the outer garment was used by the Orientals to wrap themselves in at night, the word is used for the extremity or border of a bed-covering, [Deu 22:30](#) [Deu 23:1](#); [Rut 3:9](#).

(b) It is applied to land, or to the earth - as the earth is compared with a garment spread out, [Isa 24:16](#); [Job 37:3](#); [Job](#)

[38:13](#).

(c) It is used to denote the highest point, or a battlement, a pinnacle - as having a resemblance to a wing spread out.

So the word πτερύγιον pterugion is used in [Mat 4:5](#). See the notes at that passage. It would seem most probable that the allusion by the word as applied to a building would not be, as supposed by Gesenius (Lexicon), and by Hengstenberg and Lengerke, to the "pinnacle or summit," but to some roof, porch, or piazza that had a resemblance to the wings of a bird as spread out - a use of the word that would be very natural and obvious. The extended porch that Solomon built on the eastern side of the temple would, not improbably, have, to one standing on the opposite Mount of Olives, much the appearance of the wings of a bird spread out. Nothing certain can be determined about the allusion here from the use of this word, but the connection would lead us to suppose that the reference was to something pertaining to the city or temple, for the whole prophecy has a reference to the city and temple, and it is natural to suppose that in its close there would be an allusion to it.

The use of the word "wing" here would lead to the supposition that what is said would pertain to something in connection with the temple having a resemblance to the wings of a bird, and the word "upon" (עַל 'al) would lead us to suppose that what was to occur would be somehow upon that. The word rendered "abominations" (שְׁקִיזִימִים shîqqûtsîym) means "abominable" things, things to be held in detestation, as things unclean, filthy garments, etc., and then idols, as things that are to be held in abhorrence. The word שְׁקִיזִים shîqûts, is rendered abomination in [Deu 29:17](#); [Kg1 11:5](#), [Kg1 11:7](#); [Kg2 23:13](#), [Kg2 23:24](#); [Isa 66:3](#); [Jer 4:1](#); [Jer 7:30](#); [Jer 13:27](#); [Jer 32:34](#); [Eze 5:11](#); [Eze 7:20](#); [Eze 20:7-8](#), [Eze 20:30](#); [Dan 9:27](#); [Dan 11:31](#); [Dan 12:11](#); [Hos 9:10](#); [Zac 9:7](#); abominable idols in [Ch2 15:8](#) (in the margin abominations); "detestable" in [Jer 16:18](#); [Eze 11:18](#), [Eze 11:21](#); [Eze 37:23](#); and "abominable filth" in [Nah 3:6](#). It does not occur elsewhere.

In most of these places it is applied to "idols," and the current usage would lead us so to apply it, if there were nothing in the

connection to demand a different interpretation. It might refer to anything that was held in abomination, or that was detestable and offensive. The word is one that might be used of an idol god, or of anything that would pollute or defile, or that was from any cause offensive. It is not used in the Old Testament with reference to a "banner or military standard," but there can be no doubt that it might be so applied as denoting the standard of a foe - of a pagan - planted on any part of the temple - a thing which would be particularly detestable and abominable in the sight of the Jews. The word rendered "he shall make IT desolate" - מְשׁוֹמֵם meshomēm - is "he making desolate;" that is, "a desolator." It is a Poel participle from שָׁמַם shāmēm - to be astonished, to be laid waste; and then, in an active sense, to lay waste, to make desolate. - Gesenius. The same word, and the same phrase, occur in [Dan 11:31](#) : "And they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate," or, as it is in the margin, "astonisheth."

There, also, the expression is used in connection with "taking away the daily sacrifices." The word would be more properly rendered in this place "desolator," referring to some one who would produce desolation. There is great abruptness in the entire expression, and it is evident that it was not the intention to give so clear a prediction in this that it could be fully understood beforehand. The other portions of the prophecy respecting the building of the city, and the coming of the Messiah, and the work that he would accomplish, are much more clear, and their meaning could have been made out with much more certainty. But, in reference to this, it would seem, perhaps, that all that was designed was to throw out suggestions - fragments of thought, that would rather hint at the subject than give any continuous idea. Perhaps a much more "abrupt" method of translation than what attempts to express it in a continuous grammatical construction capable of being parsed easily, would better express the state of the mind of the speaker, and the language which he uses, than the ordinary versions.

The Masoretic pointing, also, may be disregarded, and then the real idea would be better expressed by some such translation as the following: "He shall cause the sacrifice and the offering

to cease. And - upon the wing - the porch of the temple - abominations! And a desolator!" That is, after the ceasing of the sacrifice and the oblation, the mind is fixed upon the temple where they had been offered. The first thing that arrests the eye is some portion of the temple, here denoted by the word "wing." The next is something abominable or detestable - an object to be hated and loathed in the very temple itself. The next is a desolator - one who had come to carry desolation to that very temple. Whether the "abomination" is connected with the "desolator" or not is not intimated by the language. It might or might not be. The angel uses language as these objects strike the eye, and he expresses himself in this abrupt manner as the eye rests on one or the other. The question then arises, What does this mean? Or what is to be regarded as the proper fulfillment? It seems to me that there can be no doubt that there is a reference to the Roman standard or banners planted on some part of the temple, or to the Roman army, or to some idols set up by the Romans - objects of abomination to the Jews - as attracting the eye of the angel in the distant future, and as indicating the close of the series of events here referred to in the prophecy. The reasons for this opinion are, summarily, the following:

(a) The "place or order" in which the passage stands in the prophecy. It is "after" the coming of the Messiah; "after" the proper cessation of the sacrifice and oblation, and at the close of the whole series of events - the termination of the whole design about rebuilding the city and the temple.

(b) The "language" is such as would properly represent that. Nothing could be more appropriate, in the common estimation of the Jews, than to speak of such an object as a Roman military standard planted in any part of the temple, as an "abomination,;" and no word would better denote the character of the Roman conqueror than the word "desolator" - for the effect of his coming, was to lay the whole city and temple in ruins.

(c) The language of the Saviour in his reference to this would seem to demand such an interpretation, [Mat 24:15](#) : "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by

Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place," etc. There can be no reasonable doubt. that the Saviour refers to this passage in Daniel (see the notes at [Mat 24:15](#)), or that events occurred in the attack on Jerusalem and the temple that would fully correspond with the language used here. Josephus, for instance, says, that when the city was taken, the Romans brought their ensigns into the temple, and placed them over the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. "And now the Romans," says he, "upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns into the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there they did offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus "Imperator" with the greatest acclamations of joy." - "Jewish Wars," b. vi. ch. vi. Section 1. This fact fully accords with the meaning of the language as above explained, and the reference to it was demanded in order that the purpose of the prophecy should be complete. Its proper termination is the destruction of the city and temple - as its beginning is the order to rebuild them.

Even until the consummation - Until the completion - ועד־כלה ye'ad-kâlâh. That is, the series of events in the prophecy shall in fact reach to the completion of everything pertaining to the city and temple. The whole purpose in regard to that shall be completed. The design for which it is robe rebuilt shall be consummated; the sacrifices to be offered there shall be finished, and they shall be no longer efficacious or proper; the whole civil and religious polity connected with the city and temple shall pass away.

And that determined - ונחרצה venechërâtsâh. See this word explained in the notes at [Dan 9:24](#), [Dan 9:26](#). See also the notes at [Isa 10:23](#). There seems to be an allusion in the word here to its former use, as denoting that this is the fulfillment of the determination in regard to the city and temple. The idea is, that what was determined, or decided on, to wit, with reference to the closing scenes of the city and temple, would be accomplished.

Shall be poured - תתק tîttak. The word used here means to

pour, to pour out, to overflow - as rain, water, curses, anger, etc. It may be properly applied to calamity or desolation, as these things may be represented as "poured down" upon a people, in the manner of a storm. Compare [Sa2 21:10](#); [Exo 9:33](#); [Psa 11:6](#); [Eze 38:22](#); [Ch2 34:21](#); [Ch2 12:7](#); [Jer 7:20](#); [Jer 42:18](#); [Jer 44:6](#).

Upon the desolate - Margin, desolator. The Hebrew word (שׂוּמֵם shômēm) is the same, though in another form (כַּל kal instead of פֶּל pēl) which is used in the previous part of the verse, and rendered "he shall make it desolate," but which is proposed above to be rendered "desolator." The verb שׂוּמֵם shômēm is an intransitive verb, and means, in "Kal," the form used here, to be astonished or amazed; then "to be laid waste, to be made desolate" (Gesenius); and the meaning in this place, therefore, is that which is desolate or laid waste - the wasted, the perishing, the solitary. The reference is to Jerusalem viewed as desolate or reduced to ruins. The angel perhaps contemplates it, as he is speaking, in ruins or as desolate, and he sees this also as the termination of the entire series of predictions, and, in view of the whole, speaks of Jerusalem appropriately as "the desolate."

Though it would be rebuilt, yet it would be again reduced to desolation, for the purpose of the rebuilding - the coming of the Messiah - would be accomplished. As the prophecy finds Jerusalem a scene of ruins, so it leaves it, and the last word in the prophecy, therefore, is appropriately the word "desolate." The intermediate state indeed between the condition of the city as seen at first and at the close is glorious - for it embraces the whole work of the Messiah; but the beginning is a scene of ruins, and so is the close. The sum of the whole in the latter part of the verse may be expressed in a free paraphrase: "He, the Messiah, shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," by having fulfilled in his own death the design of the ancient offerings, thus rendering them now useless, and upon the outspreading - upon the temple regarded as spread out, or some wing or portico, there are seen abominable things - idolatrous ensigns, and the worship of foreigners. A desolator is there, also, come to spread destruction - a foreign army or leader. And this shall continue even to the end of the whole

matter - the end of the events contemplated by the prophecy - the end of the city and the temple. And what is determined on - the destruction decreed - shall be poured out like a tempest on the city doomed to desolation - desolate as surveyed at the beginning of the prophecy - desolate at the close, and therefore appropriately called "the desolate."

After this protracted examination of the meaning of this prophecy, all the remark which it seems proper to make is, that this prediction could have been the result only of inspiration. There is the clearest evidence that the prophecy was recorded long before the time of the Messiah, and it is manifest that it could not have been the result of any natural sagacity. There is not the slightest proof that it was uttered as late as the coming of Christ, and there is nothing better determined in relation to any ancient matter than that it was recorded long before the birth of the Lord Jesus. But it is equally clear that it could have been the result of no mere natural sagacity. How could such events have been foreseen except by Him who knows all things? How could the order have been determined? How could the time have been fixed? How could it have been anticipated that the Messiah, the Prince, would be cut off? How could it have been known that he would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease? How could it have been ascertained that the period during which he would be engaged in this would be one week - or about seven years? How could it be predicted that a remarkable event would occur in the middle of that period that would in fact cause the sacrifice and oblation ultimately to cease? And how could it be conjectured that a foreign prince would come, and plant the standard of abomination in the holy city, and sweep all away - laying the city and the temple in ruins, and bringing the whole polity to an end? These things lie beyond the range of natural sagacity, and if they are fairly implied in this prophecy, they demonstrate that this portion of the book is from God.

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