

The year-day principle

1

The year-day principle is the keystone of our interpretation of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation

Compilation by Pierluigi Luisetti

By Dr. Jean Zurcher, Seventh-day Adventist

In Jerusalem recently I was privileged to visit the excavations being carried out at the southwest corner of the wall of the Temple esplanade, a little below the Wailing Wall. Since the site is not open to the public, I had to obtain special authorization. The guide who accompanied me had taken part in the excavations. Because every stone was familiar to him, his explanations were enthralling. Using the stones that were still in position and those scattered around, my guide tried to help me visualize the vast staircase and access bridge leading to the main entrance of the Temple courts. The beginning of the arch can still be seen in the wall. Below ground the archeologists have discovered the foundations, several steps that are still intact, and the mass of hewed stones that helped to make up this imposing edifice. From these artifacts they were able to draw up an exact plan that shows the grandeur and beauty of this monumental entrance.



It was probably when they left through this exit from the Temple (Matt. 24:1) that the disciples drew Jesus' attention to the "great buildings" (Mark 13:2) and "goodly stones" (Luke 21:5) of which it was composed. I did not find it hard to picture the scene as I surveyed the immense white stones and the remains of the two magnificent columns of pink marble that formerly decorated the main gate leading to the Temple.

Contemplating these overturned stones, I asked my guide: "How could this destruction have taken place? What a titanic task it must have been to move all these stones, each weighing tens of tons!" "Not at all," replied the archeologist. "Nothing could have been simpler. We've found the secret on the stones themselves. All that had to be done was to heat the keystone until it became white-hot, so that it eventually crumbled and fell. Then the whole structure collapsed. Wherever they found keystones, the Roman soldiers used the same technique.

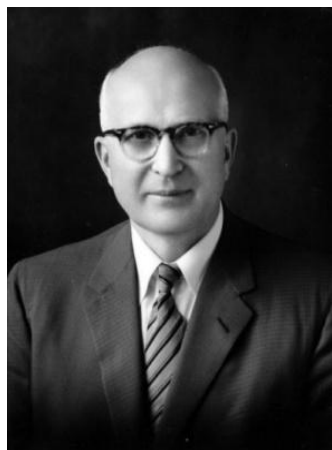
"That is how Jesus' prophecy concerning the Temple of Jerusalem was fulfilled to the letter. "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be throw down" (Matt. 24:2).

In my opinion "the keystone", so to speak, of our interpretation of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is the year-day principle. If this principle is destroyed the marvelous edifice of typically Adventist truths collapses. The doctrine of the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the role and teachings of Ellen growth of the Adventist Church — in brief, our *raison d'être* is called into question.

Critics have long recognized this. In his book *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventists* Norman Franklin Douty (1899-1993) wrote: "Yet Seventh-day Adventism, which claims to be divinely called to this work of completion, has this very theory as its bed-rock foundation, so that to discard it would be to destroy itself" (Grand Rapids, 1962, p. 95). He vigorously attacked what he termed "the fallacious year-day theory" (p. 102).

Whatever the importance of the role of the year-day principle in our system of interpretation, it should be pointed out that it was not the pioneers of the Advent Movement who invented the year-day method of exegeting apocalyptic chronological prophecies. Rather, they inherited a tradition that goes back more than a thousand years to the first centuries of our era.

It is generally thought that the *year-day* principle was applied by the Church Fathers in interpreting the 70 weeks of Daniel, from the end of the second century onward. We have every reason to believe that, instead, they followed the Jewish week-year tradition, as we shall point out in a subsequent article. However that may be, at least 14 Jewish authors are known to have applied the *year-day* principle to the 2300 evenings and mornings (see A. Vaucher, *Lacunziana*, vol. 1, pp.



54-56). Many Catholic theologians in the Middle Ages and in modern times also admitted the year-day principle without question, as well as a large number of Protestant interpreters from the Reformation to our day. In *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, LeRoy E. Froom (1890-1974, Photo) mentions nearly 200 authors who employed the year-day principle in their interpretation of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. It cannot be doubted that we find ourselves in good company.

Nevertheless, the accuracy of a principle, as that of truth, does not depend on the number of its proponents. Ellen White expressed this point well: "The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth".¹ That is why Adventists have never attempted to justify the *year-day* principle by tradition, however ancient it might be. Right from the beginning our

¹ Ellen G. White: *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35.

pioneers sought to found it on a Biblical basis. Today our increased knowledge should help us to consolidate it further.

According to opponents of the *year-day* principle, one of the major objections is that it rests on two texts alone in the Old Testament, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. They readily point out, also, that in these texts the principle is applied in opposite ways. In the first instance, it is a matter of a year for a day, whereas in the second text we have the reverse principle, a day for a year.

However valid these remarks may seem, they do not match up to reality. There are more Biblical examples of similar methods of calculation than is generally thought. Nor are they limited to prophetic language. We find evidence of this in Genesis 29:27. This verse contains an interesting concept: "Fulfil her *week*, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet *seven other years*."

Perhaps in this connection we should also consider the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream by Joseph (Gen. 41:25-30). Admittedly, the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine do not stand in relation to days or weeks. However, the same form of relationship exists between the seven cows, the seven ears of corn, and the seven years. Each individual symbol represents a year.

A Biblical principle

Although the year-day principle is not affirmed explicitly, the various examples quoted show that a principle of calculation was employed from the patriarchal period at least to the time of the Exile that established a day-year, year-day, or even a week-year relationship. There are yet other relationships based on the same principle. This makes it perfectly correct to state that there is a Biblical principle according to which "a day in prophecy stands for a year".⁽²⁾

The same viewpoint was taken by the authors of the statement drawn up by the Sanctuary Review Committee: "The year-day relationship can be Biblically supported, although it is not explicitly identified as a principle of prophetic interpretation. ... Furthermore, the Old Testament provides illustrations of the year-day interchangeability in symbolism" (Gen. 29:27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Dan. 9:24-27).⁽³⁾

We are left, then, with the principal objection: "Even if we could 'prove' that the *year-day* principle is a Biblical datum, there is no basis to apply the principle in Daniel 8:14 or 9:24." At first sight, this seems a well-founded argument. However, proper exegesis of Daniel 9:24-27 and then Daniel 8:14 and 7:25 reveals, under one

² Ellen G. White: *The Great Controversy*, p. 324; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 233; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 698.

³ See *Adventist Review*, September 4, 1980, p. 14; *Ministry*, October, 1980, p. 18.

form or another, either in the text or in the context, the well-known Biblical principle of calculation. Thus, the historic interpretations of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that stand at the foundation of the Advent Movement will be seen to be confirmed.

For those who search the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the words of Jesus still hold abundant promises: "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

END Part 1



The time prophecies of Daniel 9

2

Israel's sabbatical and jubilee years shed light
on the prophecies of the 70 years and the 70 weeks

By Dr. Jean Zurcher, Seventh-day Adventist

The prophetic periods in Daniel and Revelation are given to us in symbolic figures, each representing literal years. However, I do not believe that the *year-day* principle is an absolute imperative in calculating each of these prophetic time periods. Daniel 9 presents two examples of particular interest: The 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah and Daniel's 70-week prophecy.

In referring to Jeremiah's prophecy, Daniel is careful to note: "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (Dan. 9:2). Probably Daniel was alluding to the scrolls on which Jeremiah recorded his prophecies. On at least two occasions, the prophet proclaimed the prophecy of the 70-year exile -first before all the people in Jerusalem (Jer. 25:11), and later by letter to the captives in Babylon (chap. 29:10). It may also be that this prophecy was written into "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" to which the author of Chronicles often refers (2 Chron. 35:27; 36:8).

Besides, the second book of Chronicles ends precisely with a commentary of the events predicted by Jeremiah. At this time, the prophecy of the 70-year exile is repeated for the third time, along with several details of major importance to our study. The record states that these things happened "to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (chap. 36:21).

In other words, the destruction and desolation that fell upon the country, as predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11 and 29:10), are here considered a consequence of Israel's unfaithfulness and an application of the curses pronounced by Moses (Lev. 26:14-45). That is most certainly what is indicated in Leviticus 26:34: "Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate". Because "the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses" (verse 46) had not been observed, the Lord executed the judgment repeated four times in the same chapter: "I will punish you seven times more for your sins." "Even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths" (verses 18, 34; cf. verses 21,28,43).

What are the sabbaths referred to here? Those during which Israel should have let the earth lie fallow, in harmony with the Lord's instructions regarding the sabbatical and jubilee years (Ex. 23:10,11; Lev. 25:1-17). From this, we see that the threescore and ten years of Jeremiah's prophecy are the result of a calculation similar to that of Ezekiel 4:4-6. However, instead of being based on a day for a year, the reckoning is on the basis of a year of exile for every sabbatical year during which the land was deprived of its rest. In other words, if each of the 70 years of exile represents one sabbatical year, there must have been 490 years of rebellion during which the children of Israel failed to observe God's laws and statutes.

It is interesting to note that the similarity between these two prophecies is not restricted to the method of calculation alone. Both have their roots in Israel's unfaithfulness and cover the same period of her history. The prophet Ezekiel is required to illustrate in a symbolic manner the 430 years of unfaithfulness on the part of the children of Israel under the monarchy, from Saul to Zedekiah (Eze. 4:5,6). Jeremiah is told to announce 70 years of exile for the 490 years of Israel's rebellion, from the time of Samuel to the fall of Jerusalem. Daniel alludes precisely to this period in the history of Israel in his intercessory prayer: "Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land" (Dan. 9:6).

Obviously, the *year-day* principle cannot be applied to the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah. However, as we have seen, this does not mean that the Biblical key to interpretation does not apply to this prophecy. On the contrary, the 70 years of exile turn out to be the result of a calculation outlined in the prophetic text itself. The same is true of Daniel's 70-week prophecy (verses 24-27).

Calculation of the 70 weeks

It is certainly no coincidence that the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy are mentioned in the same chapter as Daniel's 70-week prophecy. The two are linked

closely by cause and effect. Daniel prayed in regard to Jeremiah's prophecy, and the angel Gabriel came immediately to his side in response to his petition.

It goes without saying that Daniel knew the deep reasons behind Israel's tragedy. He avowed them constantly in his intercessory prayer, as he confessed the sins of his people. Like the author of the book of Chronicles, Daniel probably also knew the other aspect of Jeremiah's prophecy that represented the 70 years of exile as a result of the sabbaths during which the land had been deprived of its rest. His allusions to the curses pronounced by Moses refer back to the same text in Leviticus 26 (Dan. 9:10-13).

Yet Daniel also had a knowledge of the God of Israel, his God, who is long-suffering, slow to anger, and rich in mercy. That is why he pleaded with Him to forgive and **"cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate"** (verse 17) — all the more so since the 70 years of exile predicted by Jeremiah were nearing completion. **"O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God"** (verse 19).

Daniel was still speaking when Gabriel suddenly appeared in response to his prayer, at the hour of the evening sacrifice (verses 20,21). Following the 70 years of exile, the result of Israel's transgressions, the Lord now proclaimed, through the mouth of Gabriel, 70 weeks of grace, the end of which would see the fulfillment of the hope of God's people. **"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy"** (verse 24).

The interpretation of the 70 weeks depends on the meaning ascribed to the "weeks" referred to here. In the original Hebrew, the word *shabûa'* designates a group of seven, which we call *heptad* or *hebdomade*, after the corresponding Greek word. The Jews counted the hebdomades in three ways: 1) as a week, made up of seven days; 2) as the sabbatical year, made up of seven years (Lev. 25:1-7); and finally 3) as the jubilee year, made up of seven times seven sabbatical years — that is, 49 years (verse 8).

Thus the word *shabûa'* — week — which is used here and elsewhere, may designate a period of seven days, seven years, or 49 years, depending on whether we are dealing with the week, the sabbatical year, or the jubilee year. The meaning can be determined only by the context. In Daniel 10:2, for example, we read of a fast of three weeks. But what about the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24?

Everything in the text and the context refers to the message of the sabbatical and jubilee years. Jewish tradition, the Talmudists, the author of the Seder' Olam, and Jewish interpreters in general have estimated that the weeks in Daniel's

prophecy can only be weeks of years. There is evidence that the Church Fathers used the same basis to interpret the 70 weeks.

Thus, we have two means of calculating the 70 weeks, on the basis of either the sabbatical year or the jubilee year. The calculation on the basis of the sabbatical year is certainly the simplest: 70 weeks of seven sabbatical years equal 490 years, which are arrived at without having recourse to the *year-day* principle. This method has the advantage of harmonizing with the mode of calculating the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy. Moreover, the phrase expresses the fullness of the spirit of forgiveness as Jesus was later to define it before His disciples: "**seventy times seven**" (Matt. 18:22), a concept that corresponds perfectly to this time prophecy representing the totality of the period of grace allotted to the people of Israel.

The second means of calculation, based on the jubilee year, also can be justified. Besides, there are few interpreters who do not recognize in Daniel 9:24 the message of the year of grace par excellence, the jubilee year. According to the law of Moses, this truly was the holy year, during which the people were to be freed from all forms of servitude. It was the symbol of the year of abundant grace and pardon that should be inaugurated by the promised Messiah. Moreover, the year of grace announced by Jesus in His sermon at Nazareth is a perfect echo of the jubilee message.⁽⁴⁾

Why, then, should we not apply the jubilee method of calculation to the 70 weeks, as set forth in Leviticus 25:8? "**And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years**". The figure seven and its multiple, seven times seven, occur in this prophecy exactly as in the jubilee text. The first period of seven weeks, at the end of which the restoration of Jerusalem was to be completed, corresponds to the first jubilee — seven times seven years of Sabbaths equals 49 years (Dan. 9:25). The remaining 63 weeks (62 + 1) are also a multiple of seven, that is, seven times nine jubilees. Therefore, the 70 weeks can be considered as *ten jubilees* each of 49 years' duration, that is, $7 \times 7 \times 10 = 490$ years. Together they make up the grand Messianic jubilee of 490 years.

We have historical proof in the Gospels that the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 came at the end of the 70 weeks — that is, after 490 years. This prophecy was well known in Jesus' time, and everyone in Israel had the possibility of being aware that the time of the Messiah had arrived. "**And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not**" (Luke 3:15). The rulers of the Jews even sent a delegation to John the Baptist

⁴ Luke 4:16-19; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 729.

to ask whether or not he was the "prophet," in other words, the Messiah who was to come (John 1:19-27). More important, at the beginning of His ministry Jesus Himself affirmed that **"the time is fulfilled"** (Mark 1:15). Furthermore, in His prophetic discourse, He applied the prophecy to His generation, specifically naming the prophet Daniel.

END Part 2



Astronomical evidences sustain the year-day principle

3

The discoveries of a Swiss astronomer shed light on
the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation

Compilation by Pierluigi Luisetti

By Dr. Jean Zurcher, Seventh-day Adventist

No prophetic periods in the Bible are more important than the 2300 evenings and mornings and the 1260 days. The significance of these two periods is due both to their related doctrinal teachings and to their chronological and historical importance. The prophecy of the 2300 evenings and mornings is, in fact, unique, mentioned only in the book of Daniel. Nowhere else in the Scriptures do we find its equivalent. Upon its interpretation depends not only our teaching on the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment but also the *raison d'être* of the Adventist Movement since 1844. That explains why no prophecy is of greater importance for the Adventist Church than Daniel 8:14, from the doctrinal as well as the historical point of view.

The importance of the 1260-day prophecy is indicated by the single fact that it is mentioned no fewer than seven times: twice in the book of Daniel (chaps. 7:25; 12:7) and five times in Revelation (chaps. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). Three times it is given to us in the form of "a time, two times, and half a time" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14); twice as a period of "forty-two months" (chaps. 11:2; 13:5); and twice as "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (chaps. 11:3; 12:6). That this prophetic period is not intended to be literal time is evident from the fact that the little horn, the subject of Daniel 7, works against God, His law, and His people, from the time of the division of the fourth empire to the day of judgment (verse 26). Daniel 12:4 and 9 also extend this same period **"until the time of the end"**, which must therefore involve centuries. How could this be so if the three and a half times, or the 1260 days, amounted to only three and a half literal years?

Besides, the repetition of the same period in Revelation under the three symbolisms (three and a half times, 42 months, and 1260 days) leaves no room for doubt. This period covers much of the time between the first and second advents when the church would be in the wilderness of persecution during the Dark Ages. This study naturally supports the *year-day* principle thesis.

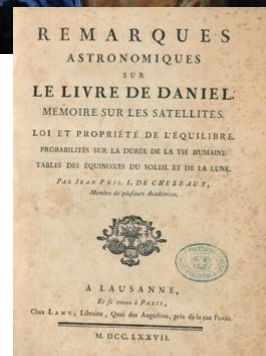
Because the majority of interpreters over the past centuries understood the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 to be prophetic days, they naturally applied the *year-day* principle. However, in the eighteenth century, an astronomer demonstrated that the time prophecies of Daniel 7:25 and 8:14 also were astronomically significant. Unfortunately, this interpretation generally has been ignored. Nevertheless, it bears out our conclusions in a striking manner. Our recourse to astronomy may seem strange at first. Yet what is more natural when one remembers that Daniel was educated in all the science of the Chaldeans and considered one of the wise men of Babylon (Dan. 2:14,17,48)? Moreover, on each occasion the two prophecies are given on the basis of time concepts, which are directly dependent on astronomy. In referring to astronomy we place the prophecies in a historical and scientific context.

Astronomical knowledge

Indeed, it is necessary to recall that the science of the Chaldeans was essentially founded on astronomy. True, astronomical knowledge was greatly exploited by the astrologists of the time, as it is today. However that may be, astronomy itself had attained a high level, and several modern branches of science are still indebted to it. Astronomical and terrestrial measurements, the measurement of angles by degrees, not to omit time measurements on the sexagesimal system, are a direct legacy from Chaldean science.

Neither can one fail to be impressed by the fact that these prophetic periods in Daniel and Revelation are described under all possible notions of time — evening and morning, day, month, and year. In other words, we have here all the astronomical references contained in the language of civilized society: the day, in relation to the earth; the month, in relation to the moon; and the year, in relation to the sun. We know, in fact, that the month, according to the Biblical calendar, depended on the moon. Similarly, the 360-day prophetic year is a heritage from the Babylonian system of calculation. It is also interesting that Genesis 1:14 states that the heavenly bodies were given to us "**to separate the day from the night**" and to serve "**for seasons** and for **days and years**".

Following the example of Isaac Newton, a Swiss astronomer by the name of **Jean-Philippe Loys de Cheseaux** (1718-1851) became deeply interested in the prophecies of Daniel. A correspondent of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris and foreign associate of the Academy of Gottingen, Germany, De Cheseaux had made a name for himself through his astronomical and mathematical research. Being preoccupied with chronological calculations, he was led to try to determine the precise date of the crucifixion of Jesus. This naturally led him to examine more closely Daniel's prophecies.



Needless to say, he was immediately impressed by the astronomical references to the day, the week, the month, and the year. The three and a half times of Daniel 7:25 and the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 did not fail to intrigue him. He immediately recognized the relationship between the three and a half times and the 1260 days. Then, being a shrewd mathematician, he noted a relationship between the 1260 days and one of his astronomical calculations. Previously De Cheseaux had discovered the 315-year cycle, at the end of which the sun and moon returned short of seven or eight minutes to their original position in the heavens. "Having discovered this 315-year cycle", he recounts, "I then noticed that it represented one quarter of the 1260-year period, or the three and a half times of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, compared with Revelation 12:6 and 14, and consequently that this prophetic period was also a lunar cycle, so that at the end of 1260 Julian years ... the Sun and the Moon returned within about a degree to the same position in the Ecliptic".⁽⁵⁾

Carried "Creator's seal"

No astronomical research had ever arrived at such precision. In the eyes of De Cheseaux, this 1260-year lunar cycle literally carried the Creator's seal. Not only did the number have the advantage of being a round figure but it was at the same time remarkable for its multitude of common factors. For, he observed, "1260 is divided by (...) 35 divisors, which is, I believe, the greatest number of divisors that a number of this kind can have".

⁵ *Remarques historiques, chronologiques et astronomiques, sur quelques endroits du Livre de Daniel. (Historical, Chronological, and Astronomical Remarks on Certain Parts of the Book of Daniel)* (Lausanne, 1754), pp. 22,23. Photo: Edition of this book dated 1777.

Briefly, then, without entering into De Cheseaux's complicated astronomical calculations, it is most interesting to learn that the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel and Revelation correspond to a lunar cycle of 1260 years' duration. Certainly the Chaldean wise men had a knowledge of this cycle, which means that Daniel had no difficulty in understanding its profound meaning. The moon, the dark, lifeless star, queen of the night, was always considered a symbol of the works of darkness. Similarly, the three and a half times represents the unfinished work of Satan, in contrast to the figure seven, symbolizing the perfect, completed work of the Creator.

Convinced that the 1260 years had been designated by the Holy Spirit, in connection with "the duration of the most remarkable periods of celestial movement, De Cheseaux concluded "that the same could well be true of that of the 2300 years" (*ibid.*). He checked his astronomical tables and discovered that at the "end of the 2300 Gregorian years, or 840,057 days less 6 hours and 14 minutes, the sun and the moon returned to within a degree of their original position, and that at the end of the 840,057 days plus 7 hours 23 minutes, the sun returned to precisely the same point in the Ecliptic" (*ibid.*).

To his great joy, De Cheseaux thus discovered that the prophetic period comprising the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 also represented a cyclic period of 2300 years — an extraordinarily precise period, unknown to astronomers until then. To help us understand the importance of this discovery not only for the interpretation of the prophecy but also for astronomical knowledge, De Cheseaux briefly explained what must be understood by a *cycle*.

He writes: "It is a space of time which harmonizes different astronomical revolutions, incorporating each of them a certain number of times without remainders and without fractions". (p. 20).

Thus we have four types of cycles:

- 1) The first harmonizes solar years with days;
- 2) the second, lunar months with solar years;
- 3) the third, solar days with lunar months;
- 4) Finally, the fourth type of cycle should harmonize at the same time the solar year, the lunar month, and the day.

Discovering this fourth cycle appeared so difficult that astronomers believed it to be impossible. It was, for them, to astronomy, what perpetual motion is to mechanics. However, thanks to the 1260-year lunar cycle and the 2300-year solar cycle, De Cheseaux also discovered the famous fourth cycle, previously considered

impossible and imaginary, which was meant to harmonize the three other cycles. The mystery is found in the difference between the two prophetic periods. This represented 1040 years and was found to be the number of the perfect cycle. Marveling at the result, De Cheseaux wrote the following significant lines:

"This period of 1040 years, or solar revolutions, indicated in some way by the Holy Spirit, is a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal, of the most perfect accuracy. I have discovered two singular confirmations. (...) May I in the meantime be permitted to give this new cycle the name of *Daniel cycle*". (p. 27).

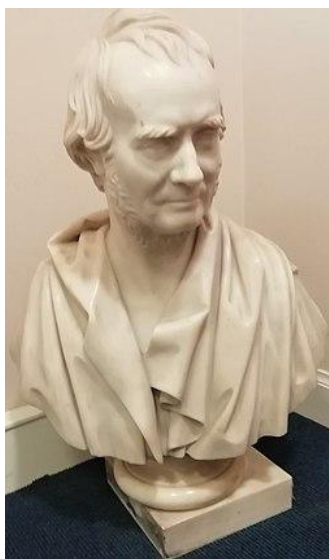
These discoveries held great scientific value for De Cheseaux. They had been verified and their accuracy confirmed by the famous astronomers Mairan and C. F. Cassini of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris. But at the same time they constituted in his eyes that best proof of the inspiration of the prophecies of Daniel. For who could have "taught their author the marvellous relationship between the periods he employed and the movement of the stars?" (p. 50). How can one fail to recognize, "considering all these points, ... the Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is?" (p. 51).

We have reason to believe that Daniel was not unaware of the prophetic significance, if not of the vision itself, at least of the solar cycle of 2300 years. It would have been strange for God to have inspired the use of figures as unusual as the three and a half times, or 1260 days, and the 2300 evenings and mornings if these numbers did not correspond to some definite fact of knowledge. In apocalyptic prophecy, figures are symbolic and consequently also bear a meaning. Of course, the symbol has no value unless it corresponds to something in reality, often hidden, but which we must try to uncover.

If the lunar cycle of 1260 years proclaimed the dark period in the history of the church, characterized by arrogance against God and His law, by persecutions and oppression against His people (Dan. 7:25), what could be heralded by the solar cycle of 2300 years? Precisely, that the judgment was approaching (verse 26), that light would shine on the sanctuary truth, or, as Daniel petitions in his prayer, **"O Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, which is desolate"** (chap. 9:17). True, the prophet was thinking of the earthly sanctuary when the angel spoke to him of the heavenly sanctuary. Daniel was considering the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy, when Gabriel declared: **"For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state"** (chap. 8:14).

One can understand that, given this perspective, Daniel literally became ill (verse 27). The fact that the angel Gabriel asked him to keep the vision of the evenings and mornings secret causes us to presume that he had at least understood that it would be for **"many days hence"** (verse 26), through the mention

of the number alone. The same request was later to be renewed, but this time with a word of assurance: "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (chap. 12:4). Is it not remarkable to observe that De Cheseaux's discoveries occurred and were disseminated at exactly the time predicted by this prophecy? De Cheseaux



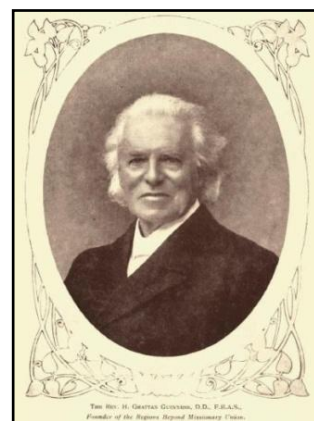
was not aware of this fact, but we are today and should give attention to these discoveries.

In his book *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, LeRoy E. Froom briefly retraced the history of these providential findings, under the description of the work of William Cuninghame (1776-1849, see marble bust), a Scottish theologian, whom he described as "champion of the number 2300" (vol. 3, pp. 364-385). It seems that Cuninghame was the first interpreter of Daniel 7:25 and 8:14 to lean on the discoveries of De Cheseaux in justifying the use of the *year-day* principle.

Froom tells the story

Here is how Froom tells the story: "Back in 1811 Cuninghame had noticed a reference to De Cheseaux's discoveries and had published the facts in a current *Christian Observer*. Then, in 1833, he wrote to the *Investigator*, further describing the finding of the original work, which he had sought without success for twentytwo years. This fuller statement was then published as *On the Jubilean Chronology*. Professor Thomas R. Birks (1810-1883), of Cambridge, became much interested and wrote on it in 1843.

And toward the end of the century Dr. Henry. Grattan Guinness (1835-1910, Photo right) made the fullest examination of all, Guinness' work being checked by Professor Adams of Cambridge. " — Vol. III, pages 384,385.



Unfortunately, it seems that the pioneers of the Advent Movement were not aware of De Cheseaux's discoveries. Did they actually need them at a time when it was currently admitted that a prophetic day represents one literal year, on the basis of the year-day principle? I think not. But today, when the interpretation of prophetic time periods is being called into question, the astronomical proof provided by De Cheseaux takes on new importance. As an astute theologian, Cuninghame understood the import of De Cheseaux's discoveries. For him they were decisive proof that the prophetic figures in Daniel and Revelation truly represent literal years.

Froom continues: "He felt [De Cheseaux] that, in order to impress the church with their importance in measuring the epochs of the enemies of the church, they were not only announced to the church and confirmed by Gabriel with an oath, in the name of Him that liveth forever and ever (Dan. 12:7), but are engraved on the very system of the material universe " (Idem p. 385). This weighty argument, set along with all the others, should help make clear that the doctrines of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment are built on a solid foundation.

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END Part 3

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Right: The compiler





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ARTICLE'S SOURCE IN ENGLISH OF DR JEAN ZURCHER (1918–2003)

Article nr. 1 is to obtain at *Adventist Review*, January 29, 1981.

Article nr. 2 is to obtain at *Adventist Review*, February 5, 1981.

Article nr. 3 is to obtain at *Adventist Review*, February 12, 1981.

Eastern facade of the castle in Baroque style, which was the residence of the Swiss physicist and astronomer Jean-Philippe Loys De Cheseaux.

Cheseaux is a French speaking country in Switzerland, canton of Vaud. In 1736 the young Loys had an observatory installed, but its location remains unknown.

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