

False Prophets are Full of Presumption

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Wherever [False] Prophet Millerⁱ and his co-workers held meetings, the crowds gathered, and among them were many who belonged to denominations strongly opposed to the approaching Second Advent doctrine, as interpreted by Prophet Miller. In a frantic effort to stem the tide of delusion the Bishop of Vermont, the Reverend John Henry Hopkins, D.D., wrote as follows, in an article which was published in pamphlet form and given a wide circulation:

"Full of presumptionⁱⁱ and of peril do we consider the attempt to fix the day or the year of our Lord's coming. Full of presumption because Christ himself declares, 'of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of God, but my Father only.' And again, 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father had put in His own power.' Full of presumption because one man sets himself above the thousands upon thousands of all the teachers, preachers, confessors, and martyrs that have gone before him. Full of presumption because St. Peter declares 'that no prophecy is of any private interpretation' (St. Peter, 1st-26th), and yet it is nothing but private interpretation that is offered us; and although it be, indeed, with as much confidence as if it were sanctioned by the consent of the whole Church of God.

"The scheme under consideration claims for its author a man of strong mind and much native talent. And we freely acknowledge that his lectures and chart display uncommon ingenuity and great familiarity with the Scriptures. It appears to have been the main object of his studies for several years of his life to master the difficulties of unfulfilled prophecy, and the result, whether he be right or wrong, is at least a very remarkable proof of persevering concentration of thought, and has secured for him thus far an extraordinary measure of public attention and notoriety. . . .

Many, very many visionary enthusiasts have undertaken to warn mankind of the approaching judgment—and never yet have they failed in obtaining a numerous auditory and a willing ear. Powerful excitement, extravagant wildness, the intoxication of fanaticism, the ravings of madness, have all followed in their train. And yet, alas! these were called the fruits of the study of prophecy—as if the Word of God, in the strongest and clearest terms, had not pronounced against the possibility of our foreknowing the time of our Lord's appearing; as if in the very last chapter of Holy Scripture the Almighty had not pronounced wrath upon the 'adding to the word of prophecy'—a sin which we fear is but too often unwittingly committed by the presumptuous inferences of human calculation."

(Days of Delusion: A Strange Bit of History by Clara Endicott Sears, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924, 82-84, From Chapter V, The Great Comet, Text Modified)

ⁱ The **Great Disappointment** in the Millerite movement was the reaction that followed Baptist preacher William Miller's proclamations that Jesus Christ would return to the Earth by 1844, which he called the Second Advent. His study of the Daniel 8 prophecy during the Second Great Awakening led him to conclude that Daniel's "cleansing of the sanctuary" was cleansing the world from sin when Christ would come, and he and many others prepared. When Jesus did not appear by October 22, 1844, Miller and his followers were disappointed. (Wikipedia)

ⁱⁱ **Presumption:** 1) an idea that is taken to be true, and often used as the basis for other ideas, although it is not known for certain. 2) behavior perceived as arrogant, disrespectful, and transgressing the limits of what is permitted or appropriate. (Oxford Languages)