

The Approaching End of the Age by H. Grattan Guinness – Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 3.



The siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 A.D.

Continued from [Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 2.](#)

THE THREE GREAT DISPENSATIONS—THE PATRIARCHAL—THE JEWISH—THE CHRISTIAN

We are consequently in a position to consider the periodicity of history as a whole, taking into account the times foretold as in their day future, by Daniel and John, as well as those recorded as past, by other holy men of old.

We now proceed to *examine* these periods, to trace their mutual relations, and their relations to other series of periods, and to show the Divine plan and system which underlies them, connecting them on the one hand with the periods of vital phenomena, and on the other with those of the whole magnificent solar system.

In pursuing this investigation, it must be borne in mind that the great end of all human history, like the great end of the existence of every human being, is a moral one. Existence to the entire race, like life to each individual, is a state of probation and education. The great objects of God, in his dealings with man from age to age, seem to have been, to reveal to him and to the universe, his true character and condition as a fallen being; while at the same time unveiling his own glorious, righteous, and gracious attributes, making known his purposes, and bringing forth his salvation.

Ignore this moral purpose of God, and human history becomes inexplicable, its chronology reducible to no system, and its study comparatively profitless and vain. Recognise it, and the whole outline and movement of the great drama, are at once intelligible, the plan underlying its periods is clear, and its study becomes fraught with lessons of the deepest and most solemn importance.

The true plan of history can therefore be found only in the Bible. The birth of humanity, its growth and maturity, its fall and its restoration, are all to be best traced in the Holy Word of God; and the key to its chronology and periodicity is also *there*. In vain do those who neglect the scriptures seek to understand aright, either man's past or his future.

The main divisions of history which we shall now proceed to present, will be found therefore to have a character more moral and dispensational, than political. Many of the greatest political events in the world's history will have to pass under our review, but we shall regard them as occupying a place of subordinate, and not of paramount importance. The central line, to which all political events have more or less reference, will be seen to be THE HISTORY OF THE TYPICAL AND OF THE ANTITYPICAL ISRAELS,—THE JEWISH NATION AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Bible history and prophecy range themselves around these, just as Bible geography ranges itself around Jerusalem and the Holy Land; and the reason is obvious.

The natural and spiritual *seed of Abraham* are the line of promise, the peculiar people of God, in and through whom alone, mankind is to be saved and blessed. "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

As in each of the realms into which we have already glanced, so here in the realm of history, we shall find everything adapted to the great Divine septiform system. In a marvellous, hidden, and intricate manner, THE WEEK measures the periods of history, both great and small. Patient and accurate attention to the statements of Scripture is needful in order to trace out the arrangement of its periods, for it is purposely disguised and concealed, so as to elude the observation of the superficial reader. A comprehension of the biblical system of times and seasons, is calculated to fill the mind with awe and admiration, and to draw forth fresh worship of the omniscient God, who orders all things after the counsel of his own will, and knows the end, from the beginning.

There is, in the various particulars we shall have to pass in review, a cumulative force; peculiarities observed in a few periods, or even in many, would be insufficient to prove the existence of plan and system, but when a vast multitude of events, and innumerable periods of the most various and apparently incongruous dimensions, ranging in duration from hours to millenaries, are found to fall into order and harmony, at the touch of a single wand, on the application of a single principle, then it will surely be clear to a candid mind, that history has been intentionally ordered on that principle; and when, further, that principle is seen to be the same that regulates the phenomena of the organic and inorganic creations, and the same that is consistently adopted in Holy Scripture, the conclusion is as inevitable, as it is elevating and sanctifying, that it is the Almighty Maker of all worlds, the sole Lord and Giver of life, the Author of the sacred volume, who so orders it, who is the Ruler of all events, the Disposer of all times and seasons. Our *times* are in his hands, and the times of all earthly empires, and kingdoms, and dynasties; and in *due time* his own kingdom shall overthrow all other dominion, and stand for ever. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry,

wait for it, for it shall surely come, it shall not tarry."

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his deep designs,
And works his sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

The grand primary division of all human history, whether viewed from the moral, or from the chronological stand-point, is into three main, comprehensive, and long-enduring dispensations.

Scripture presents us with,—

I. THE PATRIARCHAL AGE,
II, THE JEWISH DISPENSATION, and
III. THE, "TIMES OF THE GENTILES,"

and with these great periods *only*, prior to the "Times of the Restitution of all things," or the Millennial Age.

The limits of the first or Patriarchal Age, are defined by the Apostle Paul in the 5th chapter of Romans; "death reigned *from Adam to Moses*."

The second, or Jewish Dispensation, dating from the Divine act of dividing the nations of the earth, and assigning a preeminence and a sacred character to the family of *Shem*, included *the entire history of the Jewish people and their fathers*, and extended from the re-peopling of the earth after the Flood, to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70-71, which was the end of the Jewish temple, city, and polity.

The third is distinguished by our Lord Himself as a separate period, under the title of "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi, 24); and is the period of the duration of the empires prefigured by *the great fourfold image of Nebuchadnezzar*, the earliest, the simplest, and the most comprehensive of all the symbolic prophecies. It is the great Gentile dispensation, during which dominion in the earth, and *over Israel*, is by God committed to GENTILE powers. Speaking generally, it dates from the rise of the four great monarchies, and extends to the Second Advent of Christ to establish the "kingdom of the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed." The inspired statements of time connected with this last, give the clue to the duration or chronological measurements of all three dispensations. As distinctly intimated in Daniel, it is *a great week*, "seven times." Its latter half, is the oft-recurring "time, times, and a half," or 1260 years. Its whole

duration is seven years of years; that is, it is a week, each of whose days is a year of 360 years: in other words, it is a period of 2520 natural years.

Each of the two previous dispensations, has, as we shall presently show, a *similar duration*. If therefore the three were juxtaposed, if they had followed each other in chronological sequence, their united period would be between seven and eight thousand years.

But this is not the case. The second takes its rise two-thirds down the course of the first, and the third takes *its* rise, in a similar way, two-thirds down the course of the second, so that the whole period comprised in the three dispensations, is nearly 6000 years, as will be seen by an examination of the accompanying diagram.

It will be observed that the dispensations are represented not as *joined on to*, but as *growing out of*, each other. As we proceed, it will become obvious, that there actually exists between them, not a mere lifeless sequence, but an intimate living connection, which makes this theoretically proper, as well as chronologically true. The relation between them is not that of mere mechanical juxtaposition, but that of *vital ingrafting* and growth.

Before we enter into the *chronological* and *historical* details which justify these general statements, it will be well briefly to trace the moral features which characterize these three great dispensations.

They coincide with three distinct stages of revelation of the character and purposes of God: they have afforded three distinct probations to man, and they are represented in Scripture as closed by great judgments which display, each one with added clearness, God's righteous indignation against sin.

In the first, or patriarchal age, was made known, what the apostle calls, "eternal power and Godhead;" the second, or Jewish dispensation, revealed the righteousness and justice of God; its one ever-recurring refrain seeming to be, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts;" and in the third, "the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared," "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, appeared unto all men." Nature, the Law, the Gospel, such have been the three stages, by which God has been manifested to men, and by which fallen humanity has been put to the test.

Of the PATRIARCHAL AGE, the leading characteristic was, that it had "no law" (Rom. v. 13, 14). Man during its course was left very much to himself, that he might show what was in him. An immense week of probation was granted to him; for the Eternal God moves slowly and majestically in his dealings with his fallen creatures. For twenty-five long centuries no code of laws was laid on men, to restrain them from evil, or direct them to good.

Yet God left not Himself during this period without a witness, as Paul shows in the first and second chapters of Romans, He laid open before the eyes of men the volume of nature; the starry heavens above, and the beautiful world around, teeming with infinitely varied forms of life, and filled with ten thousand evidences of benevolent design, spoke to man of the wisdom, power, and goodness of his Creator.

But man had no ears to hear its silent testimony, no eye to take in its expressive teachings, no heart to feel its sweet and melting influences. He saw indeed the sun, moon, and stars, he beheld them with admiration and awe, but instead of looking through nature up to nature's God, he worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever. He did not like to retain God in his knowledge; he did not glorify Him as God; he was not thankful; he did not understand, as he should have done, the nature and character of the invisible Creator, from "the things which are made;" he became vain, dark, foolish, utterly corrupt, and filled with a reprobate mind. In all this he was without excuse, for not only was nature a revelation of "eternal power and Godhead," which should have rendered impossible to intelligent beings, the degrading sin of idolatry, but God had added to this outward witness, an inward witness to Himself and his will, in the voice of conscience. Man had been made a law to himself, and left to follow or transgress the law thus written by the finger of God on the tables of his heart. The moral law within and the material universe without, were the double testimony to duty and to God, granted during the patriarchal age. In spite of both, men universally became idolaters; worshippers, not only of the brightest and grandest natural objects, such as the heavenly bodies, but of the lowest and most degraded, such as birds and beasts and creeping things, stocks and stones and inanimate images. A reflex degradation was one punishment of this great sin; the idolater was given up by God to the lowest and vilest immorality. The heathen of our own day, the savage cannibals of the South Sea Islands, the ferocious fetish worshippers of Ashantee (Ghana tribe), the degraded aborigines of Australia, are specimens of the depth of moral depravity to which man may sink, when left to his own reading of the revelation afforded by nature.

Corruption and violence were the characteristics of the central portion of the patriarchal age, which closed with the flood. Idolatry was the great sin of its final third, which extended from the Deluge to the Exodus.

Egypt, the first mighty kingdom of antiquity, was the home and hot-bed of idolatry. The land was full of idol temples and idol monuments; huge monsters in human form, men and beasts, and reptiles, and even insects and onions, were adored as deities, and God was utterly forgotten and ignored. When at last his Divine claims came into conflict with the will of man, human crime, as represented by that first kingdom, culminated in the cruel oppression of Israel, and haughty defiance of Jehovah. The proud monarch that bowed before loathsome reptiles, refused to bow before the King of kings. God-dishonouring idolatry, was mingled with God-defying audacity and rebellion; and judgment overtook the guilty: the ten plagues of Egypt were sent in sore and sad succession, ending with death—the death of the first-born, and the destruction of Pharaoh and all his hosts in the Red Sea.

Then followed THE DISPENSATION OF LAW. Man was no longer left to conscience and the light of nature. God unfolded to him far more of his holy character and will, by means of the law promulgated from Sinai, while his purposes of mercy were darkly foreshadowed in the ceremonial worship which He thence enjoined on Israel. It was a new and advanced revelation. Amid thunders and darkness and thick clouds, God descended in the presence of the assembled

thousands of his chosen people. The mountain smoked and burned with fire, while lightnings uplit the lurid spectacle with a terrific glare.

A double law—moral and ceremonial—was given. Ten commandments were the principal embodiment of the former, while the establishment of the Tabernacle, the priesthood, and the Jewish worship, were the leading elements of the latter. The first was to convince of sin, the second to foreshadow its remedy. "The law entered that the offence might abound," and its ceremonies were "a shadow of good things to come."

With wonderful clearness and fulness the law revealed the holiness of God, his mercy, and his justice. He passed by and proclaimed Himself "the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation." The whole Jewish dispensation was one long display of these Divine attributes, and afforded a revelation of God, deeper by far than that latent in nature. It had also the effect of testing man by a more searching probation, and revealing with additional clearness his true character. Sin became more evident in the light of the laws enacted against it: "sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful."

In the Jew, man stands forth, not merely as a sinner, but as a deliberate and persistent rebel against God, breaking every law imposed on him, abusing every privilege granted to him, and despising every blessing bestowed.

Before they had time to receive, in its written form, the law which had been orally delivered to them, Israel had violated its first great and fundamental command, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me," and all their subsequent career was in harmony with this beginning.

They sinned, and committed iniquity, they understood not God's wonders nor remembered his mercies, they provoked Him and forgot his works, they waited not for his counsel but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert; they envied Moses and Aaron; they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; they forgot God their Saviour and despised the pleasant land; they murmured in their tents and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord; they joined themselves to Baal Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead; they provoked God to anger with their inventions; they did not destroy, as commanded, the idolatrous nations of Canaan, but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works; they served their idols and sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils; they shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; they were defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions, till the wrath of the Lord was kindled against his people, and He abhorred his own inheritance. Many times did He deliver them, but they provoked Him with their counsel and were brought low for their iniquity. They persecuted every prophet that was sent to them, and after every deliverance, fell lower than before, into all manner of sin and evil.

At last, long threatened judgment fell, and captivity after captivity came

upon the tribes of Israel; Pul and Sennacherib invaded their land, Shalmanezzer and Esarhaddon, kings of Assyria, conquered and enslaved the ten tribes, and Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and carried Judah away captive to Babylon. The city that was full of people and esteemed "princess among the provinces," sat solitary and became tributary, the ways of Zion mourned, and her gates were desolate; her beauty departed from Jerusalem, and she came down wonderfully; God covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down the beauty of Israel; He cast off his altar, and abhorred his sanctuary, gave his people into the hand of the enemy, and scattered their princes among the Gentiles. "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold," were "esteemed as earthen pitchers"—the adversary took possession of the gates of Jerusalem. The Lamentations of Jeremiah tell how deeply the chastisement was felt; the confessions of Daniel show what searchings of heart and what contrition it created.

But the restoration of Israel under Ezra and Nehemiah, and their prolonged probation, in their land, proved that the awful lesson had been all in vain. Prophet after prophet had announced to them the advent of Messiah the Prince. In due time He came. God was manifest in the flesh. He came unto his own,—to this people whom for over two thousand years He had been preparing to receive Him; but "*his own received Him not.*" They "despised and rejected Him;" they hated Him because He testified of them that their deeds were evil; they blasphemed the Son of God, accusing Him of deriving His power from the Prince of Devils; they took counsel together to slay the Holy and the Just; they bore false witness against Him to put Him to death; they became His betrayers and murderers; they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and by their wicked hands, He was crucified and slain.

And when the still lingering longsuffering of God, sent them one more chance of repentance, and the risen Saviour told his apostles that remission of sins through his name, was to be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost in Peter and in Stephen pleaded still with Israel to repent and be converted, they filled up the measure of their iniquities by rejecting this final offer of mercy. They slew Stephen, and persecuted the Church, "The Jews both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway, for wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16).

A few years elapsed, after those words were written, and then that wrath was poured out. Jerusalem fell, and great was the fall thereof! Signal, terrible and unparalleled was the Jewish war, ending with the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Titus. It needs a pen dipped in fire and in blood to write the story in its true colours! The sufferings and miseries that overtook the Jewish nation in that age, are all but indescribable, the very record of them is appalling. One million one hundred thousand Jewish lives were sacrificed in the siege and capture of Jerusalem alone; streams of human blood extinguished the blazing fires that destroyed the houses of the city, and heaps of the unburied corpses of those who had died of starvation during the siege, hid from the Roman soldiers the immense treasures of the temple. From

April 14th, when the siege began, to July 1st,—115,880 bodies were buried at the public expense, or thrown from the walls, not including those interred by their friends. Some said that 600,000 of the poorer people had perished of want; women cooked and ate their own children, “the maimed and defenceless people were slain in thousands”; when the temple at last fell, “they lay heaped like sacrifices round the altar, and the steps of the temple ran with streams of blood, which washed down the bodies that lay about.” “The slaughter within was even more dreadful than the spectacle from without, . . . it was indiscriminate carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. . . .The treasuries, with their wealth of money, jewels, and costly robes, were totally destroyed. . . . The value of the plunder obtained was so great, that gold fell in Syria to half its former value.”

Milman, after describing the long and awful siege, and the multiplied suffering of the Jews, says, “Thus fell, and for ever, the metropolis of the Jewish State. Other cities have risen on the ruins of Jerusalem, and succeeded as it were to the inalienable inheritance of perpetual siege, oppression, and ruin. Jerusalem might almost seem to be a place under a peculiar curse; it has probably seen a far greater portion of human misery than any other spot upon the earth.”

After its fall, “the markets of the Roman Empire were glutted with Jewish slaves; the amphitheatres were crowded with these miserable people, who were forced to slay each other, not singly but in troops, or else fall in rapid succession, glad to escape the tyranny of their masters by the expeditious cruelty of the wild beasts. And in the unwholesome mines hundreds were doomed to toil for wealth not to be their own.” “The political existence of the Jewish nation was annihilated; it was never again recognised as one of the States or kingdoms of the world. Judea was sentenced to be portioned out to strangers, the capital was destroyed, the temple demolished, the high priesthood buried in its ruins, and the royal race extinct.”

Titus had destroyed the temple and city of the Jews, and slaughtered and captured and sold into slavery millions of the people. About seventy years later, the Jews had sufficiently recovered from this crushing blow, to rise afresh in revolt against the Roman power, and then Adrian completed the work of their dispersion among all nations of the earth. He made the whole country of Palestine a desolation, expelled all its remaining Jewish inhabitants, forbade the Jews on pain of death even to *approach* Aelia Capitolina, the Roman city erected on the site of Jerusalem; he slaughtered 580,000 Jews in a murderous war which lasted three years and a half, and sold thousands of prisoners, at the lowest prices, into slavery. The rest took refuge in foreign lands, and Palestine has never since been inhabited by the children of Israel. (Until the 20th century.)

Eighteen centuries have elapsed, since that fearful judgment of fire and blood, attested the righteous “severity” of God against those who had despised his “goodness.” It was but the beginning of the “indignation” against the Jewish people. Ever since they have been scattered among the Gentiles, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, denizens everywhere, citizens nowhere; oppressed and persecuted in most countries, banished at times in turn from each; treated with indignity, injustice, and cruelty, they yet survive, a

separate and peculiar people; a nation without a land, while their land lies desolate, without a people; and their city, as Christ foretold it would be, is trodden down of the Gentiles, till "the times of the Gentiles" shall be fulfilled.

THE THIRD DISPENSATION, "the times of the Gentiles," brought a revelation of God, fuller, truer, more glorious by far, than any that had preceded it. "*God was manifest in the flesh*," men saw, and heard, and spoke with, incarnate Deity. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Not the power and wisdom only, not the righteousness and justice only, but the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man, appeared, in the life and death of Jesus Christ our Lord. God was proved to be a gracious Redeemer, as well as a holy Lawgiver, and an Almighty Creator. The shadows of the Law were replaced by the realities of the Gospel, the New Testament was added to the Old, its key and its completion; the great salvation so long foreshadowed, was accomplished and brought nigh to man. God had provided Himself a Lamb to take away the sins of the world, and that Lamb, his own glorious Son, the Lord of all! "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

What a flood of light fell upon the world in the teachings of Christ and His apostles! The gift of the Holy Ghost followed on the ascension of the risen Saviour; the Christian Church was founded, and gathered, from Jew and Gentile alike, a vast multitude into its bosom. In spite of persecution it grew and multiplied, for God was with his people; they endured and conquered, winning the world to their creed. Paganism fell. The mighty Roman Empire shut up its idol temples, sheathed its persecuting sword, and sat down as a disciple at the feet of Christ and his apostles.

Grace had wrought a wondrous work, but nature was unchanged. The natural man was still at enmity with God, and the cloak of Christianity, could not long conceal his corruption.

An apostasy of a dark and dreadful nature arose, and in the progress of ages assumed enormous proportions, and a character so diabolic, as to exceed in guilt all the idolatries of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. The greater light granted was abused and perverted, until it became a darkness exceeding any previous darkness—and the central period of its duration is, by common consent, called "the dark ages."

The religion of Christ became gradually, as we have seen, the religion of Antichrist. Carnal observances replaced spiritual conversion, the ceremonial took the place of the moral, human tradition obscured the Word of God, human authority asserted itself in opposition to Divine; and idolatry, under the guise of Christianity, replaced true and spiritual worship.

When Pagan Rome fell, Papal Rome rose. Corruptions, heresies, abominable practices abounded. The teachings of Christ were forgotten, and the teachings

of the church put in their place. It became a sin to believe the truth and serve the living God, yea, it was soon esteemed the worst of crimes to follow the Lord wholly. The saints were persecuted. In streams, ay! in rivers, their blood was shed, till the *professing* church of Christ became "drunk" with the blood of his true disciples. Millions more martyrs fell under the sword of *Papal* Rome than were slain by the power of the Pagan Empire which ruled from the seven-hilled city.

The head of this great Apostasy put himself in the place of Christ as head of the church. He wore a ring to show himself bridegroom, husband of the church; he proclaimed himself her prophet, priest, and king; he assumed to be Prince of the kings of the earth: King of kings and Lord of lords. He wore a triple crown, and claimed dominion in heaven, earth, and hell; power to pardon sins on earth, to loose from pains in hell, and to canonise whom he would in heaven; he carried two swords, to mark his temporal and spiritual government; he sat in the temple of God; received worship as God; and arrogated to himself Divine attributes and authority.

Doctrines of devils were taught to the people instead of the precepts of the Gospel. The mass was presented to the multitudes instead of the atoning Sacrifice of the Saviour, the wafer god, instead of Christ: indulgences for sin were sold for money, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. The true nature of holiness was completely obscured, as well as the true nature of sin, and the true nature of Christ's religion. The priesthood, sunk in the profoundest ignorance and in the grossest corruption, kept the people in the dark, that they might the more readily prey upon them; the Bible was buried in an unknown tongue, and might almost as well not have been in existence. Christianity retained no trace of its pure and holy original.

Human intelligence revolted from the gross and monstrous lie, and thus Christian corruption created a reaction, and called into existence indirectly, in early days, the Mohammedanism which protests against all creature worship, and in later days, the Infidelity which denies Christ altogether, and the Atheism which excludes all worship of God.

For a thousand years this Babylon reigned paramount in the Roman Earth, and then God began to consume and destroy it. He raised up holy men and wise, to protest against it; He gave back, by their means, His Word to the nations; He gave His people grace to love not their lives, but to sacrifice them freely, that the faith of Christ might be restored in the earth. A reformed church arose, and with its reformed doctrines, came reformation of manners, and something of a return to primitive Christian purity and practice. But even here darkness quickly entered again. The Reformation did not go far enough, it did not purge out all the old leaven, it retained some principles of corruption, which caused the reformed churches quickly to degenerate into worldly corporations, unable to protest, with the spiritual power of the first Reformers, against the corruptions of Popery, or to grapple with the more rapidly growing forces of the infidelity it had created.

As to the Apostasy itself, no protests availed to reform it, no teachings to enlighten it, no examples to shame it, no warnings to awaken it: and at length judgment fell. The godless infidelity which had sprung up in the

earth, as the result of Papal deeds and doctrines, rose in arms against it, and plunged both Papacy and monarchy into a sea of blood. The French Revolution! Who can depict its horrors? Vials of wrath were poured out on the Papal kingdoms of Christendom. One country after another was visited with vengeance; wars, and bloody revolutions, internal strifes and contentions, darkened the realms of the Papacy; and the Popes lost gradually all their direct authority over the kingdoms of Europe; all their political power; and enormous wealth in the shape of landed property and buildings, monasteries and convents. And still the measure of their iniquity was not full; the sore judgments of God led them not to repentance. The crowning crime came at last, and the Papacy, which had decreed the "immaculate conception" of an idolatrously worshipped woman, proceeded to decree the "infallibility" of a sinful man.

By the consent and decree of the Ecumenical Council of 1870, the Divine title of *infallible teacher of faith and morals* was given to the Pope of Rome. After twelve centuries of heresy and hypocrisy, corruption and persecution, the "man of sin" seals all his awful errors, and all his flagrant and revolting crimes, with the seal of "infallibility," and claims for all his doctrines of devils the authority of Divine inspiration!

While the words were yet in his mouth, judgment fell. War burst forth; Sadowa and Sedan crushed the might of the two most powerful Catholic nations of Europe. France, overwhelmed by the victorious armies of Protestant Germany, was fain to recall from Rome the French bayonets, which had long been the sole support of the Papal throne, and Victor Emmanuel entered the city as King of Italy. The temporal power of the Papacy was swept clean away, the throne of a thousand years was overturned, the Pope became "a prisoner in the Vatican." The long drama of the Papal temporal power is ended; there remains that its spiritual power be also destroyed. The Lord has *consumed* it by the spirit of his mouth, He is to *destroy* it by the brightness of his coming.

Nor have those sections of Christendom, which escaped the influence of the *Romish* apostasy, continued in the goodness of God. Apostasy has been universal. If we trace the history, and note the condition, of the Eastern churches, the Coptic, Armenian, Nestorian, Syrian, or Greek professing Christian churches, we shall see the same thing. In all, sooner or later, the light of truth, so graciously granted, has been first obscured, and then lost, while a darkness, all the more dangerous in that it professes to be light, has taken its place. The worship offered in these churches, has for ages been little better than idolatry; the morality practised, and the doctrines inculcated, at fundamental variance with those of Christ. The scourge of Islamism was the awful judgment sent as a woe on the Eastern churches; but it did not lead them to repentance. For twelve centuries they have groaned under its cruel oppression, but they have not forsaken their idolatries and evil deeds. They are now drinking the last dregs of the cup of judgment; and the Porte like the Papacy, true to the last to its character, is hurting, killing, and tormenting to the bitter end. But its days are numbered; the full and final judgment of God is soon to overtake both oppressor and oppressed; "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who,"—in spite of all his

revelations of Himself,—“know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Intensely mournful is the review of human history as regards *man's treatment of God*, in his threefold revelation of Himself, as Creator, Lawgiver, and Redeemer.

Having the light of nature, fallen man sinned; blessed with the additional light of law, including commandments, and types and shadows, the ministry of inspired prophets, and the incarnation of God Himself, he sinned *still worse*; and favoured with the full blaze of grace and truth, in the teaching and work of Jesus Christ, in the illuminations of the Spirit of God, and the possession of the New Testament, as well as warned by the awful judgments which closed the former dispensations, man has sinned *worst of all*, and incurred the heavier judgments foretold in the Scriptures of truth, and soon to fall on the earth!

How can the heirs of salvation ever be sufficiently grateful for the sovereign, unmerited mercy that has delivered them from the kingdom of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of God's dear Son? How can they ever be sufficiently earnest, in urging the ungodly to flee from the wrath to come—the lost to seek, while there is time, the salvation which is in Christ Jesus?

But unspeakably blessed, on the other hand, is this review of human history, in the light of *God's treatment of man*, in his threefold and ever-increasing sinfulness. It is an illustration of his power, wisdom, and love in overcoming evil with good. For out of each dispensation, marred by the sin of man, God has delivered a ransomed people, and raised them to greater heights of blessing than before. In the patriarchal age, He brought through the waters of the flood, the family of Noah, and then from Shem He produced the Hebrew race, through which salvation to the ends of the earth was to come. From the destructive and overwhelming judgments of Egypt He delivered Israel, and their Exodus brought them into new and nearer relationships to Himself, than man had ever known before; “ye shall be unto Me a peculiar people;” and from the desolating captivities of Israel and Judah, a remnant returned, destined to see the Desire of all ages, to behold the rising of the Sun of righteousness, to welcome to his temple the Lord Himself.

From the still more awful and desolating judgments poured out on the Jewish nation in consequence of their rejection of Christ, God brought forth the Christian church, “Through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles.” The branches were broken off, but the wild olive was grafted in, the casting away of *them*, was the reconciling of the world.

And then,—God's ways progressing ever from evening to morning, from good to better,—out of the closing judgments of these “Times of the Gentiles” whose thunders are already breaking on our ears and whose lurid lightnings are already flashing in our skies, shall spring the restoration of Israel, the return of Israel's Messiah, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, the rapture of the entire Christian church, the times of the restitution of all things, the millennial reign of Christ.

That in its turn will, as the very brief notice in Scripture proves, be a fresh revelation of God, and a fresh probation of man, and will end, like all the rest, in judgment—the great dread, long-foretold Day of final Judgment, which will usher in the eternal day, the “new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,” into which sin shall never enter, and where consequently death and the curse shall be no more. (Rev. xx., xxi.)

This is the great climax which closes *the first week* of human history, introducing untold ages of unspeakable blessedness for the human race, those “ages to come,” in which God will show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards his people, through Christ Jesus.

Each of the three dispensations into which human history has been divided, has therefore its distinctive and peculiar character, though the three resemble each other in this, that each ends in apostasy on the part of man, and in judgment, and the introduction of a higher economy, on the part of God.

The patriarchal age is broadly distinguished by the fact of its having “no law,” from the Jewish, and this again, by its limitation of nationality, from the Times of the Gentiles; but the flood, and the exodus, and the captivities, and the fall of Jerusalem, and the yet future destruction of the beast and the false prophet, and Babylon the Great, at the Epiphany of Christ, mark out so many distinct closes and re-commencements, wherein God executes deserved and long-denounced doom on the guilty, while delivering and raising to a higher level an elect and ransomed people.

We proceed now to trace the chronological measures of these three dispensations, and their respective positions, in the great stream of time. We will take the Times of the Gentiles first, as it is the most important, the most closely connected with the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and the one whose duration is most distinctly defined in Scripture.

(To be continued.)