

The Approaching End of the Age – Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 5.



Continued from [Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 4.](#)

The Fall of the Ottoman Empire

It has been the period of the outpouring of the vials of the wrath of God, to use the striking symbol of the Apocalypse, for the closing judgments of the dispensation. Those *vial-plagues* (Rev. xvi.), comprising “a noisome and grievous sore” or boil, darkness, frogs, and blood-changed rivers, cannot fail to recall the similar plagues sent upon Egypt prior to the Exodus and to the destruction of Pharaoh. Then they were literal, in harmony with a typical dispensation; now they are the anti-typical realities, of which boils, darkness, etc., are the symbols. But so appropriate and graphic are the symbols, so suggestive of the things, that under their guidance alone, we might have been led to discover the events we have been considering. The infidelity of the middle of the 18th century, and its fearful fruit in the enormities of the French Revolution, have long been recognised as the judgment symbolised by the eruption of the “noisome and grievous sore on the men that had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image,” that is on the inhabitants of papal Christendom. Such an outbreak in the natural body is a mark of deep-seated impurity and disease in the constitution. In the body politic the eruption of violent moral and social evil is the same, an indication of long-continued and all-pervading irreligion and corruption.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth vials predict, under various symbols, the judgments connected with the Napoleonic and anti-Papal wars which followed the French Revolution; the outpouring of the sixth, brings us to the other event we are seeking, *the decline and fall of the Mohammedan power.*

The years which have elapsed since the middle of the 18th century have been

almost as fatal to the Eastern, as to the Western little horn. We have not yet seen the complete extinction of the political power of the Sultan, as we have that of the Pope; but it is already *almost* annihilated in Europe; crippled and restricted where it still exists; and events, as well as Scripture prophecy indicate, that its hold over Syria cannot last much longer.

The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire are symbolised in the Apocalypse, by the overflow and drying up of the great river Euphrates. In other parts of Scripture the overflow of a river is, from its peculiar appropriateness, used as a symbol for the invasion of a land by a foreign conqueror. (See Jer. xlv. 7; Isa. viii. 7, 8.) A modern "History of the Ottoman Turks"* opens with the following sentence.

* By sir Edward S. Creasy, M.A, London: Bentley, 1877.

"Six centuries ago a pastoral band of four hundred Turkish families was journeying westward, *from the upper streams of the river Euphrates*: their armed force consisted of four hundred and forty-four horsemen, and their leader's name was Ertoghrul."

This little band of Euphratean horsemen, were the ancestors of that terrible host or "army of horsemen two hundred thousand thousand" strong, whom the Seer of Patmos beheld, loosed from the Euphrates, and overflowing the Roman earth, carrying distress and death wherever they went—the "second woe" sent by God as a judgment on Christendom for its depravity and apostasy, the first having been the Saracenic.

History tells us how this Euphratean flood covered land after land, with its irresistible advance. All over South-Eastern Europe, as far as Venice, the Turkish flood extended. Wherever it reached it carried misery and death, so that even the strong language of Rev. ix. 17 can barely convey an idea of the "woe" it was to Eastern Christendom.

The "drying up" of this flood, that is to say the liberation from Turkish oppressions, of the Christian nations and lands overwhelmed by it, began with the Greek rebellion in 1820. But fatal blows to the power and prestige of the Ottoman Empire, had previously been dealt by Russia. In the war of 1768 between the two kingdoms, the Turkish armies were beaten and destroyed, and ruin and disgrace attended each succeeding campaign. In 1770 the Russian admiral annihilated the Turkish fleet in the Aegean sea. In 1774 a large Turkish army was again most disgracefully beaten, and the humiliating peace of Kainargé, showed that the conqueror was in a position to dictate terms. Three years later, war again broke out between the two powers, and again the Russians had the mastery both by sea and by land, and obtained the cession of important towns and districts before concluding peace. In 1806 Russia occupied Moldavia and Wallachia, and the old hostility broke out afresh, the weakness of the Ottoman Empire becoming more apparent than ever. A new fleet, which had been created, was destroyed by the Russians at Lemnos. Mahmoud II. had to buy a peace, by the cession of all his territory north of the Pruth, of a number of fortresses on the Danube, and of a principal mouth of the Danube itself. In 1820 began a formidable insurrection in Greece, the finest

province of the Turkish Empire, which quickly spread to Wallachia, Moldavia, and the Aegean Isles.

In 1826 the Porte (the central government of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul) surrendered to the Russians all the fortresses it retained in Asia; in the same year civil commotions distracted Constantinople; and the awful slaughter of the Janissaries took place, 4000 soldiers being shot or burned to death in their own barracks in the city, and many thousands more all over the empire, by the Sultan's own command.

The Greek rebellion continued till 1827, when, after a severe and prolonged struggle, Turkey was obliged to acknowledge the independence of Greece. The sympathies of Western Christendom had been aroused by the horrible cruelties perpetrated by the Turkish Admiral, in the conquest of Scio; and England, France, and Russia intervened between the Porte and its Greek Christian subjects. At the great naval battle of Navarino, the fleet of Turkey was once more destroyed, and Greece became independent.

In 1829 the freedom of Servia was similarly secured by a treaty which forbade a single Turk to reside north of the Danube; and the same year the Turkish province of Algeria in Africa became a French colony.

Muhammad Ali Pasha (a Turkish and Albanian commander in the Ottoman army) of Egypt, who had long been aiming at an hereditary kingdom for himself, rebelled against his master, and asserted his independence in 1832. He attacked and conquered Syria, and defeated the Turkish armies in three great battles. Nothing but the interference of the great powers of Christendom, at that time prevented his marching on Constantinople, and overthrowing the Sultan altogether. He was forced back into his own province, and made again nominally dependent on the Sultan by payment of an annual tribute, and the furnishing certain military aid when asked. But Egypt is virtually independent of the Porte, and her present ruler has assumed the title of Khedive, or king, in recognition of the fact.

In 1844 the Porte was compelled, under threat of European interference, to issue an edict of religious toleration, abolishing forever its characteristic and sanguinary practice of execution for apostasy (*i.e.*, for the adoption of Christianity). This compulsory sheathing of its persecuting sword was a patent proof that its independence was gone, and a marked era in its overthrow.

Nor has it been under the judgment of the sword alone, that the Ottoman Empire has been sinking to decay. It is miserably perishing in its own corruption. Internal discord and insurrection, provoked by cruel tyranny and monstrous misgovernment, have weakened the State. Polygamy and other vices have caused a depopulation so rapid as to be almost incredible. Pestilence, conflagration, earthquakes, civil commotions, massacres, slaughters, all have tended to reduce the population and weaken the empire. These attacks from without, rebellions from within, and this steady process of internal decay, have reduced Turkey, not only to financial bankruptcy, but to such a state of weakness, that, but for the policy of England and other European States, she must long since have perished.

The notion that "the integrity of the Ottoman Empire" must be maintained in order to resist the encroachments of Russia, has for the last fifty years averted from this decaying power, long impending and richly deserved doom. But even this can avert it no longer. The atrocious cruelties and fiendish barbarities of the Turk, have alienated from him the sympathies and even the compassions of Christendom; and in the recent war no hand has been upraised to avert the fate impending over the blood-guilty Ottoman Empire. Russia has this time all but accomplished the task, on which she has so long had her heart set—the liberation from Moslem tyranny of the Christians of South-Eastern Europe. If foreign interference *should* again avert the end (as it did in the case of the temporal power of the Pope), it can only be for a time. Forces are at work which must ere long destroy the foul tyranny which has so long ruined the fairest regions of the earth; and must set, not Europe only, but Palestine, free from the Moslem rule.

The period that has elapsed since the middle of the 18th century, corresponding to the Jewish Captivity period, and closing the 2520 years, or "seven times" of Gentile supremacy, *has then been most conspicuously marked by the decline and fall of the two little horns, the final forms of Gentile rule over the Israel, and Sanctuary of God, spiritual and literal.*

And the years of special *crisis* in the former have been, as far as we have gone, answered by corresponding years of crisis in the latter, as will be seen by the following table. We have not yet reached the latest *terminus ad quem* (the latest possible date by which an event must occur or an action must be completed); it is not yet 2526 years since the *final* fall of the throne of David, and the *full* establishment of Gentile supremacy by Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Jehoiakin; nor have the events predicted as to close this time of the end all taken place as yet.

We do not wish to speculate as to the future; of that, as the great Sir Isaac Newton said, "let time be the interpreter." We simply point to facts in the past. No one can question that the sudden and terrible outbreak of infidelity and atheism in the middle of the last century, marked by the publications of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists—the accession of the ill fated king and queen who fell victims to the fury of the French revolution; the culmination of that awful movement itself in the reign of terror, followed by the overthrow of the Papal power in Italy; and, turning to the East, the compulsory signature by the Sultan of the first edict of religious toleration—no one can question we say, that these have been *marked and critical events* in the downfall of the Papal and Mohammedan powers. Other indications will shortly lead us to other dates also; but we are already in a position to see that—between the critical years of the Captivity era, and the critical years of this time of the end, there lie exactly "seven times,"—2520 years,

For one such great "week," traced backwards from the middle of last century, takes us to the reign of Menahem, king of Israel and the invasion of Pul; the same period traced back from the accession of Louis XVI. reaches exactly to the accession of Nabonassar, the first king of Babylon; the same period traced back from the overthrow of the Papal power in the French revolution, leads up to the overthrow of Samaria by Shalmanezar; and the same period traced back from the Turkish edict of toleration reaches to the completion of

the captivity of the ten tribes by Esarhaddon. A simple calculation will prove this, remembering that in adding A.D. to B.C, dates, one year has to be subtracted to obtain the *complete* interval elapsed.

TERMINI A QUO AND AD QUEM OF THE SEVEN TIMES.

I. From the first Assyrian invasion of Palestine (that by Pul, king of Assyria), and the carrying captive a portion of the Ten Tribes, to the outbreak of the grievous sore of infidelity, in the middle of the 18th century.*

* Measured from the accession of Menahem, as the date of this invasion in his brief reign, is not given.

B.C. 770–2520 years.–A.D. 1750-1.

II. From the siege and fall of Samaria and more complete captivity of the Ten Tribes by Shalmanezzer, to the judgments on the Papal Power in the French Revolution–

B.C, 723–2520 years.–A.D. 1798.

III. From the captivity of Manasseh and coincident completion of the deportation of the remainder of the Ten Tribes by Esarhaddon, *to the first edict of religious toleration in the East*, issued by the Porte, the compulsory sheathing of its persecuting sword, a sign that its *independence* was gone–

B.C. 676-7–2520 years.– A.D. 1844.

IV. From the full captivity of Judah, and final overthrow of the throne of David, accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, to the still future terminus *ad quem* of the prophetic period of 2520 years.

B.C. 598–2520 years.–A.D. 1923.

Historically, then, the Times of the Gentiles is a great dispensational week, of 2520 years, extending from the Captivity era, B.C. 770-598, to the era of the closing judgments on the kingdom of the beast, the vial era of the Apocalypse, A.D. 1750~ 1923. It is the “seven times” of Gentile dominion over Israel, included in the symbol of Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

Note: The Beast was revived in 1929 when Mussolini signed the [Lateran Treaty](#) with Pope Pius XI. Is this not the fulfillment of Revelation 13:3?

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death (in the French Revolution); and his deadly wound was healed: (by the Lateran Treaty) and all the world wondered after the beast.

This great week has thus earlier and later commencements, incipient and then full starting points, and corresponding closes, just as in an eclipse, the penumbra first comes in contact, and after a brief interval the dark shadow.

This is clearly the case with other chronological prophecies also. Jeremiah announced, for example, that Judah should serve the king of Babylon "seventy years" (Jer. xxv. 11, 12). History shows that this period had a double commencement and a double termination,—a *two-fold fulfilment*. First, from B.C. 606 to the decree of Cyrus, and again from B.C. 587 to the edict of Darius. This is easily explicable. The majestic movements of Providence and of history demand time; empires do not rise and fall in a day; and the omniscient God takes note of the comparatively insignificant *beginning* of a mighty movement as well as of its climax. We are witnesses that the decay of the Papal and Mohammedan powers demands *an era*, not an epoch merely; and such has been the case with the decay of other great powers in other ages. Hence the propriety of indicating *various dates of rise and fall*. But it should be noted that the interval by which the earliest of these commencing and closing dates is separated from the latest is, *compared to the whole period*, so small as to be scarcely perceptible, so that it is even difficult to represent it to scale, on a diagram. Thus the statement that at the equinox the day is twelve hours long, is practically true of a day or two *before*, and of a day or two *after* the equinox, because the *variation is, compared to the length of the day*, hardly observable.

But while the measures of this great dispensational week are sufficiently clear, when we consider its main termini, they become increasingly so when we proceed to study its bisections and divisions. The measures of the whole week are evident; but those of the half week, the "time, times, and a half" of prophecy, are still more so, and these we must now examine.

The *whole week*, or "seven times," dates from the era of the rise of the *literal* Babylon, and measures the entire course of the four great monarchies; the *half week*, or "time, times, and a half," dates from the era of the rise of the *spiritual* Babylon, and measures the existence of the great apostasies which occupy the latter half of the "Times of the Gentiles." When did these arise?

The Papal power rose in the interval between the fall of the Western Roman Empire, under Romulus Augustulus, the last Emperor of Rome, and the Pope-exalting decrees of the Eastern Emperors Justinian and Phocas, which put the topstone on the slowly rising arch of Papal pretension and power, by constituting the Bishops of Rome Universal Bishops, and making them heads of all Christendom. And the Mohammedan power rose in the East during the very same interval; for, as Luther used to say, "the Pope and the Turk came up together." The fall of the Western Empire took place in A.D. 476, and the Hegira era of the Mohammedans is A.D. 622.

The century and a half intervening between these dates may be called *the era of the rise of the Western and Eastern Apostasies*. It embraces nearly all the main stages of the rise of the two little horns; it is analogous in character and in duration to the Captivity era, and it is central in position in the Great "seven times."

1. It is analogous in *character*, for the Captivity era was one of decay and fall to the natural Israel, and one during which the power and dominion of the natural Babylon, was rising steadily to its culmination in the reign of

Nebuchadnezzar. This central era of the rise of the apostasies is one of decay and fall to the spiritual Israel, the true Church of Christ, and one during which the power and dominion of the spiritual Babylon, was rising steadily to its culmination in the enthronement of the Papal dynasty—the great antichrist, the antitype of Nebuchadnezzar—at Rome.

2. It is analogous also in duration, for from the era of Nabonassar to the overthrow of Jehoiakim is 146 solar, or 150 lunar, years, and from the fall of the Western Empire of Rome (a.D. 476) to the date of the Hegira of Mohammed (A.D. 622) is exactly the same period.

3. It is central in position in the great “seven times.” The intervals which separate the commencement and completion of the Captivity era from the commencement and completion of this central era are respectively 1260 lunar years; and the intervals which separate these latter dates from the corresponding dates of the “time of the end” are also respectively 1260 years.

That this central era is the bisection of “seven times” has long been perceived in a general way by students of prophecy; but it is only by the application to the period of careful astronomical measures that the wonderful accuracy and exactness with which this is the case can be demonstrated.

Three sorts of years are, it must be premised, demonstrably employed by the Author of the prophetic periods: solar, calendar, and lunar years. Calendar years, or years of 360 days, are used in the predictions of Daniel and the Apocalypse; for it is only three and a half *such* years that contain 1260 days.

Solar and lunar years are also taken into account, as is proved by the fact that in Dan. xii,—7 years are, as we have seen, added to 2520; and 75 is exactly the difference between 2520 solar years and 2520 *lunar* years.

We have a warrant therefore for measuring historic intervals by *any or all of these three standards*; and where, for any reason, it is the Divine purpose to conceal for a time, or partially, the actual measures of any interval, we may expect to find the *lunar* year employed in measuring it, inasmuch as this year gives rise to what may be termed a hidden chronology.

Before going further, it will be well to enquire what were the *critical years* in this era of the rise of the Papal and Mohammedan powers. We are in the broad sunlight of authentic profane history here; there may be room for some difference of judgment as to the relative importance of certain events in the history, but there can be no question at all as to the dates of the events selected.

“He that letteth,” or that which hindereth the development of the great apostasy, “will let, until he be taken out of the way,” said the Apostle Paul, and *then* the antichrist will be revealed (2 Thess. ii.), There could be no chance for Popes while the Caesars still ruled at Rome. The first step in the rise of the Papacy therefore was necessarily the complete *downfall of the Western Empire of Rome*, which, as we have seen, took place under Romulus

Augustulus, in A.D. 476. From that time forth the claims of the Bishops of Rome increased continually, based at first on the metropolitan character of the see of Rome, and by degrees on more supernatural and spiritual grounds. But their claims to supremacy over other bishops received no *legal sanction* until A.D. 533, when, by his celebrated decretal letters, the Eastern Roman Emperor, Justinian, recognised the Bishop of Rome as "*head of all the holy Churches, and all the holy priests of God.*"*

* See Appendix A., Justinian's decree.

In the seventy-fifth subsequent year, A.D. 607, the Emperor Phocas promulgated another very notable decree, confirming the right of the Pope to the headship of all the Churches, *Eastern as well as Western*, and acknowledging him *primate of all other sees, that of Constantinople included*. In 608 Phocas bestowed upon the Pope the Pantheon of Rome, a temple formerly dedicated to Cybele and all the gods, and thenceforth to the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs; i.e., formerly devoted to Pagan, and thenceforth to Papal, idolatry. Phocas died in A.D. 610. In 1813 the base of a pillar was excavated in Rome, bearing an inscription intimating that it was erected in honour of Phocas, A.D. 608, on the occasion of these his great concessions to the Pope.

The accession of the assassin Phocas was "joyfully" endorsed by Pope Gregory the Great+ whose own accession in A.D. 590, constitutes a very leading date in the rise of the Papacy. Gregory the Great was "the last of the Latin Fathers, and *the first in the modern sense of the word of the Popes,*" and he "did more than any other to set the Church forward upon the new lines on which henceforth it must travel to constitute a Latin Christianity, with distinctive features of its own, such as broadly separate it from Greek.\$

+ Gibbon, "Decline." Ch, xlvii.

\$ Archbishop Trench, "Medieval Church History," p. 14.

One more remarkable step in the rise of the Papacy, and the extending over Europe of its peculiar evil influence, must be noticed. It is the decree of the Pope Viratian, ordering all the services of the Church throughout Christendom to be read in *Latin*,—a decree, as we know, still (until Vatican II in 1963) in fatal force, and obeyed by every Roman Catholic priest in the world. This was in the year A.D. 663. It gave a distinctly Roman, or Latin, character to the Church, secured perfect unity with Rome in all its ceremonial, and was surely one way in which the beast "caused all to receive his mark and the number of his name" (Latin man in Greek = 666). From the time of the division of the Roman Empire, the Western half, indeed, received the designation Latin, in opposition to "Greek," which, strangely enough, was soon applied by the Eastern Roman Emperors to themselves and their empire. In the West the word Roman was also dropped; it was the *Latin* world, the *Latin* kingdoms, the *Latin* Church, the *Latin* clergy, the *Latin* patriarch, the *Latin* councils. Gibbon, who is so accurate in his word-painting, always applies this epithet to the Western Papal kingdoms. "They latinize everything,' to use Dr. More's words; 'mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The Papal councils speak in Latin; the Scripture is read in no other language under Popery than Latin; in short, all things are Latin'" * From the time of Vitalian's decree, public worship

itself throughout the whole of Papal Christendom was in Latin only. Hence the truth and worship of God became mere unmeaning sounds to the mass of the people in all lands, and the power of the Papal priesthood proportionally increased.

* Elliott, vol. iii, p. 232.

We take then as the main epochs of the rise of the *Papal power*—

1. The decretal letter of Justinian ... 533.
2. The accession of Gregory the Great ... 590.
3. The edicts and donations of Phocas ... 607-610.
4. The latinizing decree of Vitalian ... 663.

The main points or epochs in the rise of the Eastern little horn, the *Mohammedan power*, which sprang up during the same era, spread with extraordinary rapidity, attained enormous influence, and wielded it to the misery and destruction of the Christian nations subjugated by it,—are two.

1. The Hegira, or flight of Mohammad from Mecca to Medina, the turning point in the career of the false prophet, which transformed him from the despised leader of a sect of fanatics to the prince and prophet of his people.

2, The capture of Jerusalem and Syria by the Caliph Omar, when a mosque was erected on the site of Solomon's temple, from which, that Muezzin call to prayer which has never since ceased (save for a brief interval in the time of the Crusaders) was first heard in the city. It was on this occasion that Sophronius, the unhappy patriarch of Jerusalem, muttered as he followed the victorious caliph round the sacred sites, "The abomination of desolation stands in the holy place."

The ten years of the Caliphate of Omar from A.D. 634 to A.D. 644 were years of rapid extension of Mohammedan power. The Saracens during their course reduced to obedience 36,000 cities or strongholds, destroyed 4,000 Christian churches, and built 1,400 mosques.

"At the end of the first century from the Hegira, the Arabian Empire had been extended to 200 days' journey from east to west, and reached from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic, "over all which ample space," says Gibbon, "the progress of the Mohammedan religion diffused a general resemblance of manners and of opinions,"—over all which ample space, we may add, the venom of the scorpion sting of their conquerors was made to rankle in the breast of the subject Christians. For, indeed, the bitter contempt and hatred flowing out from the Moslem faith towards them could not but be felt perpetually. It was marked in the terms "Christian dogs" and "infidels." The enactments of the capitulations granted them were their every-day remembrancers of it. Deprived of the use of arms, like the Helots of old, with a tribute enforced as their animal life redemption tax, with a different dress, enjoined on them from their masters, and a more humble mode of riding, an obligation to rise up deferentially in the presence of the meanest Moslem, and to receive and gratuitously entertain for a certain time any Mussulman who on a journey might require it, such were the

marks of personal degradation ordained in the capitulations. And then, in token of the degradation of their religion,—to which, notwithstanding all their superstitions, they clung with fond attachment—there was a prohibition to build new churches, to chime the bells in those retained by them, or to refuse admission into them to the scoffing Moslem, though they regarded his presence as defilement. Add to which the inducements to apostacy, operating to an incalculable extent, on the young and thoughtless in families more especially, and then the penalty of death against their returning to the Christian faith, the insults, moreover, to the Christian females, and thousands of undefinable injuries of oppression, and how could it be but the bitterness of their loss should be felt, and the poison rankle within them, even as in other days with the Jewish captives in Babylon, so as to make life itself almost a burden?" *

* Elliott, vol. i, p. 424.

The two principal *Mohammedan* dates of commencement then are—

1. The Hegira ... A.D. 622.
2. Omar's capture of Jerusalem ... A.D. 637.

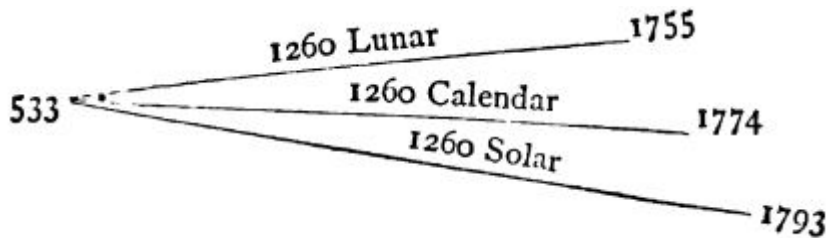
Now let it be observed

1. That from the accession of Nabonassar, the first king of Babylon, to the deposition of Romulus Augustulus, the last Emperor of Rome, was *to a day* 1260 lunar years. +

+ See Calendar of the Times of the Gentiles, Appendix.

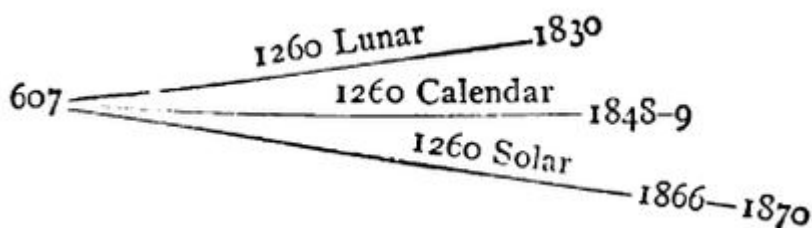
2. That from the overthrow of Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 602) to the Hegira of Mohammed is also 1260 lunar years.
3. That from Nebuchadnezzar's burning of the temple, in the 19th year of his reign (B.C. 587), to Omar's capture of Jerusalem (A.D. 637), followed by the erection of a mosque that bears his name on the site of the temple, is again 1260 lunar years.
4. That from the Mohammedan era of Hegira to the important crisis in the *decay and fall* of Mohammedan power before alluded to, the end of its independence and *legalized* intolerance, A.D. 1844, is once more 1260 years lunar, and it should be remembered that the Mohammedan reckoning is lunar.
5. That from the celebrated Pope-exalting decree of Justinian, A.D. 533, which constituted the Bishop of Rome head of all the Churches, 1260 years reckoned as lunar, as calendar, and as solar, lead respectively to the important initial, and crisis dates of the French revolution; thus:—

A.D. 533, Justinian's decretal letter



6. That from the decree of the Emperor Phocas, confirming the primacy of the see of Rome over that of Constantinople and all the Eastern and Western Churches, 1260 years measured in the same three ways lead respectively to the three great modern overthrows of Papal power of which we have spoken: the revolutions of 1830, 1848-9, and 1866-70.

A.D. 607-10. Phocas—



7. That measured from the important central date of the accession of Pope Gregory the Great, Sept. 3, A.D. 590, *the first properly speaking of the Popes*, the 1260th solar year commences in Sept., 1849, which year is the terminus of 1260 *calendar* years from the decree of Phocas.

8. That from the captivity of Jehoiachin, and the final overthrow of Judah, B.C. 598, 1260 solar years lead to the promulgation of the decree of Vitalian that the services of the Church throughout Christendom should be performed in Latin, A.D. 663. This latter date is, consequently, the *bisection* of "seven times" in solar years, as reckoned from the date of the final overthrow of the throne of Judah, and 1260 solar years from that point do not run out until the year A.D. 1923.

9. Further, from the capture of Jerusalem by Omar, A.D. 637, 1260 calendar years have brought us to the recent overthrow of Turkey by Russia, the Treaty of Berlin; the Anglo-Turkish Convention as to Cyprus, and the English protectorate of Asia Minor, unquestionably a fresh stage in the downfall of the Mohammedan power, whose present head is Constantinople. We have not yet reached 1260 solar years from the same date; they will run out in 1897 (and 1260 solar years from the Hegira date, the true commencement of Mohammedan reckoning, will expire in 1882).

It may be asked, How is it, if the fulfilment of these chronological prophecies be thus clearly traceable, that the fact has not been earlier perceived?

We reply, it is the revealed purpose of God that, for wise and gracious reasons, these chronological prophecies *should* become clear only in the "time

of the end" (Dan. xii.).

In fulfilment of this design, not only is a symbolic system of predicting events and their duration adopted, but even when the chronological symbol employed is rightly translated on the year-day system, it is not necessarily clear *what kind of year* is the *reality*, for which a day is the *symbol*; hence the true length of the predicted period may still be to a certain extent hidden.

Some of the above periods are accurate even to a day when calculated by the true lunar year, though they present only distant approximations to accuracy when measured by the solar year.

But while comprehension of these Divine prophecies was impossible until partial fulfilment had given the true clue in the year-day system, and while the periods predicted still remained obscure even when the clue was obtained, their true scope has become clearer and clearer as each successive generation of students has searched into their meaning, till now, in the light of such fulfilments as the late loss of temporal power by the Papacy, and the present and imminent loss of power by the Ottoman Empire,—in the clear glow of light shed by fulfilments in this end of the age, and by the discovery of the astronomic measures of these mysterious times, the whole series seem to range themselves into order and proportion, and to present no longer a hopeless, puzzling, and intricate maze, but a complete, majestic, and clearly traceable plan.

CHRONOLOGICAL MEASURES OF THE PATRIARCHAL AGE AND THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.

It remains now to show that each of the two earlier dispensations lasted for a period similar to the Times of the Gentiles, and consisted of a great week of years of years—"seven times."

It should be noted, that Christianity, the religious system which has distinctively characterized the Times of the Gentiles, did not take its rise at their commencement, but on the contrary, when they had already run a third of their course. The rise of Christianity dates, not from the overthrow of Jewish independence in the Captivity era, but from the period of the abolition of Judaism, just before the fall of the city and temple of Jerusalem. Similarly Judaism, the distinctively characteristic religion of the previous or second great dispensation, dates, not from its commencement, but from SINAI, the giving of the law, the point where the Patriarchal dispensation closes. And just as the times of the Gentiles had an earlier commencement than Christianity, so the Jewish race and their special covenant privileges, had an earlier origin than the giving of the law. *In each case a people was first prepared to receive the new system of religious truth, and then the system was revealed.* Thus, as represented in the diagram, the dispensations overlapped; the second grew out of the first, and the third out of the second.

The earliest date of the origin of the third, is, as we have seen, the beginning of the Jewish Captivities, the invasion of Pul, in the reign of Menahem, whose accession was in B.C. 770, 840 years before the destruction of

Jerusalem, followed by the triumph of Titus, celebrated at Rome A.D. 70-71. Now 840 years is one-third of 2520 years; the times of the Gentiles took their rise one-third of "seven times," before the passing away of Judaism. We naturally inquire, is any parallel fact observable in connection with the previous dispensation? Did the origin of the Abrahamic race precede the giving of the Law, by any such period?

The call of Abram preceded the Exodus by 430 years: "the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years *after*, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. iii, 17). The birth of the Patriarch preceded his call by seventy-five years, and Abram the Hebrew was himself descended, through Eber, from SHEM, and with his race, inherited the blessing of that pre-eminently blessed son of Noah; *his* was the specially privileged branch of the great Shemitic family. Now the blessing of Shem *immediately followed the flood*; it dates from the recommencement of human history after the first great judgment of the world by water. Measuring, then, the Shemitic dispensation, or that of the Jewish people and their fathers, from this primary epoch, to the time of Messiah's advent and rejection, we find that another great "seven times" intervened; that, as nearly as we can ascertain, such a week of years of years, divided these great termini from each other.

It must be borne in mind, that the two inevitable gaps in the world's chronology, occur in the course of this Shemitic or Jewish age, so that certainty, to within forty or fifty years, is unattainable. The date of the flood is A.M. (number of years from Creation) 1656, which, according to Clinton's chronology is B.C. 2482. Adding twenty-nine years—to the date of the Crucifixion,—it will be seen that the latter event took place 2510 years after the flood, that is, only ten years less than the full "seven times," or 2520 years.

Now it must be borne in mind that their rejection of Messiah the Prince, did not, as we have seen, cause at once, the full and final rejection of Israel by God. For some years subsequently the ministry of the Holy Ghost by the Apostles, appealed to them to repent and be converted, that the times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord. Ten or fifteen years later the sentence was pronounced by Paul and Barnabas, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commandeth us" (Acts xiii. 46). Allowing therefore a few years for this final hovering of the Spirit of mercy and longsuffering over the guilty race, we may say that 2520 years, "seven times," elapsed between the bestowment of distinctive privilege on the race of Shem, and the utter rejection of the Jewish people, and transference of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles. It should be remembered that this is no question of brief periods; it is a question of a period of over twenty-five centuries; so that an inaccuracy of two or three years, even if it existed, would scarcely affect the conclusion.

But it cannot be proved that there is an inaccuracy, because of the acknowledged and inevitable uncertainty as to two of the minor intervals composing this long period, which may throw our accepted dates out, to the

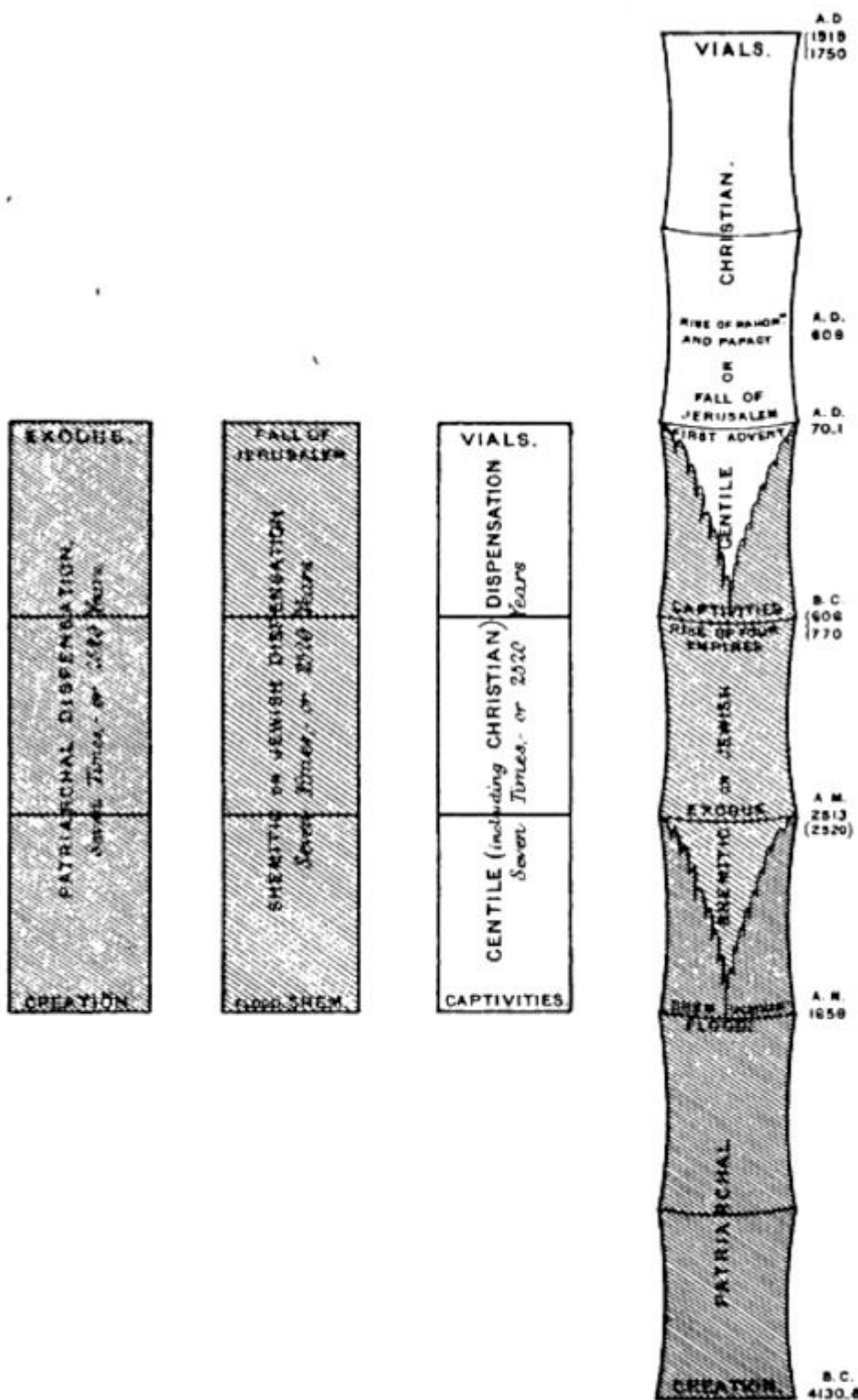
extent of forty or fifty years. Absolute accuracy is in this case unattainable; the terminal event of the Shemitic or Jewish "seven times" may have been the Crucifixion itself, or it may have been the crisis indicated above, or it may have been the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. There is no need to fix on any one of these, in order to recognise the broad fact, which is beyond dispute, that the Shemitic or Jewish age extended over a great week of prophetic times, exactly as does the succeeding dispensation, the times of the Gentiles. No trifling discrepancy of a few years,—a discrepancy which, as it is founded on ignorance, not on certain knowledge, may not exist, but be merely apparent,—can blind a candid observer to the fact, that here, in these major divisions of human history, there prevails the same law of completion in weeks, which we have traced in so many minor arrangements.

The first, or patriarchal dispensation, had a similar duration, "From *Adam to Moses*," when there was "*no law*," i.e., from the Creation to Sinai, 2514 years elapsed, for the date of the Exodus (according to Clinton) is A.M. 2513, and the giving of the Law followed the Exodus, so that the "seven times" terminated within seven years of the Exodus. We may therefore boldly say that from Adam to Moses was "*seven times*;" from the incipient rise of the Hebrew nation and their peculiar privileges, to their utter rejection and fall, was "*seven times*;" and from the recognition by God of Gentile monarchy, down to its final overthrow, is also "*seven times*." The three dispensations so clearly distinguished by their broad *moral* features, and marked off by their critical termini (the greatest events of all human history), are THREE GREAT WEEKS CHRONOLOGICALLY EQUAL TO EACH OTHER. Taking the prophetic "time" (360 years) as the unit, the first contained seven such; the second contained seven such; and the third contains seven such.

Symmetrical subdivisions of these great periods seem also clearly traceable. The second is divided into thirds, the last into halves. The Exodus marks the first third of the Shemitic or Jewish age, the Captivity era its second, and the fall of Jerusalem its close; the three periods representing respectively the rise, the prosperity, and the decay and fall, of the Jewish nation. The golden headship of the Babylonian power marks the rise of the times of the Gentiles, the *first* half of which is occupied by the four great Pagan Empires of antiquity, and the *last* by the domination of the "little horn," or Papal dynasty, for "time times and a half," 1260 years. The chronological harmony between these three great dispensations, or stages of progress, in the providential dealings of God with man, is of profound interest, especially when viewed in relation to the other scriptural uses of the week, and in relation to its prominence in natural and vital phenomena.

THE THREE DISPENSATIONS

Patriarchal – Jewish – Christian



Owing to the *ingrafting* of these three dispensations, before mentioned, and represented in the diagram, their total duration is between 5880 and 6000 years. This commencement of a succeeding dispensation before the termination of a previous one, seems natural and appropriate, when the relation between them is remembered. Their connection is not one of mere succession or juxtaposition, but one of intimate relation, and of vital growth. The mature years of the parent coincide with the infancy and youth of the child; indeed, there is always a period in which the lives of the mother and child are not twain, but one. So in the chronological arrangements of the law, one year

began while another was still in progress, so that the two overlapped for several months. The year of jubilee, for instance, commenced in the midst of the ordinary current year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the great day of atonement. (Lev. xxv.)

The deep reason for this arrangement is also obvious, it forms part of that hidden wisdom, of which Scripture is full. It is one feature of an underlying system of times and seasons, which, like all system in nature, is concealed from mere casual observers. Scientific classification has its basis in natural facts; but the facts on which it is based are not conspicuously obvious to the superficial inquirer, so that the system is not self-evident. On the contrary, the facts must be carefully compared, before their mutual relations can be perceived, or the system which embraces them all, discerned. So it is with these biblical times and seasons. The moral distinctions between the three dispensations are clearly pointed out in Scripture; the great crises in human history which form their respective termini, are fully narrated, the dates of the events and their duration are duly given, and the measures of the last are not indistinctly intimated in prophecy, But it is nowhere *stated* that human history has been providentially divided into three great weeks of seven prophetic times each; we are left to discover from what *is* stated, what is *not* stated, *i.e.*, the plan that underlies the whole chronology of the Bible, and the harmony of that plan with the plan observable in nature, organic and inorganic. We are furnished with a clue, and then left to explore the labyrinth.

That there should be this analogy between *the mode* of God's revelation of His ways, in nature and in Scripture, is what might have been expected, even were no special reason assignable why, in the matter of the chronology of the ages, peculiar reserve should be employed. But, as we have previously seen, the purpose of God to conceal the fore-ordained duration of this Christian age, from all save the later generations of His people, is very distinctly intimated. "Shut up the vision and seal the book, even to the time of the end." "The words are closed up and sealed, even to the time of the end." The intimations which exist, of the uniform and septiform measures of the three dispensations, were therefore purposely slight and indirect, unlikely to attract attention in early days, or to be even surmised, till the fulfilment of the great prophetic "time times and a half" had so far progressed, as to illuminate with fresh light the entire book of chronologic prophecy.

And further, not only is the whole plan and system an underlying and half-hidden one, but even when perceived the providential gaps in Bible chronology necessarily prevent its being demonstrated, with that absolute evidence which would place it beyond dispute, or with that accuracy which would justify any prediction of "that day and that hour." "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power," said our Master to his early disciples, when they inquired as to the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. He did not abate their confident expectation that such a restoration was to take place; He implied, on the contrary, that the time and the season for it were appointed, but intimated that with that time and season *they* were not to become acquainted. A revelation of nineteen centuries of delay, would have been a test of faith and patience too severe

to be imposed on the infant Church: a merciful veil of mystery was thrown over the subject, and the return of their Lord, after a longer or shorter delay, was the one hope and prospect left to the early disciples. But ages before, the promise had been given, that in the time of the end, the wise should understand the mysteries of chronologic prophecy (Dan. xii, 10, 11); and the promise has been fulfilled. Revelations that were dark to the fathers, are radiant with light to us; and the perception of the true nature of the year-day system, and of the septiform measures of the Divine dispensations, so far from discouraging faith and hope, *now* only stimulate both. We humbly venture to regard the view unfolded in this chapter, of the uniform and harmonious ordering of the ages of human history, by the law of completion in weeks, as a fresh instance of progressive interpretation, another example of the way in which God, who is his own interpreter, makes plain in due time. the meaning of His own Word.

Continued in [Part IV. Section III. Soli-Lunar Cycles, And Their Relation to the Chronology of History. Chapter I.](#)