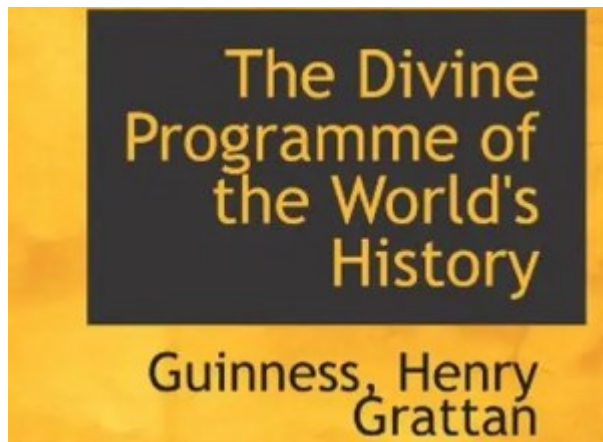


The Divine Programme of The World's History By H. Grattan Guinness



I am very excited to find [a hard to read PDF file](#) of H. Grattan Guinness' famous work! It's now my major ministry in my service to the Lord to present classic books like this in a format you can easily read from a phone.

I left the British spelling as is because the title of the book uses British spelling.

THE DIVINE PROGRAMME OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY.

BY
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"The Approaching End of the Age," "Light for Last Days," Romanism," etc.

PREFACE

THE days in which we live have seen the growth of a godless materialism. Providence, by many, is denied. History, we are boldly taught, is but a blind evolution. The ages drift without an aim.

In the "sure word of prophecy" we have a Divinely provided safeguard against this false philosophy. Prophecy is history written in advance. It unfolds with unerring wisdom not merely the facts of the future, but their underlying plan. It demonstrates Providence. It reveals the glorious truth that the history of the world is none other than *the history of man's redemption*. The revolving ages fulfil the programme.

The present volume exhibits the testimony of Scripture prophecy as a *whole*. Selecting its chief elements, and arranging them in their natural order, it compares them with the events of the last six thousand years. In former works we have sought to set forth the *general principles* of prophetic interpretation, and also the fulfilment *in the last twenty-five centuries* of things predicted by prophets and apostles. The scope of this volume is wider and its intention different. It embraces, though but in outline, the story of the world, And it treats exclusively of *fulfilled* prophecy. Its object is *evidential*, The Scriptures contain the Divine Programme of the world's history. Programme and history correspond.

We hope to follow this volume, when our practical missionary work permits, by one on the Last Prophecy in Scripture, viewing it from the double standpoint of history and typology.

It is our earnest desire that the present work may prove helpful to many. When the Rock of history is struck by the Rod of prophecy, there flow forth living waters. Such are ever needed, and refreshing. Evermore shines on the instructed mind the sacred truth—*God is in Christ*, reconciling the world; and *Christ is in history*, its Alpha and Omega, its beginning, its centre, and its end.

Hartey House, Bow,
March, 1888.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is an unquestionable fact, and one which has hardly received the consideration it deserves, that the volume which claims to be a supernatural revelation—the inspired word of God—clearly and boldly *commits itself even from its opening pages to A PROPHETIC PROGRAMME OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY*. It is daring enough to present on its forefront an orderly chart of the events of ages lying at the time far in the future—a distinct and detailed map of the untrodden shores and untraversed oceans of time, to inform men beforehand of the main outline of all that should befall their race.

The course thus taken in Scripture is a bold one. In assuming the possession of knowledge so entirely superhuman, the Bible necessarily exposes itself to the perpetual danger of being demonstrated to be erroneous in its predictions, and consequently false in its pretensions. A definite programme published at the beginning of any series of events, and professing to give their nature and order, must inevitably be either verified or falsified by the result. The things predicted either come to pass or fail to do so, and experience decides the worth of the programme. Would any spurious or pretended Divine revelation dare to risk its own future rejection by exposing itself to such a test as this? The Bible alone does so, and this fact is a strong *a priori* proof of its Divine origin. It is a book which presents itself to mankind saying: "I am from God, and in order that you may see that I am so I tell you beforehand things that are to happen on the earth ; I sketch out to you the whole course of future events, together with their order and their times. I reveal the end from the beginning. Prove me herewith! Let every age as it rolls past bear its witness to my truth or to

my falsehood. I am content to stand or fall by this test."

We propose to accept this virtual challenge, and to test the Bible in these pages in the very way in which God commanded that those who professed to be prophets of old should be tested. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." If the Bible has foretold, as regards the past, things that have never been fulfilled, then it is not of God, and we need not reverence it in the slightest degree. But, on the other hand, "when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." If the predictions of Scripture *have* been fulfilled, not once or twice, but in a thousand particulars; if the programme *has* been acted out, exactly as given in advance, all through the past ages of history and up to our own day; if not one point has failed to be fulfilled in its due season;—then we are bound to believe that the book which contains it is inspired, and to reverence it as the very Word of God.

Christ Himself submitted His claims to this test among others. "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John xiv. 29). And Jehovah in the Old Testament challenges idolaters to demonstrate the worth of their idols in the same way. "Let them . . . show us what shall happen; . . . or declare us things for to come"; and again, "Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods" (Isa. xli. 22, 23). A test thus recognised and applied by God Himself must needs be a good and sufficient one. If we can prove that the Bible stands this test, we demonstrate its Divine origin, perhaps more clearly than in any other way.

Three thousand five hundred years of history have rolled away since the days of Moses, when its earliest books were published, and eighteen centuries (by 1888) have elapsed since its latest "Revelation" was given to John in Patmos, Apart therefore from the history of the earliest centuries, which it alone contains, the predictions of Scripture can now be compared with the events of at least thirty centuries recorded by profane historians, as well as with the events transpiring in our own day. What a magnificent opportunity is thus afforded of testing the true character of the book! How easy to prove its claim to inspiration false, if false it be! and if true and valid, what abundant evidence must exist of the fact! *If the general history of the world throughout all these ages has been foreseen and foretold*, then clearly the records which embody the revelation must in some way or other owe their authorship, not to saint or seer, to prophet, priest, or king merely, but to the only wise God, who alone knows the end from the beginning.

We live in days when inspiration is more than ever doubted and denied, and this not by Gentile professors of Christianity only, but by the Jews themselves. The very custodians both of the Old and of the New Testaments are now calling in question their Divine authority.¹

¹ The following quotation from a work published recently in Boston, and entitled "Messianic Expectations and Modern Judaism," amply supports the statement as regards the rationalistic Jews: "I do not believe in a Divine authorship of any book whatsoever, be it called the Old

or the New Testament. . . . The Jew of to-day is no longer the Jew of one thousand nine hundred years ago..."

It is therefore more than ever incumbent on those who adhere to the faith once delivered to the saints, and still believe that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, to give a reason for the hope that is in them—for their belief that though heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle of the word of God can fail. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The present generation of Christian believers has had to withstand many a deadly onslaught from the hosts of unbelief, and has withstood them. But the rising generation will have a still harder conflict to endure, for faith is failing on every hand, and the treachery of unbelief has crept into the very citadel itself. The standard bearers are one by one deserting to the enemy; nor can we wonder that it is so, since this too was foretold as a feature of the days in which we live. Our Lord asked the question, "When the Son of man cometh, *shall He find faith on the earth?*" But all the more because of this state of things, and because we see the day approaching, must we exhort and encourage one another to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering," and earnestly seek its confirmation and support.

We have reached what is emphatically "a dark place" in the history of the Church. A lamp has however been put into our hands to illuminate the gloom—the lamp of fulfilled and ever-fulfilling prophecy—a light shining in a dark place, "whereunto we do well that we take heed." In the following pages we shall endeavour so to hold forth this lamp that its beams may fall on the path we are treading; and though they may be insufficient to remove all mystery or to lighten the darkness that shrouds the providential government of God, they will nevertheless give us light enough to perceive and avoid the dangers of the way.

There are many things which a traveller journeying by night would like to see—the winding valley, the distant view, the mountain tops; and he will see them all clearly by-and-by, when the clouds have cleared away and the sun rises in the morning. But, in the meantime, the important thing for him is to see his way in the pitchy darkness, to see the path before him if only for a few steps at a time, so that he may avoid the pit land the precipice, and distinguish between the road and the by-path. This much at any rate his lantern enables him to do, and he values it accordingly, and although it be not bright as the sun, refuses to allow it to be extinguished. May Christian pilgrims similarly refuse to be robbed of that "sure word of prophecy" which is "a light unto their feet and a lamp unto their path"! And may the following pages help to enhance their sense of its inestimable value!

Before entering on our investigation, we must recall the fact that different historians regard history from different standpoints, and select from the mass of events those which have a bearing on their own special theme, passing by hosts of facts less directly related to it. In writing, for instance, the history of the Christian Church, Mosheim did not feel it needful or desirable to enter fully into the political or military history of the various nations in which the Christian Church from age to age took root. It was needful to glance more or less briefly at these subjects and similar ones in order to

the exposition and comprehension of the main theme, but only as subordinate to it. So Gibbon, in tracing the decline and fall of the Roman empire, had to glance at the height from which it fell, and at the fragments into which it was broken by its fall; but the causes and the stages of the decline and fall itself being the theme of his work, all beyond is merely subsidiary. The question arises, from what standpoint does the Bible regard the world's history? Either in narratives of the past or in predictions of the future it tells the entire story, and much of it in both ways. It carries us right through from Paradise lost to paradise regained, from the rise of the earliest empire—that of Nimrod, the mighty hunter—to the fall of the last form of the empire of Rome and the full establishment of the kingdom of God on earth—that kingdom which is to succeed all earthly monarchies and to subsist for ever. But Scripture tells this long story in brief compass, and omits much more than it records. What principle underlies its selection of facts? From what standpoint does it consider the story?

The purpose and plan of a book must be clearly grasped before it can be understood. We must not expect from a work information on any subjects which have no connexion at all with its theme, nor full information on such as have but a slender connexion with it. The Bible, like other histories, has a definite scope of its own, a well-defined purpose, and can only be properly appreciated when this purpose is recognised. An undiscerning critic, if ignorant of the title and scope of the work, might say of Mosheim's Church History, for example: "I cannot understand it or admire it at all. It ranges over a vast extent of history, but gives only the most partial and unsatisfactory views of very interesting and important points. It dwells with disproportionate fulness on some episodes of little moment; it wastes, for instance, whole chapters on the disputes of councils and the analysis of heresies, yet it fails to describe the decisive battles of history or to trace the careers of its heroes. It is a poor, unequal, disjointed account of the world's progress during the period." This judgment would be just, had Mosheim undertaken to write a general history. It is absurdly unjust in view of the fact that what he intended to write, and did write, was the history of the Church only.

For what view of history then are we to look in the Bible? – political? social? scientific? philosophic? ethnographic? military? Clearly none of these would either require or be worthy to become subjects of Divine revelation. No! If God condescends to become the historian of human affairs, the only possible standpoint from which they can be viewed is evidently the *religious* one; that is, He will present them *in their relation to Himself* as Creator and Redeemer of mankind. In other words, the Bible must be the history, first, of man's creation and fall, and, secondly, of his redemption and restoration.

Further, for religious purposes, that is, in order to human salvation, the first of these two sections—that describing the creation and fall—would not require to be a full or detailed one. All that was needful was to reveal the great facts that God made man, and that He made him in His own image. How or when is irrelevant to the great argument and need not consequently be enlarged upon. Man as an intelligent, free, responsible being was created by

God, not developed from mere matter; and he was therefore bound to love and obey his Maker. He failed to do so, and thus he fell. Further, his fall did not *introduce* moral evil into the universe, for it existed previously, and it was an enemy both to God and to man who tempted the latter to his ruin. How or whence this ensues, or from what period this moral evil dated, why it was suffered to exist at all,—these and other interesting questions on which mere curiosity would crave for light, being beyond the scope of a book which has the salvation of the lost race as its object, are passed by in silence; and man's creation and fall having been briefly recounted on the opening page, the whole of the rest of the volume is devoted to *the history of human redemption*. Events are selected for record solely in view of their relation to this all-important theme, and human affairs are viewed from the standpoint of their bearing on *it*. This is the key to the Bible as a book. It narrates the history of human sin and human redemption, carrying us steadily forward from the perfected and "good" condition of things in Eden at the close of the first creation to the still higher perfection of the new creation, to the "new heavens and the new earth," and the renewed and restored race of man, when "He that sitteth on the throne shall say, It is done! Behold, I make all things new."

He therefore who criticises the Bible because it does not contain what it does not profess to contain, and could not consistently contain, violates a fundamental canon of literature, and exposes his own folly, and not that of the book. Its nature, object, and scope require that it should be utterly imperfect as a mere secular history of the events of ages, in order that it may be perfect as a sacred history of the redemption of mankind. Not a word does it contain, consequently, about Julius Caesar, though Augustus Caesar and the Roman emperor Claudius are alluded to; they were remotely connected with the Saviour and His apostles, but not so their great military predecessor. Both the historic and the geographic sphere of Scripture story are limited, and this very limitation is a feature of perfection. The book *keeps to its point*, and that point is *to reveal God to man and to bring man back to God*.

The work of human redemption has been carried on from age to age in ever-widening spheres, and will continue to be so until it embraces the world. It begins in the individual heart and extends to the life, and then, like the concentric rings produced by a stone thrown into water, it extends until it affects the extreme circumference of humanity.

Hence we find in Scripture individual biographies, patriarchal and tribal stories, a national history, and prophetic histories of imperial dominion, all playing their part in the narrative, all linked together by one golden line—their common relation to a great redeeming work. Whatever be the sphere and whatever be the style—whether the history be anticipated in prophecy, or simply recorded in narrative—it is always the story of the redeeming work of God which is traced, and the salvation of men is always the end in view. Only as we bear in mind this self-evident truth shall we be able to estimate aright the selection and treatment of historic events in Scripture.

THE DIVINE PROGRAMME OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY CONSISTS OF SEVEN MAIN SECTIONS, CORRESPONDING WITH SEVEN GREAT EPOCHS OF FRESH COMMENCEMENT WHICH STAND OUT

PROMINENTLY IN THE BIBLE STORY OF HUMANITY, CONNECTED WITH EACH OF THESE THERE HAS BEEN A FRESH DIVINE REVELATION, SKETCHING OUT WITH MORE OR LESS FULLNESS THE EVENTS DESTINED TO TRANSPIRE IN THE COURSE OF THE AGE THEN BEGINNING. THESE SEVEN GREAT EPOCHS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SEVEN MEMORABLE NAMES: ADAM, NOAH, ABRAHAM, MOSES, DAVID, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST—THE SECOND ADAM, THE LORD FROM HEAVEN.

“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, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” The first six of these names are the names of men merely; the seventh is that of the glorious God-Man: it stands apart from all the rest—the stately procession closing with the majestic figure of the Redeemer Himself. ADAM was the father of the human race; NOAH, the father of the world that now is; ABRAHAM, the father of the Jewish people and the Arab races—and in another sense the father of the faithful, or believing people of God in all ages; MOSES, the founder and legislator of the Jewish nation; DAVID was the founder of Jewish monarchy, and the father of the royal line of Judah, destined yet to rule the world in the person of “David’s Son and David’s Lord, the Lion of the tribe of Judah”; NEBUCHADNEZZAR, the spring-head of Gentile monarchy—the head of gold in the fourfold image of it shown to Daniel; and lastly, OUR LORD AND Saviour Jesus CHRIST, the founder of the kingdom of God and the head of redeemed humanity, whose kingdom, established in a mystery eighteen hundred years ago, is yet to bear sway over all the earth in manifested power and glory. It is represented by the stone cut out without hands which smote on its feet the image of Gentile monarchy, ground it to powder, “became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Now it is undeniable that to and through each of these FATHERS, or FOUNDERS, of a new order of things was given a FOREVIEW OF THE FUTURE, a more or less full and clear revelation of the events of the era at the opening of which he stood. Most of these seven prophetic outlines embrace the entire interval from their own date to the full accomplishment of the work of human redemption. But as each starts from a later chronological point than its predecessor, it covers a shorter interval. The New Testament predictions of the events of this Christian dispensation, for instance, necessarily cover an interval sixteen hundred years shorter than that covered by the Mosaic foreview. But the later charts give fuller details than the earlier ones; and thus, though the interval they cover be shorter, the later revelations are the longest and most complex. In the following chapters we take up these seven foreviews of the future, examining in each case, first, what is predicted, and secondly, what has happened.

It is not to be expected that our readers can derive from the perusal of this work the same sense of the overwhelming and unanswerable nature of the argument here developed as the writers obtained in its preparation, because a sample only can be presented of the mass of evidence which has been passed under review. Some of the following chapters would have had to be swelled to volumes to do full justice to their themes. Our world is so wide that few, if any, are acquainted with all its countries; and human history is so long and

so complex that still fewer are familiar with all its facts. Memory may retain enough to attest the accuracy of general outlines, but when fresh research furnishes the mind with fresh material for comparison, the correspondence of a multitude of particulars is perceived in addition; and it is realized that, not only does the key open the lock, but that it fits it down to its most minute divisions—fits it as no key but one made to fit it could possibly do, fits it so as to reflect the highest credit on the skill of its designer and maker.

Peculiarities in the key which might have been thought to be defects were it alone considered, prove to be delicate perfections as soon as it is inserted in the lock. So portions of a prophecy which when considered alone seem perplexing, prove when compared with the history to be absolutely and accurately exact as predictions of the peculiar and complicated relations of certain powers or persons. All is seen to be perfection, and we are constrained to exclaim, “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

Continued in [Chapter I. The Adamic Programme. – Part I.](#)

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