

# History Unveiling Prophecy by H. Grattan Guinness



Henry Grattan Guinness - (11 August 1835 – 21 June 1910), an Irish Protestant Christian preacher, evangelist and author.

Henry Grattan Guinness D. D. (11 August 1835 – 21 June 1910) was an Irish Protestant Christian preacher, evangelist and author. He was the great evangelist of the Evangelical awakening and preached during the Ulster Revival of 1859 which drew thousands to hear him. He was responsible for training and sending hundreds of “faith missionaries” all over the world. (Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Grattan\\_Guinness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Grattan_Guinness))

The alternate title for this book is

## **Time as an Interpreter.**

My good friend Dr. John Gideon Hartnett sent me the link to this book in PDF format on <http://historicism.com/> PDF files are not nearly as easy for me to read as HTML.

H. Grattan Guinness He is also the author of [Romanism and the Reformation](#) which is also posted on this site.

The text is slightly edited. I just couldn't take the time to make all the tables and add all the footnotes. I'm only interested in the message. Yes I know good documentation should have references. You can [download and read for yourself the PDF file](#) I got the text from.

This book is continued in [Section X The Present Stage](#)

## **PREFACE**

THE lofty decree of Papal Infallibility issued by the Vatican Council of 1870, immediately followed by the sudden and final fall of the Papal Temporal Power, after a duration of more than a thousand years, was the primary occasion of my writing that series of works on the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy which has appeared during the last quarter of a century.

We are wearied with vain speculations as to the meaning of prophecy which have no other foundation than the assertions of men. We are wearied with

speculations as to imaginary future fulfilments of prophecies which have been plainly accomplished before our eyes in the past; prophecies on whose accomplishment in the events of Christian history the structure of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century was built; on the fact of whose accomplishment in their days the confessors stood, and the martyrs suffered. Alas! the speculations of men have clouded these facts and brought into disrepute the Holy Word of God.

I left Paris, where I had been labouring in the Gospel, at the outbreak of the Franco-German war in July, 1870. It was in the light of the German bombardment of that city, of the ring of fire which surrounded it, and of the burning of the Tuileries, that I began to read with interest and understanding the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse. Subsequent visits to Italy and Rome enlarged my view of the subject. A library of books bearing on it was accumulated, historical, astronomical, and prophetic, including 150 commentaries on the Apocalypse, ancient and modern, from the commentary of Victorinus in the third century., down to those of Elliott and others in the nineteenth. These studies laid the foundation of my works on prophecy.

The present work, which differs in important respects from my previous works, as being chiefly historical in character, may be fitly introduced by a brief explanation of the method of interpretation which it follows.

A great and incontrovertible principle underlies the method it pursues in the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Simply stated that principle is that :

#### GOD IS HIS OWN INTERPRETER

In two ways does the great Revealer of the prophecy explain its meaning – by words, and deeds ; by written word, and acted deeds. He has given us a verbal explanation of its most central and important vision, one which stands in close and commanding connection with all its other visions and in the long course of Christian history he has fulfilled its predictions.

Thus Scripture is the key to Scripture; and Providence to Prophecy.

The historic interpretation of the Apocalypse which rests on this twofold foundation has been slowly developed under the influence of the divine action in Providence; it has changed in details with the changing currents of Providence; it has grown with the growth of the knowledge of the plans of Providence; it has been confirmed and sealed by the whole course of Providence. It is no vain, or puerile, or presumptuous speculation. It is a reverent submission to the very words of God, and a reverent recognition of His acts. God has spoken; He has given an explanation of the central and commanding vision of that prophecy; and God has acted; He has fulfilled its predictions. In pointing to the words and deeds of God we act as His witnesses. What hath God said? What hath He done? These are the questions. We are wearied with vain speculations as to the meaning of prophecy which have no other foundation than the assertions of men. We are wearied with speculations as to imaginary future fulfilments of prophecies which have been plainly accomplished before our eyes in the past; prophecies on whose accomplishment in the events of Christian history the structure of the great

Reformation of the sixteenth century was built; on the fact of whose accomplishment in their days the confessors stood, and the martyrs suffered. Alas! the speculations of men have clouded these facts and brought into disrepute the Holy Word of God. Even good men have been led to neglect the voice of divine prophecy, and to refuse its lamp to light their steps, through the follies of its exponents. Is it not time that the last prophetic book in the Word of God, a book bearing the seal of the signature of the name of "JESUS" should be lifted up from dust of neglect, and set upon a candlestick in the midst of the house, to shed its clear light and cheering beams on all around? Let the reverent believer who "trembles" at God's word, the patient student who has searched the records of the past, the uncompromising witness who fears not the faces of men, lift up that fallen lamp from the soil on which men have cast it, and place it where Copernicus placed the sun, as a kingly light enthroned in the centre of its system.

In agreement with the foregoing principle I have written, among others, two works, on the interpretation of the symbolical prophecies in Daniel and the Apocalypse by means (1) of divinely given explanations of their meaning contained in the books themselves, and (2) by the events of history. The first of these works, published in 1899, is entitled "A Key to the Apocalypse, or the seven divinely given Interpretations of symbolic prophecy." The second is the present work.

In the first of these I have shown that as God has graciously given us His own all-wise and infallible explanations of the meaning of certain leading and determinative portions of the symbolical prophecies in the book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, no interpretation of these prophecies can be secure and trustworthy which does not rest on these divine explanations, and employ them as keys to unlock the meaning of the prophecies as a whole.

The seven divinely given interpretations of Daniel and the Apocalypse are the following :

- I. The interpretation of the vision of the great image in Daniel 2.
- II. The interpretation of the vision of the great tree in Daniel 4.
- III. The interpretation of the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's Palace in Daniel 5.
- IV. The interpretation of the ram and he-goat in Daniel 8. V. The interpretation of the four wild beast kingdoms, and of the kingdom of the Son of Man, in Daniel 7.
- VI. The interpretation of the seven stars, and seven candlesticks in Revelation 1.
- VII. The interpretation of the woman " Babylon the great," and of the seven-headed, ten-horned beast that carries her, in Revelation 17.

Concerning the last of these interpretations I have shown that "of all the visions in the prophetic part of the Apocalypse (chaps. vi-xxii), that of Babylon and the beast in chap. xvii, is the only one divinely interpreted;"

and that through the interpretation of this vision a door is opened to the understanding of the rest of the prophecy.

(1) The woman is interpreted as signifying the city of Rome.

(2) The city is represented as sitting on "seven hills," the well known seven hills of Rome.

(3) The "many waters" over which she rules are interpreted as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues."

(4) The wild beast which sustains and carries her the ten horned wild beast of Daniel's prophecies, the fourth of his four Gentile kingdoms, the kingdom of Rome-is interpreted in detail.

(a) Its seven heads are interpreted to represent ruling powers. Of these it is expressly stated "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.— Thus the sixth head of the wild beast power which carried the harlot is stated to have been in existence when the Apocalypse was written ; and must necessarily therefore refer to the government of the Cesars, as then represented by the Emperor Domitian. This locates the visions of the Apocalypse as relating to Roman and Christian history.

(b) The ten horns are interpreted as ten kingdoms, then future, into which the empire should be divided. These horns, or kingdoms first submit to the harlot city, and then rise against her and " make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

As to the use of this central interpreted vision to explain the other visions of the Apocalypse I have pointed out that there are three visions in the Apocalypse of the ten horned wild beast power.

The first in chapter 12.

The second in chapter 13.

The third in chapter 17.

(1) That the interpretation of one of these in chapter 17, determines the meaning of all three.

(2) That these three visions of the wild beast power represent successive stages in the history of the Roman Empire, as first under the government of its seven heads; secondly under the government of its ten horns, for in the prophecy the crowns are transferred from the heads to the horns; and thirdly as carrying, and then casting off and destroying, the harlot Babylon.

(3) That the story of Babylon and the Beast occupies the largest and most central part of the Apocalyptic prophecy, being referred to in no less than ten successive chapters: Chapters 11. 12 13 14 15) 16, 17j 18, 19) 20.

(4) That to the visions relating to the Roman Empire under its revived eighth head prophetic times are attached representing

1. The period of the sun-clothed woman in the wilderness (chap. xii).

2. The period of the rule of the eighth head of the wild beast (chap. xiii).
3. The period during which the outer temple court is trodden under foot by the Gentiles (chap. xi).
4. The period during which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth (chap. xi).

These four periods are manifestly the same period stated in three forms, as days, months, and "times," or years 1,260 days; forty-two months, and three and one-half "times," or years: and are to be interpreted on the year-day scale; a scale recognized in both the law and the prophets; the scale on which the "seventy weeks" to Messiah are universally interpreted; a scale justified by the course and chronology of Christian history, and confirmed by the discoveries of astronomy as to the cyclical character of the prophetic times.

The interpretation of the Apocalypse thus reached is in harmony with that of the book of Daniel, and links both prophecies with one and the same series of events—the course of five kingdoms, the temporal kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and the eternal kingdom of God. The Apocalypse is simply the story told in advance of the two last kingdoms of Daniel's prophecy; the story of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and of the rise and establishment of the kingdom of God.

From the interpretation of the Apocalypse by means of the divinely given explanation of its most central and commanding vision, we now advance to the subject of the present volume, the interpretation of the prophecy by the events of history.

History has ever been the interpreter of prophecy. It was so notably in New Testament times, for the sufferings and glories of our Lord, foretold in the Old Testament, remained uncomprehended until their meaning was revealed by the events of history. Similarly the predictions concerning the great apostasy, or "falling away" from the faith and practice of Apostolic times which has taken place in the Christian Church, were not comprehended till explained by historical events. And thus has it been all along. From the beginning of the world to the present day Time has ever been the chief interpreter of prophecy. For prophecy is history written in advance. As the ages roll by history practically takes the place of prophecy, the foretold becoming the fulfilled.

A clear and comprehensive view of the leading events of Christian history up to the date of the Reformation is afforded by Gibbon's noble work on "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." This standard work embraces in a single view the history of the Roman Empire and Christian Church for fourteen centuries, from the time of the Antonines to the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire at the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. It is enhanced by its extensive learning, its philosophic spirit, the lucidity of its arrangement, and the majesty of its style. The value of Gibbon's work as an unintended key to the Apocalypse is exhibited by the well-known commentator Albert Barnes in the following interesting account of his own experience:

“Up to the time of commencing the exposition of this book (the Apocalypse) I had no theory in my mind as to its meaning. I may add, that I had a prevailing belief that it could not be explained, and that all attempts to explain it must be visionary and futile. With the exception of the work of the Rev. George Croly, which I read more than twenty years ago, and which I had never desired to read again, I had perused no commentary on this book until that of Professor Stuart was published, in 1845. In my regular reading of the Bible in family and in private, I had perused the book often. I read it, as I suppose most others do, from a sense of duty, yet admiring the beauty of its imagery, the sublimity of its descriptions, and its high poetic character; and though to me wholly unintelligible in the main, finding so many striking detached passages that were intelligible and practical in their nature, as to make it on the whole attractive and profitable, but with no definitely formed idea as to its meaning as a whole, and with a vague general feeling that all the interpretations which had been proposed were wild, fanciful and visionary.

“In this state of things, the utmost that I contemplated when I began to write on it was, to explain, as well as I could, the meaning of the language and the symbols, without ‘attempting to apply the explanation to the events of past history, or to inquire what is to occur hereafter. I supposed that I might venture to do this without encountering the danger of adding another vain attempt to explain a book so full of mysteries, or of propounding a theory of interpretation to be set aside, perhaps, by the next person that should prepare a commentary on the book.

“Beginning with this aim, I found myself soon insensibly inquiring whether, in the events which succeeded the time when the ‘book was written, there were not historical facts of which the emblems employed would be natural and proper symbols, on the supposition that it was the divine intention in disclosing these visions to refer to them, and whether, therefore, there might not be a natural and proper application of the symbols to these events. In this way I examined the language used in reference to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth seals, with no anticipation or plan in examining one as to what would be disclosed under the next seal ; and in this way also I examined ultimately the whole book: proceeding step by step in ascertaining the meaning of each word and symbol as it occurred, but with no theoretic anticipation as to what was to follow.

To my own surprise, I found, chiefly in Gibbon’s ‘Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,’ a series of events recorded such as seemed to me to correspond to a great extent with the series of symbols found in the Apocalypse. The symbols were such as it might be supposed would be used, on the supposition that they were intended to refer to these events; and the language of Mr. Gibbon was often such as he would have used, on the supposition that he had designed to prepare a commentary on the symbols employed by John. It was such, in fact, that if it had been found in a Christian writer, professedly writing a commentary on the book of Revelation, it would have been regarded by infidels as a designed attempt to force history to utter a language that should conform to a predetermined theory in expounding a book full of symbols. So remarkable have these coincidences appeared to me in the course

of this exposition, that it has almost seemed as if he had designed to write a commentary on some portion of this book; and I found it difficult to doubt that that distinguished historian was raised up by an overruling Providence to make a record of those events which would ever afterwards be regarded as an impartial and unprejudiced statement or the evidences of the fulfilment of prophecy. The historian of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' had no belief in the divine origin of Christianity, but he brought to the performance of his work learning and talent such as few Christian scholars have possessed. He is always patient in his investigations; learned and scholar-like in his references; comprehensive in his groupings, and sufficiently minute in his details; unbiased in his statement of facts, and usually cool and candid in his estimates of the causes of the events which he records; and, excepting his philosophical speculations, and his sneers at everything, he has probably written the most candid and impartial history of the times that succeeded the introduction of Christianity that the world possesses; and even after all that has been written since his time, his work contains the best ecclesiastical history that is to be found. Whatever use of it can be made in explaining and confirming the prophecies will be regarded by the world as impartial and fair; for it was a result which he least of all contemplated, that he would ever be regarded as an expounder of the prophecies in the Bible, or be referred to as vindicating their truth.

"It was in this manner that these Notes on the Book of Revelation assumed the form in which they are now given to the world; and it surprises me-and, under this view of the matter, may occasion some surprise to my readers-to find how nearly the views coincide with those taken by the great body of Protestant interpreters. And perhaps this fact may be regarded as furnishing some evidence that after all the obscurity attending it, there is a natural and obvious interpretation of which the book is susceptible " (Barnes on the Revelation, preface, pp. xi-xiii).

The present volume traces the history of that interpretation, describes its progressive development under the modifying influence of the events of the last nineteen centuries from stage to stage, from its germinant form in the pre-Constantine centuries, through Medieval and Reformation times, down to the present day.

As written later than Elliott's great work on the *Horae Apocalypticae*, whose five editions appeared in the years 1844-1862, the present work takes into account the long expected fall of the papal temporal power in 1870, immediately following the decree of papal infallibility; and the present deeply interesting Zionist movement dating from 1897, for the national restoration of the Jews to the land of their fathers.

An important confirmation of the historical interpretation of the Apocalypse afforded by the discovery of the astronomical features of the prophetic times, is briefly set forth at the close of the volume. The extensive astronomical tables published by the author in 1896 are based on the remarkable fact that the prophetic times of Daniel and the Apocalypse are extremely perfect astronomical cycles harmonizing solar and lunar revolutions. The year-day theory resting on Scripture analogy and historic strongly confirmed by the discovery, and the fulfilment is 1,260, 1,290,

1,335, and 2,300 "days" of Daniel and the Apocalypse proved to represent the same number of years in Jewish and Christian history.

It is a deep satisfaction to the author to remember that whatever may be the views of a modern section of sceptical or speculative interpreters of the Apocalypse, who either see no reference to definite historical events in the prophecy, or relegate its fulfilment to future times, in accepting and advocating its historical interpretation, in regarding it as the story told in advance in symbolic language of the events of the Christian centuries, he is treading in the steps of the greater part of Apocalyptic interpreters from the earliest times, of Justin Martyr; Irenaeus ' Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Methodius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine among the Fathers; of Bede and Anspert, Andreas and Anselm, Joachim Abbas and Almeric of the middle ages, of the Albigenses and Waldenses, of Wickliffe and the Lollards, of John Huss and Jerome of Prague of pre-Reformation times ; of the Reformers, English, Scottish, and Continental; of the noble army of Confessors and Martyrs who suffered under Pagan and Papal Rome; of the Puritan theologians, of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, of Mede and More, and Sir Isaac Newton, and Jonathan Edwards that greatest of American theologians, of Bengel the learned German exegete, of Alford and Wordsworth, of Birks and Bickersteth, of Faber and Elliott in England, and a host of others, men distinguished for their ability, their assiduity, their spirituality, their deep study of the prophetic world, in short by what appear to be the greatest and best of the expositors of the book. Modern historical interpreters of' the Apocalypse are in good company; they stand with the Fathers, the Confessors, the Martyrs, the Reformers, with men who suffered for the truth they believed, and were practically guided and inspired by the interpretations they have handed down to posterity. The fanciful interpretations of the Preterists who falsely conceive the Apocalypse to bear a Neronian date, and to be Neronian in its references, have never been a practical power in the history of the Church; the vague interpretations of a modern school, German and English, which ignoring the clearly defined order of the Apocalyptic Visions, their synchronisms and successions, their system of prophetic times, fixed and absolute, and sure as the times of the celestial luminaries, reduce the prophecy to a nebulous mass of anticipations of things in general in human history, have wrought no victories, have accomplished no reformations, have sustained no martyrs, and are self-refuted by their impotence, and unworthiness as expositions of the last great revelation of Jesus Christ concerning " the things" which were to "come to pass." The same may be said as regards the reveries of the Futurists ; barren of practical and worthy effects, they have denied accomplishments recognized by the great mass of prophetic interpreters in the past; they have invented future fulfilments, as unsubstantial and impossible as the dreams of those who they have forsaken the great trend, the main path, the well trodden highway of Apocalyptic interpretation, based upon divine explanations of prophetic symbols, and unquestionable historic facts, for empty speculations about the future unprofitable speculations mistake bizarre imaginations for sober realities as to the coming universal dominion of a short-lived infidel antichrist, to be seated in a literal temple to be erected by the Jews in Palestine, who in the brief space of three and a half years is to fulfil all the wonders of the Apocalyptic drama, and exhaust the meaning of the majestic



prophecy which the Church of God has been blindly misinterpreting and misapplying throughout all these ages. Surely it is time for such interpreters to consider the unscripturalness and unreasonableness of the method of interpretation which they employ, the absence of authority, of warrant, for their views, the entire lack of demonstration human or divine; and the fruitlessness of their speculations, as afford rig no present guidance to the Church, and their injuriousness as extinguishing the lamp which God has given His people to guide their steps along the perilous way of their pilgrimage. I am well convinced from wide observation that many excellent persons adopt these modern prophetic speculations because good men have advocated them, here and there and for no better reason; they have heard them advanced in prophetic conferences, they have read them in books. and tracts, full of confident assertions, superficial and dogmatic compositions on the sublimest questions which can exercise the human mind, and they have been satisfied to believe without proof, and to repeat without independent investigation the marvellous inventions of busy brains as to the antichrist of the future, without ever having soberly inquired whether the Reformers and Martyrs were right or not in their recognition of the antichrist as already come, and as long reigning in the professing Church, the Standard Bearer of an abominable apostasy, the very Masterpiece of Satan for the delusion of mankind. Let us appeal to such to open their eyes to the facts of history, to turn their thoughts for awhile to the sublime story of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, of the rise of the great apostasies in the Eastern and Western Church, of the testimony and sufferings of the Christian witnesses of the middle ages, and Reformation days, and of the retributive acts of Providence in our own time, the manifest and awful judgments which have been poured forth on Papal Rome in and since the French Revolution, judgments whose afterwaves are rolling and reverberating still, uttering with no uncertain sound the solemn conclusion that so far from living in days preceding the fulfilment of Apocalyptic prophecy, we are living in the closing days of the accomplishment of the things which it has foretold.

In writing thus, and in making this appeal, I write as one who has long and deeply studied both Prophecy and History, and as one who knows that his days are numbered, and that he must give account before long of his stewardship as a teacher in the Christian church, for in the present year of the publication of this volume I have entered on the fiftieth year of my ministry, a ministry in which I have striven to teach in harmony with the oracles of God," and to declare, as far as in me lies, the whole counsel of God." I have no private ends to accomplish by the publication of this book; it is written in the interest of truth, as a heritage for my children, a guide to those whom I would not and dare not mislead, a help to young men and women prosecuting their studies in their homes or colleges with a view to future usefulness; and for ministers of the gospel, most of them my younger brethren, to whom I would be of service; and for the sake of any into whose hands it may come, of open heart and unprejudiced mind, desirous of understanding more clearly the meaning of the last predictions in the Word of God. Brethren, beloved in the Lord, in writing thus, it is not I who testify, but the voice of a multitude of Witnesses, mostly gathered now before the throne of God. We shall spend eternity with them; are we prepared to join their songs of triumph, to echo the hallelujahs which break from their lips? Is the testimony of the Word of

God to us what it was to them? Is our testimony in the world in harmony with theirs? Can we join the Reformers in their witness, and the Martyrs in their song? They stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, having the harps of God, proclaiming the accomplishment of God's judgments in the fall of Papal Babylon; shall we stand apart from them, electing to sing some little song of our own out of harmony with the great volume of the voice of God's redeemed? Let it not be! It would be unworthy of us. Compassed about with "so great a Cloud of Witnesses " let us lay aside indifference and ignorance, prejudice, and misconception, and take our place with these in the great arena of conflict, dyed with martyr blood, to maintain "the Testimony of Jesus Christ, looking away from all beside to Him as the Author and Finisher of our faith, whose hand has given us this final prophecy to be our armour in the day of battle, our guide in the perils and perplexities of our pilgrimage, our morning star amid the darkness which precedes the dawn of eternal day. Behold the volume whose seals his hand, his providence, have loosed. Seal it not again. Neglect it not. Doubt no more its meaning. For lo Time, that great Interpreter, has rolled back the veil which once hung upon its mysteries, and is irradiating its pages as with the sunlight of heaven.

IT was towards the close of the first century of Christian history, in the year 95 or 96, that the aged Apostle John, banished by the Roman Emperor Domitian, to the lonely island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, beheld the Apocalypse. More than sixty visions described in the eventful years had elapsed since the ascension of his blessed Lord. During that long period he had looked back to that sublime and glorious event, as the closing incident in his Master's earthly history, and often had retraced in thought every step of his last walk with the risen Saviour over the Mount of Olives, to the sloping fields above the little village of Bethany with the deep Jordan valley and the blue far-off hills of Moab full in view. On countless occasions he had recalled his Lord's last charge, and parting blessing, and gazed in thought on His ascending form, and on the white robed angels whose words directed the minds of the bereaved disciples from the sorrowing contemplation of their Lord's departure, to the glad anticipation of His return, saying, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." But when was it to be that promised return? Was it to take place in the lifetime of the disciple whom Jesus loved? Had not the Master said concerning that disciple when speaking to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Peter had died, following his Lord to the cross. Was he, John, to escape death? Was he to enjoy translation with the saints who were to be 'I alive and remain " to the Second Advent? Yet he remembered that Jesus had not promised he should not die, but had only said, "If I will that he tarry till I come." What could that mean? The strange mysterious sentence lived and lingered in his thoughts; he ends his gospel narrative with it. Was he to behold before his departure some glorious prefiguration of his Lord's return, like the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration; some vision, unveiling the secrets of the future more fully than they had been foreshadowed by that memorable event? No such revelation had been given, and he was now grown old; a venerable, patriarchal man, gentle and gracious in mien; the last survivor of the apostles. He had shared

the promised baptism of Pentecost; had witnessed the marvellous growth of the Christian Church; had seen the fall of Jerusalem; the destruction of its glorious temple, of which now not one stone was left standing upon another; had witnessed the accomplishment of those dreadful judgments on the Jewish nation in anticipation of which his Master's tears had fallen on the Mount of Olives, bedewing the palm branches spread by the multitudes beneath His feet. He had seen too the preliminary fulfilment of the signs of the approach of the Second Advent which his Master had predicted; the earthquakes, famines, pestilences, wars, and persecutions, the appearance of false prophets, and false Christs, of fearful signs and wonders in heaven. The idolatrous ensigns of the desolating Roman power had been planted within the precincts of the Holy City. The triumphal arch of Titus had been reared in Rome, the mighty metropolis of the world, to commemorate Jerusalem's fall; that arch on which were represented in striking sculpture the sacred vessels of the sanctuary carried in triumph by heathen hands; the seven branched golden candlestick, the table of the shew bread, and the book of the law. Jerusalem was no more. The Jewish Dispensation founded ages before by those supernatural revelations granted to Moses and Israel on Mount Sinai had come to an end. The kingdom of heaven had taken its place, growing up silently as a grain of mustard seed, from small and despised beginnings to far reaching development. From the upper chamber of Jerusalem it had spread through Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and across the Roman Empire, in which there was scarce a city of importance which had not a Christian Church. It had reached Antioch and Alexandria, Crete and Corinth, Philippi and Thessalonica, Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira, Athens and Rome; it had spread throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Egypt, and even as far as the western confines of Spain, and the distant isles of Britain; and this in spite of the most violent opposition and persecution from Jews and Gentiles. The gospel had penetrated even to Caesar's household, and won the hearts of some of his nearest kindred. The aged Clement presided over the Christian Church in the city of Rome, undeterred by threats of imprisonment and martyrdom; while another Clement of high born position had just witnessed for Christ even unto blood, whose wife Domitilla had been banished to the desolate island of Pandateria, where she was suffering the same punishment for the Christian faith as John himself was enduring in Patmos.

And with the lapse of time changes for the worse had taken place in many Christian Churches, gross corruptions of the pure doctrines of the gospel had appeared. Self-righteous legalism and Judaic ritualism on the one hand, and false philosophy, the boasted wisdom, of the Gnostics on the other, had perverted the minds of many, corrupting them from the simplicity which is in Christ. Sects had arisen in the Church which denied the divinity of Christ, and the atoning character of His death. Tares had been sown by the enemy among the wheat, and were already flourishing on every side. It appeared as though the Antichrist so long before foretold by Daniel, and so emphatically predicted by Paul, might speedily con; springing up as a horn or ruler among the kings of the divided Roman Empire, and exalting himself as an overseer in the Christian Church, in whose symbolical temple it was foretold he would sit supreme, clothed with divine honours and prerogatives, and deceiving many to their eternal destruction. These things were to be, and the times seemed dark enough to indicate that they might even then be at hand. Daniel had revealed

in mystical language the time of the manifestation of this antichristian power, and the period of its continuance. But what was the exact meaning of those times of Daniel? What meant the "time, times, and a half time," of which he spoke; the 1,260, 1,290. and 1,335 days; the 2,300 ,evenings and mornings"; the periods which were to reach to the resurrection and promised "rest", of the righteous at the end of the days ? Were they literal days which were meant, or were the days he spoke of symbolical of larger periods? Were these revelations in Daniel the last to be granted on the subject, or was more light to shine forth through communications of the truth yet to be given to the Church of "the last days"? Questions such as these may well have occupied the mind of the aged apostle in the lonely hours of his banishment.

We can conceive him standing on the rocky height of some Patmos headland watching the western sun descending over the blue waters of the Aegean Sea, making a broad pathway of golden light on the waves, till they shone like "a sea of glass mingled with fire," or beholding the sun rise in the glowing east over the Asiatic shores, transporting his thoughts to the advent of the "morning without clouds," yet to shine upon the world. Or when he watched the host of heaven come forth by night, and fill the glittering canopy above the lonely isle, while the "many mansions " of which his Master had spoken came to his mind, and the angel hosts who do His bidding, can we not conceive him longing that one of these glorious beings might be sent to him as of old one had been sent to Daniel, the man "greatly beloved," to impart some of that knowledge of the future enjoyed in higher and holier realms? We know not what he thought or desired, but we know what God granted to the aged and privileged apostle.

It was on one Lord's day of his sojourn in Patmos, the day commemorating Christ's triumphant 'resurrection, that being alone, and 'I in the spirit," or rapt in ecstasy from the outward world, and oblivious of its presence, he suddenly heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet, speaking to him such words as mortal ear had never heard before.

*" I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."*

And turning in the direction of the Voice he saw seven golden candlesticks, and standing in their midst, One whom he recognized as "like unto the Son of Man," but  $\theta$  how changed from the Christ on whom he had so often looked in Galilee, and on whose bosom he had leaned in the upper chamber at Jerusalem! For every trace of humiliation was gone. No tears upon the cheek, no thorns upon the brow, He stood there transfigured and glorified; His face as the noonday sun shining in its strength; His garment white and glittering, and girt at the waist with a golden girdle; the hair of His head white with the snows of dateless years, as the "Ancient of days " beheld by Daniel; His eyes like a flame of fire; needing no exterior light to aid their vision, but penetrating the secrets of the soul with holy searching gaze; His feet as burning brass, strong as the pillars of heaven, and glowing as though they burned in a furnace; His voice as the mighty and majestic sound of many waters; seven stars glittered in His right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword,

the evident symbol of the Word of God, living and powerful, and piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, proceeded from His lips.

At this sudden and marvellous apparition of the glorified Redeemer all strength forsook the aged apostle. Falling at the feet of the Son of God he lay there as one dead. Then touching his prostrate form with His right hand, the Lord strengthened him, saying in His own well-remembered voice, 'I Fear not; I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen; and have the keys of death and of hades.'

And now aroused to wondering attention, the aged apostle received from the lips of Christ the divine commission to communicate to the seven Churches of Asia, representing symbolically the entire Christian Church throughout the world, a faithful record of all that he had seen, and was yet to behold.

*"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things, which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.-"*

And first to the seven Churches of Asia Minor John is directed to write brief letters, charged with lofty meaning; letters appreciating, judging, encouraging, rebuking, and counselling these representative Churches; and conveying through them messages from the glorified Redeemer to the whole Christian Church throughout the world. In these letters, bearing on their forefront descriptive titles of Christ referring to attributes suited to the character and condition of the Churches addressed, our Lord speaks in the tone of sovereign authority, perfect knowledge, burning holiness, and tender love. His eyes as a flame of fire search the secrets of hearts, yet beam with infinite compassion. His lips are full of promises, his hands of gifts and graces. Every sentence in these celestial communications bears the impress of His personality. In listening to their words we hear the very voice of the Son of God speaking to our individual souls, out of the world of glory. "I know thy works." "I have somewhat against thee." "I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts." "I will give unto every one of you according to your works." "I have set before thee, an open door." "I have loved thee." "I will keep thee". "I would thou wert cold or hot." "I will spew thee out of My mouth." "I counsel thee." "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "I stand at door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open to Me, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me." Each letter closes with a special promise of glorious and eternal reward "to him that overcometh"; and with the solemn appeal to the individual Christian conscience, "he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

Having received these communications from the Lord Jesus Himself, standing amid the golden candlesticks which symbolized the Churches He addressed, John now beholds heaven opened, and sees the throne of God, and the worshipping hosts before the throne, and hears them crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; " "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." In the right hand of Him who sits on the throne, John now beholds a seven sealed book, and hears an angel cry with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the

seals thereof? " None in heaven or earth is found worthy to open the book or look thereon. Then appears the sublime and solitary Exception. In the midst of the throne, standing among the four living creatures and adoring elders, is seen "a Lamb as it had been slain." He who had redeemed man by His blood shed on Calvary's tree, is there enthroned. Lo! The Lamb advances and takes the seven scaled book from the hands of Him who sits upon the throne, while the songs of the redeemed proclaim Him worthy to open its seals. and countless myriads of holy angels cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The whole creation takes up the anthem and sounds forth His praise. Then the Lamb opens the seals of the sacred and mysterious book, and unveils the contents of this final revelation of providence and prophecy.

As He opens the seven seals, successive visions appear to the gaze of the inspired seer of Patmos. First four horses, white, red, black, and livid, are beheld issuing forth, with their various riders. The souls of the martyrs are seen under the altar of sacrifice, and their cry for righteous retribution is heard. Heaven and earth are then shaken with the judgments attending the day of "the wrath of the Lamb. "A pause follows in which the destructive winds of judgment are stayed, while a definite number of saints are sealed out of the twelve symbolical tribes of Israel. Then an innumerable multitude of the redeemed from all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, is seen gathered before the throne of glory, with palm branches of victory, and songs of grateful joy. "They have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The Lamb who has redeemed them leads them to fountains of living water, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes.

At the opening of the seventh seal there is silence in the symbolical heaven of the vision, during which seven angels prepare to sound trumpets of woe. At the successive sounding of these trumpets various judgments fall on the earth, seas, rivers, and sun of the symbolical world scene. After the sixth of these woe-trumpets occur parenthetical visions, followed by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, proclaiming the advent of "the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." The parenthetical visions are then continued. There is seen the persecution of a sun-clothed woman by a wild beast power. Three stages of the conflict are marked. First the Draconic world power is cast down by "Michael and his angels," who overcome by "the blood of the Lamb," and the witness of martyrs who loved not their lives unto the death." Then the woman fees to the wilderness, from the persecutions of the revived wild beast power, who makes war against the saints and overcomes them. Lastly, under the judgments of the seven vials, the persecuting wild beast power, and that of Babylon the great, are utterly destroyed. Great Babylon is burned, the beast is cast into the lake of fire, and Satan bound for a thousand years, while the saints and martyrs reign with Christ. The final judgment of the great white Throne succeeds, and the New Jerusalem, arrayed in the glory of God, as the Bride of the Lamb, descends from heaven into the new earth, and becomes the everlasting abode of righteousness and bliss.

Such in brief is the general outline of the Apocalyptic drama. How great the progress it depicts! At the beginning the crowns of glory and dominion are

worn by the potentates of the world ; the saints are oppressed and persecuted, forced to flee to the wilderness, and trodden under foot; at the close, dominion, crown, and glory are transferred to the suffering saints and their great Leader. The Lamb is crowned with "many crowns," and the victorious martyrs are exalted to reign with Him in His eternal kingdom.

Prefacing his description of these visions by the title "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," John wrote as he was directed to the seven Churches of Asia; opening his message with greetings of God's grace and peace "from the Eternal Father, the Spirit, and the Son. A doxology of praise bursts from his lips to Him "Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." The keynote of the Apocalyptic prophecy is sounded, "Behold He cometh with clouds," indicating its character as the book of the Advent of Christ, and of the Kingdom of God. At the close is added the seal of Christ's own name and authorship. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." "Surely I come quickly," is the final word of the prophecy.

## **THE RECEPTION OF THE APOCALYPSE BY THE EARLY CHURCH**

From the seven Churches of Asia Minor copies of the Apocalypse, multiplied by Christian hands, rapidly spread in all the Churches throughout the Roman Empire. Its apostolical authorship was recognized from the first, and its sacred character admitted. Early added to the Canon of the New Testament, it became the closing book of the entire Word of God.

No book of the New Testament was accorded a more general reception. The chain of evidence on the subject is complete. Justin Martyr, a Christian philosopher, born about A. D. 103, six or seven years after John's banishment to Patmos, in his dialogue with Trypho thus refers to the Apocalypse: A man from among us by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem.— Justin Martyr suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith about A. D. 165. Irenaeus, Bishop of the Lyonese Church, in his book on Heresies written between A. D. 180 and 190, speaks of the Apocalypse as the work of John the disciple of the Lord, that same John that leaned on His breast at the last supper. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, about A. D. 170, wrote a treatise on the Revelation of John. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, about 181, according to Eusebius, made use of quotations from John's Apocalypse. So also did the martyr Apollonius, at the close of the second century, in an eloquent apology before the Roman Senate, in the reign of Commodus. Clement of Alexandria, who flourished about 194, frequently quoted the Apocalypse. Tertullian, the contemporary of Clement, one of the most learned of the Latin fathers, quotes or refers to the Apocalypse in more than seventy passages in his writings, and declared that "the succession of bishops traced to John I rested' on John as its author" Hippolytus, a greatly esteemed Christian Bishop, and martyr, who flourished about A. D. 220, in early life a disciple of Irenaeus, wrote an express commentary on the Apocalypse. Origen, the most critical and learned of the early fathers,

received the Apocalypse into the Canon of Scripture. "What shall we say of John," he asks, "who leaned on the breast of Jesus? He has left us a gospel:

. . . he wrote likewise the Revelation, though ordered to seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered : he left, too, one Epistle of very moderate length, and perhaps a second and a third, for of these last the genuineness is not by all admitted." <sup>2</sup> Cyprian, Bishop and martyr, the contemporary of Origen, held similar views. Victorinus wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse in the third century, which is still extant; Methodius, Arnobius, Lactantius, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine all received the Apocalypse, and regarded it as the inspired production of the last of the Apostles. In the centuries which followed the times of these Fathers, the acceptation of the Apocalypse by the Christian Church, both in the east and in the west, was universal. In all the early and later translations of the Scriptures, the Apocalypse found a place; and the literature to which its exposition has proved by its exceptional magnitude the interest which the prophecy has awakened in almost every age of the Church's history.

<sup>1</sup> "Adv. Marcion," Book IV, Ch. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, H. E. VI, 25

AS the direct gift of the ascended and glorified Redeemer, His message from heaven, His last message through the last of His apostles, the Apocalypse possessed from the very first for the Christian Church a special and incomparable interest. Granted in the days of Domitian towards the close of the first century while the Church was suffering from the cruel persecutions of heathen Rome, this prophecy of the sufferings and triumphs of her saints and martyrs, struck a cord which strongly vibrated in every Christian heart. To the Martyr Church of the first three centuries, this book of martyrs was at once the mirror of her experiences, and the treasury of her hopes. It illuminated the darkness, and dreariness of her lot with rays of celestial brightness. It was recognized as the golden crown of Revelation; the highest stone of its structure; the most triumphant note of its lofty music. What wonder that every sentence of the mysterious prophecy should have been studied with earnest attention by the Church of primitive times? What wonder that its visions should have arrested the gaze of men eager to read the meaning of the present, and to pierce the secrets of futurity? What wonder that the hands of humble sufferers, of lonely exiles, of holy martyrs, should have transcribed its pages with loving care, and transmitted them to their beloved companions in "the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"?

And that they did so study this closing prophecy of Scripture is evident from the fact that the entire Apocalypse can be reproduced from its quotations in the writings of the early Fathers which remain in our hands. 1 One complete commentary on the book has come down to us from the third century, that of the martyr Victorinus a brief and simple exposition, exhibiting the views of the Church of that period on its mysterious meaning.

And now, going back in thought to those early days of purer faith, and nobler heroism, let us endeavour to realize what \*ere the first faint dawnings of



the comprehension of this mysterious prophecy which penetrated the mind of the primitive Church; and mark the dawn light slowly increasing, as the course of history unfolded the meaning of the prophecy, and the secrets of Providence became revealed to every eye.

<sup>1</sup> See index to quotations from the Apocalypse in the writings of the early Fathers at the close of this chapter

#### I. Title and subject of the prophecy.

On opening the Apocalypse the early saints and martyrs saw plainly written upon its forefront its descriptive title,— The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass . . . for the time is at hand.” Here then they beheld an authoritative definition of the subject of the prophecy. Not to some distant period in the future of the Church’s history, did this prophecy relate, but to events whose occurrence was even then, nineteen centuries ago, ” at hand.— This inspired declaration determined the primitive interpretation. Not a single trace is to be found in that interpretation of the “gap theory ” of modern futurism, the theory that the prophecy, overleaping the last nineteen centuries of Christian history, plunges at once into the remote future, and occupies itself with the events of a brief closing period, a mere stormy sunset hour, in the story of the world. To the Church of the first three centuries the fulfilment of the Apocalypse had already begun, and was to continue without a break to the final consummation of all things.

#### II. Her study of the prophecy revealed to the primitive Church its Christian character.

It was evident that the Apocalypse was sent to Christian Churches ; that it was prefaced by letters addressed to these Churches; that its leading prophetic features had their parallels in these prefatory letters ; that the warnings and promises in the letters related to things set forth more fully in the visions of the prophecy ; that the saints of the prophetic portion of the book were those who kept “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” <sup>1</sup> and that its martyrs were ‘I the martyrs of Jesus” <sup>2</sup> Hence a Christian meaning was attached by the early Church to the entire book. It was regarded as the prophetic story of the trials and triumphs of the Church of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 12:12 <sup>2</sup> Rev 17:6.

#### III. The early Church regarded the Apocalypse as the New Testament continuation of the prophecies of Daniel.

The history of the Gentile world from the period of the Jewish captivities presented then, as now, the succession of four great Gentile Kingdoms; those of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The last of these, the greatest of the four, was at that time in the fullness of its strength, and at the acme of its glory. Ptolemy of Alexandria, the great astronomer and chronologer of the second century, had traced and tabulated in his invaluable Canon, the order and succession of these four kingdoms; associating with a series of dates in

the reigns of their kings the whole of his astronomical observations. To the early Church these four kingdoms of history were mirrored in the visions of prophecy. Daniel had doubly foretold their course in his vision of the quadripartite image, of gold, silver, brass and iron; and in his vision of the four beasts; the lion, bear, leopard, and ten-horned wild beast which trod down and crushed, with iron strength, the nations of the earth. The visions of the Apocalypse were recognized as the continuation of those of Daniel, as relating to the fourth of these Gentile kingdoms, and to that divine eternal kingdom which Daniel foretold, destined to destroy and replace the kingdoms of the world.

“The golden head of the image, and the lioness, denoted the Babylonians; the shoulder and arm of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast, dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet, which were part of clay and part of iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. Speak with me, O blessed Daniel. Give me full assurance I beseech thee. Thou dost prophesy. concerning the lioness in Babylon, for thou, I wast a captive there. Thou hast tin folded the future regarding bear, for thou wast still in the world, and didst see the, things come to pass. Then thou speakest to me of whence canst thou know this, for thou art already gone to thy rest? Who instructed thee to announce these things, but He who formed thee in thy mother’s womb? That is God, thou sayest. Thou hast spoken indeed, and that not falsely. The leopard has arisen; the he-goat is come ; he bath smitten the Ram; he bath broken his horns in pieces; he bath stamped upon him with his feet. He has been exalted by his fall; (the) four horns have come up from under that one. Rejoice, blessed Daniel! thou hast not been in error! all these things have come to pass. After this again thou hast told us of the beast, dreadful and terrible. “It has iron teeth and claws of brass: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.’ Already the iron rules; already it subdues and breaks all in pieces; already it brings all the unwilling into subjection; already we see these things ourselves. Now we glorify God, being instructed by thee.”

IV. The early Church interpreted the first vision, that of the crowned Rider seated upon a white horse, armed with a bow, going forth “conquering and to conquer,” as a representation of Christ going forth on His victorious mission.

Thus Victorinus in his commentary on the Apocalypse written in the third century says, “The first seal being opened he saw a white horse and a crowned horseman bearing a bow. For this ‘ was at first drawn by Himself. For after the Lord and opened all things, He sent the Holy Spirit, whose words the preachers sent forth as arrows, reaching to the human heart that they might overcome unbelief.

A comparison of this opening vision with that in the nineteenth chapter, of the rider on the while horse, whose name was “King of Kings and Lord of

Lords," justified in the view of the early Church the application of the first seal to Christ's victorious mission.

The fact that Christ had founded a Kingdom whose power was greater even than that of Rome, became early apparent. The words of Origen in his answer to Celsus strikingly exhibit the conviction of the primitive Church, that its marvellous progress could only be explained by attributing it to the action of supernatural power. "Any one who examines the subject," says Origen, "will see that Jesus attempted and successfully accomplished works beyond the reach of human power. For although from the very beginning, all things opposed the spread of His doctrine in the world, -both the princes of the time, and their chief captains and generals, and all, to speak generally, who were possessed of the smallest influence, and in addition to these the rulers of the different cities, and the soldiers, and the people, -yet it proved victorious, as being the Word of God ' the nature of which is such that it cannot be hindered ; and becoming more powerful than all such adversaries, it made itself master of the whole of Greece, and a considerable portion of barbarian lands, and converted a countless number of souls to his religion." 1

"The outcry," says Tertullian, "is that the State is filled with Christians; that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands; they make lamentation as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the profession of the Christian faith."

The triumph of Christianity over Paganism described by the historian Gibbon is in striking harmony with the view of the early Church as to the destinies of Christ's kingdom. 'While the Roman world," says Gibbon, "was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion quietly insinuated itself into the minds of men ; grew up in silence and obscurity ; derived new vigour from opposition; and finally erected the triumphal banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period, or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of humankind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chili in a world unknown to the ancients."

With the vision of Christ going forth on His world-conquering mission, the Apocalypse most naturally begins. At the outset of the drama, the glorious Conqueror goes forth to whose head at the close are transferred the "many crowns " of universal dominion.

And in the vision thus interpreted is found a key to the entire prophecy; for this is the starting point of the whole. Seals, trumpets, and vials set forth a continuous course of history stretching to the consummation, having as its commencement the going forth of the Gospel of Christ to accomplish its world-subduing work. The inference is unavoidable that the Apocalypse presents a prophetic foreview of the entire course of Christian history, from the foundation of the Church to the end of the world. Nor was any other

interpretation ever known in the Christian Church till the rise of modern futurism.

V. The red, black, and livid horses, and their riders, of the second, third, and fourth seals, were explained by primitive interpreters as signifying the wars) famines and pestilences which our Lord had predicted in the twenty fourth of Matthew, as salient events which would occur in the interval between His departure and His return. Thus in the commentary of Victorinus, who died as a martyr under the persecution of Diocletian, after the application of the going forth of the rider on the white horse of the first seal to the victorious Kingdom of Christ, he adds, "The other three horses very plainly signify the wars, famines, and pestilences announced by our Lord in the gospel.

"VI. The vision under the fifth seal of the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar, was interpreted by the Church of the first three centuries as representing the continuous persecutions and martyrdoms of Christ's saints; while the sixth seal was regarded as a vision of the judgments attending the consummation, or close of the age. No other view of the meaning of the seals was possible to the early Church. Their scope seemed to reach to the consummation) and it was most natural that their mysterious symbols should be interpreted in the light of our Lord's plain unmetaphorical predictions concerning the events whose occurrence should extend to His Second Advent. Both prophecies were by the same divine Revealer; and both seemed to predict the same course of events; wars, famines, pestilences, earth quakes, persecutions; a universal proclamation of the gospel, a great tribulation; and then the darkening of the sun and moon; the falling of the stars; the shaking of the powers of heaven; and the advent of the Son of Man in the power and glory of His kingdom.

Holding this view as regards the six first seals, the early Church, unable to anticipate the long course of history which lay concealed in the future, considered that in the remaining visions of the book the revealing Spirit retraced the steps leading up to the consummation, in order to fill in, the features omitted in the introductory sketch. Thus Victorinus says with reference to the trumpets and vials, which succeeded the seals, "we must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had (before) failed to say." To this interpreter the brief "silence" under the seventh seal was "the beginning of everlasting rest " ; while the judgments of the trumpets represented events connected with the coming of Anti-Christ.

VII. According to Victorinus the mighty cloud-clothed angel of the covenant of Revelations 10, "is our Lord." His position as standing on sea and land signifies that all things are placed under His feet." The command to measure the temple," he regarded as relating, not to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, but to the right ordering of the Christian Church. By the assembly of its bishops its faith was to be brought into agreement with the teachings of the Word of God. The slaughter of the witnesses he explains as representing the slaying of holy prophets by Antichrist in the last times. The 1,260 days of their prophesying he interprets literally, as the period of three years

and six months, during which the witnesses should prophesy in their sackcloth clothed character, as despised and persecuted by the world. To have interpreted the 1,260 days as symbolically representing 1,260 years of a suffering and subjected condition of witnesses to gospel truth, was of course impossible at that early period of the Church's history. The latter view only dawned upon the minds of Apocalyptic interpreters during the actual fulfilment of the prophecy in the middle ages.

VIII. The woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars, of Ch. 12, is, according to Victorinus, and all the early interpreters, "the ancient Church of fathers, and prophets, and saints, and apostles.— In his treatise on Christ and Antichrist, Hippolytus says, "By the 'woman clothed with the sun' he meant most manifestly the Church, endued with the Father's word, whose brightness is above the sun . . . the words 'upon her head a crown of twelve stars,' refer to the twelve apostles by whom the Church was founded." The "three and a half times" of her seclusion in the wilderness is the period of 1,260 days, or three and a half years, during which the Church "seeks concealment in the wilderness," from the persecutions of Antichrist; finding no safety but in flight.

IX. The 144,000 sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel, of Chs. 7 and 14, are interpreted by Tertullian as not Jews but Christians. 'With the same anti-Judaic view he markedly speaks of the Apocalyptic New Jerusalem (though with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on its gates) as Christian, not Jewish; the Jerusalem spoken of by St. Paul to the Galatians, as the Mother of all Christians." 1

The same view was clearly and powerfully advocated by the celebrated Origen ; and was held by Methodius, and Lactantius ; in fact was a leading feature of primitive exposition.

X. On the important subject of Antichrist, "while there was a universal concurrence in the general idea of the prophecy, there was in respect of the details of application, a considerable measure of difference; these differences, arising mainly out of certain current notions of the coming of Antichrist as in some way Jewish as well as Roman, and the difficulty of combining and adjusting the two characteristics." 2 The Roman view was derived from the Antichrist being represented in the prophecy as the eighth head of the Roman beast, arising after the healing of his deadly wound. 1 His Jewish character, where held, seems to have arisen from his being regarded as in some sense a false Christ, such as our Lord predicted in Matt. 24. Hence Irenaeus and Hippolytus imagined that the place of his manifestation would be the Jewish sanctuary, and that its time would synchronize with the last half week of the "seventy weeks" of Daniel 9. The whole subject was necessarily involved in great perplexity to these early expositors. No correct anticipation of the fulfilment of the predictions relating to Antichrist, viewed as a whole, was possible in the opening centuries of the Church's history. Certain points, however, were clearly and correctly seen. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Fathers, considered the Apocalyptic ten-horned beast, or rather its ruling head, to be identical with St. Paul's Man of Sin, and St. John's Antichrist: and Irenaeus directed his readers to look out for the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, as that which was

immediately to be followed by Antichrist's manifestation. He also remarkably explained the number of Antichrist's name, 666, as symbolizing Latteinos, the Latin man, "seeing that they who thus held the world's empire were Latins." 2

XI. To the early Fathers the Babylon of the Apocalypse represented Rome.

This is an important point owing to the magnitude of the position occupied by "Babylon the Great" in Apocalyptic prophecy; and also to the fact that the angelic interpretation of the vision relating to Babylon makes it the key to the whole prophecy.

"Tell me, blessed John," says Hippolytus, "thou apostle and disciple of the Lord, what thou hast heard and seen respecting Babylon: wake up, and speak; for it was she that exiled thee to Patmos." "Babylon, in our own John," says Tertullian, "is a figure of the city of Rome, as being equally great and proud of her sway, and triumphant over the saints.— On Revelations 17:9, Victorinus says, "The seven heads are the seven hills on which the woman sitteth -that is the city of Rome." "On the Apocalyptic BabyIon's meaning Rome, all agreed."

XII. The continued existence of the Roman Empire was commonly regarded by the early Fathers as the "let" or hindrance to the manifestation of "the Man of Sin," or Antichrist. In his magnificent apology addressed to the rulers of the Roman Empire, Tertullian says that the Christian Church prayed for the stability of the empire, because they knew "that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth—in fact the very end of all things, threatening dreadful woes—was only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman Empire. We have no desire to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed we are lending our aid to Rome's duration." As to the 'I let' or hindrance to the manifestation of the "Man of Sin," "we have the consenting testimony of the early Fathers," says Elliott, "from Irenaeus, the disciple of the disciple of St. John, down to Chrysostom and Jerome, to the effect that it was understood to be the imperial power ruling and residing at Rome."

XIII. The Martyr Church of the first three centuries interpreted the first resurrection foretold in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse as a resurrection of the literal dead. Hence they believed in the pre-millennial Advent of Christ. On no point of interpretation was their agreement more remarkable. "On the millenary question, all primitive expositors except Origen, and the few who rejected the Apocalypse as unapostolical, were pre-millenarians; and construed the first resurrection of the saints literally." 2 They looked for the appearance of Christ to destroy Anti-Christ. They believed that the Roman Empire would fall into ten kingdoms, then Antichrist would appear, and then Christ would come in the glory of His kingdom. Thus Lactantius held that after the destruction of Antichrist "the saints raised from the grave would reign with Christ through the world's seventh Chiliad, a period to commence, Lactantius judged, in about two hundred years at furthest: the Lord alone being thenceforth worshipped in a renovated world; its still living inhabitants multiplying incalculably in a state of terrestrial felicity; and the resurrection saints, during this commencement of an eternal kingdom in a nature like the angelic, reigning over them." 3

At the conclusion of his treatise on Christ and Antichrist, Hippolytus expresses himself as follows-,, Moreover, concerning the resurrection, and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel says, And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life.' Esaias says, "The dead men shall arise, and they that are in their tombs shall awake; for the dew from thee is healing to them." The Lord says, ' Many in that day shall hear' the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' And the prophet says, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' And John says, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.' Concerning the resurrection of the righteous, Paul also speaks thus in writing to the Thessalonians ' The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice and trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. These things then, I have set shortly before thee, O Theophilus, drawing them (from Scripture itself) in order that maintaining in faith what is written, and anticipating the things that are to be, thou mayest keep thyself void of offense both towards God and towards men, " looking for that blessed hope and appearing of our God and Saviour," when having raised the saints among us, He will rejoice with them, glorifying the Father. To Him be the glory unto the endless ages of the ages. Amen.' "

Such were the leading features of the interpretation of the Apocalypse by the Martyr Church of the first three centuries. In the Catacombs of Rome, there remains a profoundly interesting and touching reference to one of the opening and closing symbols of the Apocalypse in the oft recurring Monogram of the Name of Christ, in which the Greek letters Alpha and Omega., the first and the last of the Alphabet, are inserted on either side of the brief sign standing for Xpiorus or Christ; the whole being enclosed in a circle, the symbol of eternity.

The following are the passages in the Apocalypse forming the foundation of the monogram. " I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

" / am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book." " / am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last ... I Jesus." " The two letters of Greece, the first and the last," says Tertullian, " the Lord assumes to Himself, as figures of the beginning and end which concur in Himself: so that, just as Alpha rolls on till it reaches Omega, and again Omega rolls back till it reaches Alpha, in the same way He might show that in Himself is both the downward course of the beginning on to the end, and the backward course of the end up to the beginning; so that every economy, ending in Him through whom it began,—through the Word of God, that is, who was made flesh,—may have an end corresponding to its beginning."

1

Such was the faith that overcame the world !

The place and power of the Apocalyptic prophecy as sustaining in the Martyr Church, the hope of the speedy advent of Christ, and thus strengthening that

Church for its warfare and victory over the persecuting pagan Empire of Rome, were of the highest practical importance. The historian Gibbon recognizes the immense influence of the hope of Christ's speedy coming on the early Church. "The ancient Christians," he says, "were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion. It was universally believed that the end of the world and the kingdom of heaven were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apostles; " a view " productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various races of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge. The ancient and popular doctrine of the millennium was intimately connected with the Second Coming of Christ. As the works of creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection."

While correct in its historical principle and leading features, the interpretation of the Apocalypse by the early Church was necessarily deficient in scope. It foreshortened the prospect to a narrow margin. It knew nothing of the long centuries which were destined to elapse before the dispensation had run its course. It knew nothing of the great Apostasy which was to darken the earth by its long and terrible eclipse ; and nothing of the glorious reformation which was to follow, although all these were foretold in the far-seeing prophecy. Rome Pagan, in her declining dominion, and proximate doom, filled the scene on which the early Christians gazed. One bright star shone in their sky, burning with intense and pristine splendour, the hope of the speedy coming of Christ. For that great event they watched and waited. They believed that to suffer with Christ was the prelude to reigning with Him, and that His kingdom was at hand. And this conviction nerved them to endure the utmost torments which heathen Rome had power to inflict. In this conviction they lived and died, " more than conquerors."

THE great historic event which immediately succeeded the Diocletian era of persecution was the fall of Paganism, and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

It is only by assuming Christ's name that the simpler ones of believers can be seduced to go to Antichrist; for thus they will go to Antichrist, while thinking to find Christ.

In its internal character and far-reaching effects this revolution is one of the greatest and most remarkable that has ever taken place in the history of the world.



The ruin of Paganism, as Gibbon has pointed out, is perhaps " the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition." During the long period of a thousand years the dark shadow of Paganism had covered the city and empire of Rome. Its temples were innumerable and adorned with the utmost magnificence. Its wealth, the accumulation of ages, was fabulously great. Its priesthood was established and endowed by government, the Roman Emperor himself occupying the position of the supreme pontiff of the hierarchy. In the fourth century this monstrous system was brought to ruin. Working upwards from the lowest strata of society, the belief in the unity of the Godhead, and the divinity of the Christian religion, a belief commended by the lives, and sealed by the blood of the martyrs, had gradually reached the highest classes in the community, and effected the conversion of the Roman Emperor. The conviction that "the idolatrous worship of fabulous deities, and real demons, is the most abominable crime against the Supreme Majesty of the Creator," led to the subversion of the temples of the Roman world, and the total suppression of Paganism. Maxentius, the last persecuting Pagan Emperor, was overthrown by Constantine at the memorable battle of Milvian Bridge, and his legions drowned in the waters of the Tiber. The Christian religion, liberated from persecution, became the religion of the State. The suppression of Paganism gradually followed, and within less than a century its " faint and minute vestiges were no longer visible."

In this memorable event Apocalyptic prophecy was strikingly fulfilled, a fact clearly recognized and openly confessed by the leading Christian writers of the period, and even celebrated by Imperial Enactment.

The fall of Paganism shed a flood of light on the Apocalyptic vision in which the issue of the deadly conflict between the Christian Church and the Imperial Roman power is represented by the casting down of the seven-headed Satanically inspired dragon from his lofty position of rule and authority.

The conflict and its issue are thus symbolically described in Revelation 12: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place any more found in heaven, and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Several points in this most remarkable prophecy should be especially noticed.

1. The dragon is the ten-horned wild beast power of the Apocalypse whose identity with the fourth or ten-horned wild beast of the prophecies of Daniel was recognized by the Church of the second, third, and fourth centuries. Of the fourth beast " dreadful and terrible " Hippolytus says "who are these but the Romans ...the kingdom which is now established ? " " John in the Apocalypse," says Irenaeus, "teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel."

2. This ruling power, under a sevenfold succession of heads, is represented as Satanically inspired. In a later vision 2 the sixth head is identified with the form of Roman rule which existed in St. John's own time, that of the Pagan Roman Caesars.
3. The dragon is described as "great." The power of heathen Rome was then the greatest in the world. It had conquered and crushed the nations.
4. As "red "; red with much bloodshed of war and persecution.
5. As wearing the "crowns" which symbolized its rule, not on the ten horns, which had not then arisen, but on its previous succession of " heads."
6. As first standing before the " woman," who represented as the Fathers clearly saw the Judeo-Christian Church, 3 to devour her child as soon as it was born, and then warring against her, and "her seed."
7. The conflict is described as a fierce and obstinate " war."
8. The army of the just, under its Heavenly Leader, is victorious over the dragon.
9. The victory is celebrated by a song of praise in which the great event is regarded as a signal triumph of the Kingdom of God. "Now is come salvation and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ."
10. The victors are declared to have " overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ": not by sword and spear, as in a mere carnal conflict, but by moral, spiritual, and Christian weapons.
11. The martyr character of the conquerors is touchingly described in the concluding sentence " they loved not their lives-even unto the death."

In connection with the application of this remarkable prophecy, it should be observed that the figure of the dragon was used as an ensign by the armies of heathen Rome. Ammianus Marcellinus thus describes this heathen Roman standard: "The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air." It was first used as an ensign near the close of the second century of the Christian era. " In the third century it had become almost as notorious among Roman ensigns as the eagle itself; and is in the fourth century used by Prudentius,

Vegetius, Chrysostom, Ammianus, etc, in the fifth by Claudian and others." 1

Two stages in the casting down of Roman Paganism should be distinguished; first its primary dejection when headed by Maximin and Licinius; and secondly, its final overthrow as headed by the apostate Emperor Julian. The persecution under Diocletian was the most prolonged and severe of those endured by the early Church. Under Maximin this persecution reached its climax. " Before the decisive battle," says Milner, "Maximin vowed to Jupiter that, if victorious, he would abolish the Christian name. The contest between

Jehovah and Jupiter was now at its height, and drawing to a crisis." "The defeat and death of Maximin," says Gibbon, "delivered the Church from the last and most implacable of her enemies."

The effort of the apostate Emperor Julian thirty years later to restore Paganism throughout the Roman Empire was similarly defeated by the wonder working hand of God. It was "the design of Julian," says Gibbon, "to deprive the Christians of the advantages of wealth, of knowledge and of power." They were condemned to rebuild at enormous cost, the Pagan temples which had been destroyed. By these rash edicts "the whole empire, and particularly the East, was thrown into confusion." The persecution which broke forth afresh against the Church was terminated by the tragic death of Julian on the field of battle, in A. D . 363.

Theodoret tells us that "as soon as the death of Julian was known in Antioch (followed by the accession of the orthodox Jovian) public festivals were celebrated. And not in the churches and martyr chapels only, but even in the theatres the victory of the cross was extolled, and Julian's oracles held up to ridicule. . . . They exclaimed as with one voice, 'Where are now thy predictions, O foolish Maximus? God and His Christ have gotten the victory. ' " 1

Bishop Gregory Nazianzen in a public discourse delivered on the occasion says, "Hear this, all ye nations . all that are now, and all that shall be hereafter. Hear every power in heaven, even all ye angels, whose office was the destruction of the tyrant: not of Sihon, King of the Amorites, nor of Og, King of Bashan, rulers of little importance, and their afflicted Israel, a small people only of the habitable earth; but the destruction of the dragon, the apostate, the man of great mind, the common enemy and adversary of all; who madly did and threatened many things on the earth, and spoke and devised great wickedness against the height above. ... Who shall worthily celebrate these things? Who shall declare the power of the Lord, and speak all His praise? Who shivered the armour, the sword and the battle, and broke the heads of the dragon in the water? . . . It is the Lord mighty and powerful; the Lord mighty in battle."

Later on, alluding to the frustration of Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, and to destroy the very name of Christians, he says:—"What will be the end of the heathen if they turn not to Christ now? Would that they would consent to be ruled not with the rod of iron, but with that of the Good Shepherd."

To commemorate the fall of Paganism, the Emperor Constantine caused medals to be struck representing that event under the semblance of a dragon precipitated into the abyss. "As we see on the coins of Constantine," says ' Ranke, "the Labarum with the monogram of Christ above the conquered dragon, even so did the worship and name of Christ stand triumphant above prostrate heathenism."

In his Epistle to Eusebius and other bishops concerning the re- edifying and repairing of churches, Constantine' said that "liberty being now restored, and 'that dragon' being removed from the administration of public affairs by

the providence of the Great God, and by my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest, even to all." 1

The Emperor Constantine, says Eusebius, " caused to be painted on a lofty tablet, and set up in the front of the portico of his palace, so as to be visible to all, a representation of the salutary sign placed above his head; and below it that hateful and savage adversary of mankind, who by means of the tyranny of the ungodly, had wasted the Church of God, falling headlong, under the form of a dragon, to the abyss of destruction. For the sacred oracles in the books of God's prophets have described him as a dragon and a crooked serpent, and for this reason the Emperor there publicly displayed a painted resemblance of the dragon beneath his own and his children's feet, stricken through with a dart, and cast headlong into the depths of the sea."

This triumphant celebration of the victory of the early Church over Roman Paganism was anticipated in the words of the Apocalyptic prophecy, " Now hath come the salvation, and the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ . . . therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." " The very word," says Elliott, " eufraivesthe, used in the Apocalyptic prophecy to wish the Christian professors joy, was the identical word addressed more than once to them in the Imperial Edict of Constantine."

The exaltation of the Christian religion to the position of the religion of the State under Constantine, while productive of great advantages, especially in the cessation of persecution, led to serious declension, not only in the spiritual life of the Church, but also in her views as to the teachings of prophecy concerning her relations to the Roman Empire, and to the world. The divine weapon placed in the hand of the Church to preserve her from apostasy fell from her grasp. She lost the remembrance of her position as a pilgrim and a stranger on earth seeking a celestial city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The transformation of the Martyr Church of the early centuries into the Christendom of the Middle Ages involved the change of Apocalyptic interpretation as to the reign of Christ and His saints in a post-advent kingdom, into a prediction of a Romanized Christianity ruling after the fashion of the Caesars, the peoples of the world.

"The great Constantine revolution," says Elliott, "could hardly fail of exercising a considerable influence on Apocalyptic interpretation. A revolution by which Christianity should be established in the prophetically-denounced Roman Empire, was an event the contingency of which had never occurred apparently to the previous exponents of Christian prophecy; and suggested the idea of a time, mode, and scene, of the fulfilment of the promises of the latter-day blessedness that could scarcely have arisen before; viz.— that its scene might be the earth in its present state, not the renovated earth after Christ's coming (and the conflagration) ; its time that of the present dispensation ; its mode by the earthly establishment of the earthly Church visible. For it does not seem to have occurred at the time that this might in fact be one of the preparations, through Satan's craft, for the establishment, after a while, of the great predicted antichristian ecclesiastical empire, on the platform of the same Roman world, and in a professing but apostatized Church." 1

This revolution of interpretation is strikingly visible in the case of Eusebius, who, though he seems in early life to have received the Apocalypse as inspired Scripture, and interpreted its seals in harmony with the method of Victorinus, was led, after the Constantine revolution, and the establishment of Christianity, to doubt the apostolic authorship of the prophecy. He continued, however, to apply the symbolic prefigurations of the Apocalypse to the changed events of the period; the casting down of the seven-headed dragon from its high and ruling position represented in the twelfth chapter seemed to him to agree in a marvelous manner with the dejection of Paganism, and of the Pagan Emperors, which had just taken place, from the supremacy which they had for ages exercised in the Roman world. The prophecies of Isaiah respecting the latter-day glory of the redeemed, and the Apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, were applied by him to the Christian Church as newly established by Constantine. The millennial day of the glory and prosperity of the Church seemed to have dawned, and the language of the period was filled with the loftiest anticipations.

During the thousand years which followed, the Mediaeval period of history, the Church believed she was living in the millennium. The commencement of this millennium, or period during which Satan is bound, was variously dated; first with Augustine from Christ's ministry, when the Redeemer beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven; and later on, when the lapse of time had proved the error of this view, from the Constantine revolution; the binding of Satan being taken to represent the restriction of Satanic power at the fall of Paganism. This extraordinary view continued to prevail up to the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Reformers supposing themselves to be living in the "little season" during which Satan was to be "loosed" at the close of the millennium. To carry out the view that the millennium had come, and that the Church, as Eusebius supposed, had reached the stage of existence represented by the latter-day glory predicted by Isaiah, and the new Jerusalem foretold by John, "must soon have been felt most difficult: the Arian and other troubles which quickly supervened, powerfully contributing to that conviction. It resulted, perhaps not a little from this cause, that the Apocalypse itself became for a while much neglected; especially in the Eastern Empire, where the Imperial seat was now chiefly fixed." 1

The sad effect of this neglect became evident in the dark apostasy which speedily followed. The Harlot Church denounced in the Apocalypse was magnified as the Bride of Christ, enriched with the privileges and adorned with the glories of the millennial state. The reign of Satan was mistaken for the reign of Christ. The solemn warnings of the Word of God intended to preserve the Church from the apostasy were forgotten; and the "falling away" foretold took place, carrying with it the whole of Christendom, with the exception of a small and feeble remnant of faithful witnesses to New Testament truths.

The growing perception of this apostasy led the prophetic interpreters of the fourth and fifth centuries to the view which had presented itself to the pre-Constantine Fathers, that the scene of the manifestation of Antichrist would prove to be the professing Christian Church. Thus Athanasius taught that the

Antichrist of prophecy would prove to be a heretical ruler of the Roman Empire, making a Christian profession; and that Antichrist would come with the profession, " I am Christ," assuming Christ's place and character, like Satan transformed into an angel of light. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, in France, the contemporary and friend of Athanasius, asked when the flood of Arianism swept over the western part of the Roman Empire, " Is it a doubtful thing that Antichrist will sit in Christian Churches? "He denounced the Emperor Constantine as a precursor of Antichrist; and speaks of Bishop Arius, and Bishop Auxentius as Antichrists. Cyril, of Jerusalem, says of Antichrist, " This man will usurp the government of the Roman Empire, and will falsely call himself the Christ." " He will sit in the temple of God : not that which is in Jerusalem, but in the Churches everywhere." 2 Jerome, in interpreting Paul's Man of Sin, declares that he " is to sit in the temple, that is in the Church." He adds, " It is only by assuming Christ's name that the simpler ones of believers can be seduced to go to Antichrist; for thus they will go to Antichrist, while thinking to find Christ.

WITH the Gothic invasion and the break-up of the western Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, came the predicted rise of Antichrist. The incipient fulfilment of the foretold partition of the empire began to be recognized as early as the fourth century. "In our time," said Jerome, " the clay has become mixed with iron. Once nothing was stronger than the Roman Empire, now nothing weaker, mixed up as it is with, and needing the help of barbarous nations." "He who withheld is removed, and we think not that Antichrist is at the door!" On the unthinking Church, blind to the meaning of the events occurring around her, came the predicted " Man of Sin," to take his foretold place and sit supreme for long disastrous centuries in the very Temple or Church of God.

## **THE RISE OF THE PAPACY TO UNIVERSAL DOMINION**

"A mighty and majestic figure," says Pennington, " comes upon our view in the Middle Ages. Its feet rest upon the earth, while its head towers towards the stars. A triple tiara, rich with the most costly gems, glitters on its brow. It is clothed in the sacred robes of the priesthood, but bears in its hand the golden sceptre of temporal dominion. The nations of the earth crouch at its feet. Around it clouds of incense roll upwards from innumerable altars. The ground on which it stands is whitened with the bones of God's saints. 1

The rise of this power was gradual. The removal of the Imperial Government from Rome to Constantinople, and the break-up of the empire by invading hordes of barbarians, liberated the Bishop of Rome from the bonds which had confined his activities, and hindered the attainment of the supremacy to which he aspired. Rome had in earlier times sat queen among the nations. Why should not the Bishop of Rome be accorded the proud position of Head of the Churches of Christendom? Why should he not become their spiritual dictator? Applications for assistance and advice came to him from every quarter. His letters, first mild and moderate in tone, gradually assumed the form of arbitrary mandates. Encroachments were made on the spiritual jurisdiction of other bishops. Appeals addressed to him by bishops or presbyters, and applications from monarchs to interfere in their quarrels, led to his

asserting the right to decide by his own arbitrary will the disputes of individuals and the controversies of the Church. Additional powers were gradually obtained. The Bishop of Rome was the alleged successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, to whom Christ had committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the fifth century the lineal descent of the Popes from St. Peter was an accredited article of Christianity. Claiming to have been bestowed as a divine gift, the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all other bishops was established by a law of the Roman Emperor. In the year 607 the Emperor Phocas, a blood-stained usurper, placed the crown of universal supremacy in the Christian Church on the brow of Boniface III. The temporal dominion of the Popes speedily followed. In the next century the usurper Pepin bestowed upon the Pope the city of Rome, and the exarchate of Ravenna, which he had wrested from the Lombards. Charlemagne, crowned by the Pope in the year 800 as Emperor of the Romans, enlarged the Pope's dominions; and the Roman Empire, which had been overthrown by the barbarians, restored by Charlemagne, took officially the title of the Holy Roman Empire.

King and priest stood side by side at the summit of this empire. Which stood highest? That question which took centuries to settle, ended by the exaltation of the Papal power in 1268 to supremacy over the Imperial power. A large space in the history of the Middle Ages is filled by the struggle between the empire and the papacy. Its termination witnessed the subjection of the temporal to the spiritual dominion.

In the Donation of Constantine—a forged document on which Papal supremacy was largely built—the emperor transfers the diadem from his own head to the head of the Pope of Rome, and says "in our reverence for the blessed Peter, we ourselves hold the reins of his horse, as holding the office of his stirrup-holder; and we ordain that all his successors shall wear the same mitre in their processions, in imitation of the empire and that the Papal crown may never be lowered, but may be exalted above the crown of the earthly empire. Lo, we give and grant not only our palace, as aforesaid, but also the city of Rome, and all the provinces and palaces and cities of Italy, and of the western regions, to our aforesaid most blessed Pontiff and universal Pope." The famous Decretal Epistles in the ninth century, now condemned as forgeries by the voice of Christendom, containing the "alleged judgment of the Popes in former ages, in unbroken succession from St. Peter, supplied them with everything they could require to establish the sovereignty of the Popes over the monarchs of the earth, and their authority over the doctrines and practices of the Churches of Christendom." In the exercise of his supremacy the Pope exalted or deposed monarchs, absolved subjects from their oaths of allegiance, declaring in the synod of 1080 "we desire to show the world that we can give, or take away at our will, kingdoms, duchies, earldoms, in a word, the possessions of all men, since we can bind and loose." Gratian's work, the Decretum, in the middle of the twelfth century, deciding questions relating to the Canon law of the Church of Rome, quoting as authority sixty-five of the forged Decretal Epistles, gave to the papacy a legal and long unquestioned standing. "This work was always the authority for the Canon law of the Church of Rome, which was received into every nation before the Reformation. No book has ever exercised so much influence in the Church. In fact, this system of law constitutes the papacy."

The subjection of the Bishops to Papal supremacy was followed by the destruction of the independence of Councils. " The only business of Bishops at a Council was considered to be to inform the Pope of the condition of their dioceses, and to give him their advice in spiritual matters. The Pope in fact appropriated to himself all the rights and institutions of the Church. . . . National churches now found themselves subject to an irresistible despotism. Legates were appointed to represent the Majesty of the Pope in remote territories, who lived in splendour at the expense of the victims of their tyranny, deposing Bishops, holding Synods, promulgating Canons, and pronouncing sentences of Excommunication against those who dared to resist their arbitrary decrees."

In the year 1268 the Popes "blotted out the name of the House of Hohenstaufen from under heaven." The execution of Conradin, the grandson of Frederick II, the last heir of the House, leaving " another stain of blood on the annals of the papacy, marked the termination of the struggle for two hundred years between the Emperors and the Popes for supremacy over the nations. The latter now reigned without a rival in Christendom."

It only remained for the Popes to assume Divine honours. In the person of Boniface VIII, whose accession took place in 1294, the Pope sat "as God in the temple of God." Human ambition could rise no higher. The Pope boldly laid claim to the attributes and prerogatives of Deity. He represented the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He claimed to rule in three worlds, Heaven, Earth, and Hell; and in token thereof was crowned with a triple crown. He paraded himself before the world as the infallible Teacher of faith and morals. Exalted above bishops, above councils, above kings, above conscience, from his decisions there was no appeal. He was the supreme Judge of mankind. Lifted up to sit on the high altar of St. Peter's, the chiefest Church in Christendom, he was publicly adored, cardinals, the princes of the Church, kissing in turn his feet; bishops bending low before him in deepest reverence; and nations worshipping him as the visible representative of the Godhead, possessed of power to pardon sins on earth, to canonize saints in heaven, to loose souls from the pains of purgatory in the world beneath; to judge, to govern, to bless, to save mankind; whose sentences, clothed with the authority of God, were inherently irreversible, irrevocable, final and everlasting.

And for what ends, and with what effects has the Godlike power of this great Usurper been employed?

Let history answer. Let the stake reply. Let the Inquisition speak. Let the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, the Lollards, the Hussites, the Huguenots sound forth the answer. Let Italy, let France, let Spain tell what they have witnessed. Let Roman Catholic lands in their notorious degradation, and Protestant lands deluged with blood by Papal wars and massacres, bear their testimony. The Bible prohibited; idolatry enforced; the gospel denied; Christianity caricatured; millions deluded; millions led to destruction; who can estimate the world-wide effects of this diabolical travesty of the religion of Jesus Christ? The cup of salvation changed into the cup of death; revealed religion, God's greatest, highest gift to man, transformed into a snare, an instrument of delusion, tyranny, and eternal ruin to countless



souls, and generations of mankind.

## PARALLEL DEVELOPMENT OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

Did the prophetic expositors of the Middle Ages, after the breaking up of the old Roman Empire, and the rise of the Papal power to supremacy over the Gothic kingdoms, recognize, on his appearance, the predicted "Man of Sin," or Antichrist?

Not at first. The comprehension of the character of Romanism and the papacy was a gradual growth. In its slow development the doctrinal errors of the Church of Rome were recognized as unscriptural long before the antichristian character of the papacy was perceived. Not until the papacy reached the monstrous height of self-exaltation and depravity which it attained in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was it seen to fulfill the predictions relating to the "Man of Sin," or Antichrist.

From the middle of the seventh century the Paulikians in Eastern Christendom, "bore a continuous and unvarying protest against the grosser superstitions of saint mediatorship, image worship, and other kinds of idolatry, as well as against the established system of priestcraft which supported them." 1 In Western Europe, Claude, Bishop of Turin, "was a true, fearless, enlightened, and spiritual witness for Christ's truth and honour, and against the superstition and wickedness of the age," 1 and earned the title of "the Protestant of the ninth century." "When sorely against my will, I undertook at the command of Louis the Pious the burden of a Bishoprick," says Claude, "and when contrary to the order of truth I found all the Churches of Turin stuffed full of vile and accursed images, I alone began to destroy what all were sottishly worshipping. Therefore it was that all opened their mouths to revile me. And forsooth, had not the Lord helped me, they would have swallowed me up quick." 32 From the works of Claude, and the treatises written against him, it appears that he protested against the "worship of saints, relics, and the wooden cross, as well as of images; against pilgrimages, and all the prevailing Judaic or formal and ceremonial system of religion; against masses for the dead; against what was afterwards called transubstantiation in the Eucharist; against the supremacy of the Pope of Rome; and the authority of tradition in doctrines of religion. The written Word was made by him the one standard of truth." 3

Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, from A . D . 810 to 841, was a determined enemy of all superstition. With reference to the invocation of saints, he held that "there is no other Mediator to be sought for but He that is the God-Man." "He combats the idea of merit in human works with as much zeal and force," says Leger, "as Calvin himself." 4 Gottschalc, a monk of the abbey of Fulda, left his monastery with missionary purposes, and after preaching the gospel agreeably with Augustine's views of it, in Dalmatia, Pannonia, Lombardy, and Piedmont, was condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, beaten with rods, and cast into prison, where he lingered refusing retractation till his death in 868. 5 Treatises from the Lyonnese Church of this period exhibit "the same decided adhesion to the doctrines of Augustine." A reference occurs in the letters of Atto, Bishop of Vercelli near Turin, A.D. 945, to "certain false teachers, known among the common

people by the name of prophets, under whose teaching certain persons in his diocese had been induced to forsake their priests, and their Holy Mother the Church." 6 In 1028 the archbishop of Milan discovered on a visitation a sect of so-called heretics whose central point and refuge was "the castle of Montfort, in the near neighbourhood of Turin, its chief teacher there being one Gerard." When taken and imprisoned at Milan these heretics "spoke of their High Priest in contradistinction to the Roman High Priest." "In vain offers of life were made to them on condition of recantation. Gerardus especially, with happy countenance, seemed eager for suffering. The most continued steadfast; and so were burned, on the Piazza of the Cathedral." 1

At the Council of Arras, heretics from the confines of Italy, who had been summoned before their Bishop in 1025, admitted their rejection of "the whole doctrines, discipline, and authority of the Romish Church." Berenger, in the year 1045, Principal of the Public School at Tours, and afterwards Archdeacon of Angers, combated the received doctrine of transubstantiation. His teaching was "condemned in Councils held at Rome, Vercelli, and Paris, in the year 1050, and he was deprived of the temporalities of his benefice."

Peter de Bruys, originally a presbyter of the Church, "became a missionary and protestor against what he denounced as the superstitions of the day in the French provinces of Dauphiny, Province and Languedoc. His success was great, and a sect formed of his followers,, vulgarly called after him Petrobrussians, but who called themselves Apostolicah. At length in the year 1126, after nearly twenty years of missionary labour, he was seized by his enemies, and burned to death in the town of St. Giles, near Thoulouse."

The so-called heresies of Peter de Bruys "were propagated after his death by a monk named Henry." Beginning from Lausanne, in 1116, he preached in Paris and Languedoc "with eloquence such as to melt 'all hearts, and a character for both sanctity and benevolence such as to win all admiration. He was the Whitfield of the age and country, and with success that to a Catholic eye was fearful."- He was seized in the year 1147, convicted and imprisoned. "Soon after he died, whether by a natural death or by the flames, is a point disputed." In the same year heretics were discovered and burned at Cologne. Maintaining their doctrines in opposition to the Church of Rome "from the Words of Christ and His apostles," they suffered martyrdom, "and what is most wonderful," says Evervinus, "they entered to the stake, and bore the torment of the fire, not only with patience, but with joy and gladness."

The Henricians, or followers of Henry of Italy (called also Boni Homines) who were examined and condemned at the Council of Lombers, in 1165, rejected the characteristic doctrines of the Church of Rome, basing their beliefs on the Word of God alone.

Peter Waldo, or Valdes, a man eminent among Mediaeval witnesses to the gospel of Christ, sold all he had in the year 1170, distributed to the poor, and became the leader to "certain missionary bands known thenceforth under the name of Waldenses, as well as "Poor Men of Lyons." Before the close of the next -century they were "well known as sectaries that had an intimate local connection with the Alpine valleys of Piedmont and Dauphiny." Perpetuated from the time of Claude of Turin, the separatists in Piedmont appear to have

commingled later on with the sectaries of Lyonnese origin under the common name of Waldenses. Driven by persecution from the plain of Lombardy the Waldenses took refuge in the valleys of the neighbouring Alps, where for many centuries they maintained, in opposition to the Church of Rome, their witness to New Testament teachings. An ancient manuscript copy of their treatise, "The Noble Lesson" exists in the library of Geneva, and another in the library at Cambridge. The date of this famous composition is A . D . , 1100.

The record of the date of "The Noble Lesson " is preserved in the opening lines of the composition:

" O Frayres entende une noble Leycon  
Souvent deven veglar e star en oreson  
Car nos veen aquest mont esser pres del chavon.  
Mot curios deorian esser de bonas obras far  
Car nos veen aquest mont de la fin apropiar.  
Benha mil et cent an compli entierement  
Que fo scripta lara, que sen alderier temp."

Leger's translation of this ancient Waldensian confession is given as follows in the antiquated French of 230 years ago.

" O Freres ecoutes une noble Lecon,  
Souvent devons veiller et etre en oraison.  
Car nous voyons ce monde etre pres de sa fin.  
Bien soignens devrions etre a faire bonnes ceuvres,  
Car nous voyons ce monde de sa fin approcher :  
Ily a mil et cent ans accomplis tout a fait  
Que fut ecrire l'heure qu'estions es derniers terns."

In this remarkable composition " the following doctrines are drawn out with much simplicity and beauty:—the origin of sin in the fall of Adam, and its transmission to all men; the offered redemption through the death of Jesus Christ, who " underwent agonies, such that the soul separated from the body, to save sinners;" the union and cooperation of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity in man's salvation ; the obligation and spirituality of the moral law under the gospel; the duties of prayer, watchfulness, self-denial, unworldliness, humility, love, as " the way of Jesus Christ" ; their enforcement by the prospect of death and judgment, and the world's near ending; by the narrowness too of the way of life, and the fewness of those that find it; as also by the hope of the coming glory at the judgment and revelation of Jesus Christ. Besides which, we find in it a protest against the Romish system generally, as one of soul-destroying idolatry; against masses for the dead, the doctrine of purgatory, the confessional, priestly absolution, and priestly mercenariness; and "the suspicion is half hinted, and apparently half formed, that, though a personal Antichrist might perhaps be expected, yet popery itself, with its followers was probably one form of Antichrist." 1 The astounding development of papal ambition in Innocent III, and the papal war of extermination which followed against the Albigenses and Waldenses, led the latter, early in the thirteenth century, to accept as an article of their creed the doctrine "That the papacy and Church of Rome were to be regarded as the Apocalyptic Harlot Babylon, and by consequence

Antichrist," a doctrine to which they held unalterably ever afterwards." 2 This doctrine they embodied in their Treatise on Antichrist, and other works. The idea of Antichrist as a person or power professedly Christian in character is seen slowly dawning on the mind in the Apocalyptic commentaries of the Middle Ages. Primasius, Bishop of the Carthaginian province, whose name appears in a Council held at Constantinople in 553,- in his "Commentary on the Apocalypse" (discovered with his other works in the monastery of St. Theuderic, near Lyons, in the sixteenth century) lays stress on Antichrist's affected impersonation of, or substitution of himself for Christ; and blasphemous appropriation to himself of Christ's proper dignity. He seems to view the second two-horned beast of Revelation 13, as ecclesiastical rulers, "hypocritically feigning likeness to the Lamb, in order the better to war against him: and by the mask of a Christian profession, under which mask the devil puts himself before men, acting out the Mediator."

The venerable Bede, whose death in a Northumbrian monastery took place A . D . 735, similarly interprets in his " Commentary on the Apocalypse," the lamb-like beast of Revelation 13, as meaning " Antichrist's pseudo-Christian false prophets." " He shews the horns of a lamb, that he may secretly introduce the person of the dragon. For by the false assumption of sanctity, which the Lord truly had in Himself, he pretends that a matchless life and wisdom are his. Of this beast the Lord says, 'Beware of false prophets' which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."

Ambrose Anspert, a Latin expositor whose era was A. D. 760 or 770, and dedicated his Apocalyptic commentary to Pope Stephen, interpreted the second beast of Revelation 13 as "signifying the preachers and ministers of Antichrist; feigning the lamb, in order to carry out their hostility against the Lamb; just as Antichrist too, the first beast's head wounded to death, would, he says, exhibit himself pro Christo, in Christ's place."

Andreas, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, an expositor in the Greek Church during the latter part of the fifth century, explains after Irenaeus the two-horned beast as Antichrist's false prophet, " exhibiting a show of piety, and with pretense of being a lamb when in fact a wolf." "With regard to the harlot seated on the beast in Revelation 17, he observes that Rome had been judged by certain earlier writers to be the city intended, because of its being built on seven hills; but he objects its having then for some time lost its imperial majesty: unless indeed, he adds, very remarkably, this should in some way be restored to her, "a supposition involving the fact of a previous overthrow of the city now ruling," ie., Constantinople.

Berengaud, a Latin expositor of the Apocalypse, towards the close of the ninth century, explains the beast-riding harlot of Revelation 17 as Rome, and her predicted burning and spoiling by the ten kings, as the destruction of ancient Rome by the Gothic barbarians, with reference, however, as Rome was professedly Christian at that time, to the reprobate in her. 4

Before the conclusion of the eleventh century, the papacy under Gregory VII " had risen to such a height of power as well as of pretension, and abused it to the enforcement of such unchristian dogmas, albeit in the professed

character of Christ's vicar, as to force on the minds of the more discerning, surmising about the Popes and Papal Rome, and their possible prefiguration in Apocalyptic prophecy, scarce dreamed of before. Already, just before the year 1,000, Gherbert of Rheims had spoken in solemn council of the Pope upon his lofty throne, radiant in gold and purple; and how that if destitute of charity, he was Antichrist sitting in the temple of God. And Berenger, in the eleventh century, as if apocalyptically instructed, and with special reference to the Pope's enforcement of the antichristian dogma of transubstantiation, declared the Roman See to be not the apostolic seat, but the seat of Satan." 1 Joachim Abbas, elected abbot of the monastery of Curacio in Calabria, about the year 1180, who had a greater repute as an expounder of prophecy than any other in the Middle Ages, taught in his valuable " Commentary on the Apocalypse," that as Christ is both King and Priest, Satan would " put forth the first beast of Revelation 13, to usurp His Kingship, and the second to usurp His Priestly dignity: the latter having at its head some mighty prelate, some universal pontiff, as it were, over the whole world, who may be the very Antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks as being extolled above all that is called God, and worshipped ; sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as God."

Thus gradually the idea of the professedly Christian character of the predicted Antichrist penetrated the minds of leading expositors in the Middle Ages, and the view that the professing Christian Church would be the sphere of his manifestation. The notion that the foretold break up of the Roman Empire had not taken place, because the Greek Byzantine ruler was still, after the Gothic catastrophe, called the Roman Emperor, and that therefore the rise of Antichrist should still be regarded as a future event, long hindered the application of the prophecies concerning Antichrist to the papacy: as also the supposition entertained in the Middle Ages that the period in which they lived was part of the Apocalyptic millennium precursive to the three-and-a-half-years' season of Satan's loosing, and the manifestation of Antichrist. " The passing away of the millennial year 1,000 without any such awful mundane catastrophe, loosing of Satan, and manifestation of Antichrist, as had been popularly expected, tended to make men earnestly reason and question both on the long received millennial theory, and on that of the Antichrist intended in prophecy, more than before. Moreover, the incoming of the twelfth century from Christ, promised (should the world, last through it) to open to expositors the first possible opportunity of some way applying the year-day principle (which had never been recognized) not to the smaller three-and-a-half-days' prophetic period only, but also to the great prophetic period of the 1,260 days, without abandonment of the expectation, 3ver intended, of Christ's second advent being near."

## **I. The Identification of Babylon and Antichrist.**

IN the three centuries which preceded the Reformation the papacy was seen by men in a new light, and with growing clearness. The development of the "Man of Sin "reached its culmination, and the veil of professed sanctity which had concealed his real character fell from his shoulders. The papacy stood self-revealed.

Victorious over the imperial power in the middle of the thirteenth century, the popes of Rome "displayed far more ambition, arrogance, cruelty, and rapacity, than the kingdoms of this world with which they had struggled for the mastery." "Self-constituted vicegerents of the Almighty, the popes now sat 'as God in the temple of God,' and compelled the nations of the earth to crouch in vassalage before them. They had enslaved alike the souls and bodies of their fellow creatures."1 Boniface VIII who ascended the pontifical throne in 1294 "surpassed even Innocent III in the arrogance of his pretensions, launching his spiritual thunderbolts against states and empires, summoning princes to his tribunal that he might as an infallible judge settle their controversies, and laying claim to supreme dominion over the monarchs of the earth."2 During the period of seventy years which began in 1305, a fierce struggle for the papacy was carried on between rival factions. A set of popes and anti-popes, in Rome and Avignon, fought for the tiara; pope hurled against pope the thunderbolts of anathemas and excommunications. The wealth of the papacy was enormous; the extortion and appropriation of benefices, the sale of bishoprics, of sacraments, of indulgences, yielded a golden tide of riches, "swelling the pomp, and augmenting the retinue of the pretended successors of the fisherman of Galilee."3 All efforts to reform the Church proved abortive. "The vices, flagrant sins, and public crimes of the popes of the last half of the fifteenth century, and the early part of the sixteenth, gave them a conspicuous place in the annals of infamy. Paul II (1464-1471) was a great drunkard, put up all offices to sale, and spent all his days in weighing money and precious stones. He also directed an infamous war against the Hussites; oppressed his subjects, tortured the members of a literary institution because he affected to discover in it a dangerous conspiracy against the Pope, and died in the possession of a large treasure Sixtus IV was not only guilty of conspiracy, and of kindling the flames of war, but he was also dissolute, avaricious, intemperate, ferocious and bloodthirsty. Innocent VIII established a bank at Rome for the sale of pardons. Each sin had its price which might be paid at the convenience of the criminal. Alexander VI, and his son Caesar, were literally monsters in human shape. In early life, after he had become a cardinal, he was publicly censured for his gross debauchery. Afterwards he had five acknowledged children by a Roman matron, named Vanozia. After the death of Innocent in 1492, he succeeded by the grossest bribery in securing for himself the triple crown.

He had become rich through his preferment, and through inheritance from his uncle Cahxtus III. Of twenty-five cardinals, only five did not sell their votes. He is known to have sent four mules laden with silver to one, and to have given to another a sum of five thousand gold crowns. After his elevation he plunged without scruple and remorse into the practice of every vice, and the perpetration of every crime. His bastards were now brought forward and acknowledged as his children. The papal palace became the scene of Bacchanalian orgies. Licentious songs swelled by a chorus of revellers, echoed through its banqueting hall. Indecent play\*s were acted in the presence of the pontiff. He himself quaffed large draughts of wine from the foaming goblet. He indulged in licentiousness of the grossest description. . . . Venality prevailed in the papal court. The highest dignities in the Church were conferred without shame upon the best bidders. He committed the greatest crimes for the advancement of his children. One of them, Caesar

Borgia, was a fiend incarnate. The assassin's dagger, and the poison bowl were the constant instruments of his vengeance. Almost every night some assassination which he had ordered took place in the streets of Rome. The inhabitants were in constant terror of their lives. He caused the murder of his brother, of whom he was jealous, because he was preferred by a mistress with whom they were both intimate. These deeds were possible only in the spot where the highest temporal and spiritual authority were united in the same person. The palace of the popes was, in fact, a pandemonium. At length the reign of Alexander came to a sudden termination. He perished by a poisoned draught which Caesar had prepared for one of the cardinals whose wealth excited the cupidity of the Borgias. Multitudes which gazed on that livid corpse as it lay in state in St. Peter's Church, breathed a fervent thanksgiving to Almighty God for deliverance from the tyranny of an execrable monster, whose crimes had polluted the land, disgraced human nature, and placed him on a level with the very beasts that perish."The crimes, impurities, cruelties and tyrannies of these and other popes of the period opened the eyes of the nations, while the contemporaneous intervention of printing, and revival of learning, poured a blaze of light on these deeds of darkness. "The world stood aghast with horror at the contemplation of deeds as bad as those perpetrated in the darkest period of pagan antiquity."<sup>1</sup> A distinguished Roman Catholic historian, whose testimony on this subject is not likely to be questioned, acknowledges the corrupt state of the Church of Rome before the Reformation in emphatic terms: "For some years," says Bellarmine, "before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not (as contemporary authors testify) any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories, any discipline with regard to morals, any knowledge of sacred literature, any reverence for Divine things, there was not almost any religion remaining."<sup>2</sup>

## **RECOGNITION OF THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE "MAN OF SIN," OR ANTICHRIST**

History had interpreted prophecy, and justified the predictions in the Word of God. Men's eyes were opened. This then was what apostles and prophets had foretold. The thing predicted, the thing unexpected, the incredible thing, had come to pass. Antichrist was come. The "Man of Sin" was there, clothed in scarlet and purple, adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; crowned with the priestly mitre, and the proud diadem of the tiara; the VICECHRIST; an enemy of the gospel; a persecutor of the saints; a monster of iniquity; he was there, lifted up at his coronation to sit on the high altar of St. Peter's; worshipped by cardinals; adored by superstitious multitudes; a usurper of the place and prerogatives of God; a false idol; covetous, cruel, blood-stained, "drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus."He was there in the seven-hilled city; he was there in the temple of God. Yes, this was he. Such were the convictions and confessions of God's faithful saints and servants of those days.

In examining their testimony one cannot but be impressed by the spirit which animated the Mediaeval witnesses to gospel truth; for such they were, their whole contention against the system of Rome being on the ground of its antagonism to "the truth as it is in Jesus"; "the faith once delivered to

the saints."The seriousness of their spirit, their whole-hearted earnestness, their depth of conviction, the simplicity and singleness of their aim, the unflinching courage, the boldness of their attitude and tone, recall the confessors of Apostolic days, "the men who had been with Jesus."In the presence of this long line of "witnesses,"one seems to hear a voice as from heaven saying, "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."As the eyes of the mind are opened, we come to see that the spirit which animated and upheld these noble men and women, was none other than the Spirit of Jesus; that He Himself was in them, and that that was the profound secret of their utter unworldliness, their bold antagonism to error and superstition, their deep humility, their sanctity and strength. In these His servants and followers Jesus Christ walked on earth during those long dark centuries. Risen from the dead, He repeated in them the testimony He had borne to the truths of "the Everlasting Gospel" in the days of His earthly life.

And the three and a half years of His own sackcloth clothed testimony had their parallel in the three and a half-- times "of their sackcloth clothed "witnessing; the twelve hundred and sixty literal days of the one answering to the twelve hundred and sixty years of the other; whilst His death and resurrection "on the third day,"were paralleled by their death and subsequent resurrection after that three years' interval during which their enemies pronounced their testimony extinct. Thus did the Lord of Glory pass twice through analogous terrestrial experiences; first, in His own person, and next in the persons of His saints and followers, the members of His body, His flesh and His bones; first in the briefer period, and then in the longer; the one period answering to the other, on the prophetic scale of "a day for a year."Here is one of the principal keys to the times and visions of the Apocalypse. Here is the key to the story of the Church of the Middle Ages, and it is furnished by the word of prophecy as compared with the facts of history.

When with our understanding thus opened to the meaning of this long central period of the history of the Christian Church, intervening between the fall of Paganism in the fourth century, and the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we examine the records relating to the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Wyclifites, the Lollards, and the Hussites, who in Eastern and Western Europe, in Armenia, in Bulgaria, in the South of \* France, in the Alps of Piedmont, in Lombardy, in England, and Bohemia, kept the lamp of gospel testimony burning all through the Middle Ages, unextinguished by the superstitions, apostasies, and persecutions of those dismal times, and handed it on to the firm grasp of the Reformers, to be lifted up and set on a candlestick in the midst of Europe, and in the eyes of the nations, to shine as the great luminary of modern days, we recognize the unbroken continuity of the testimony of the true and living Church of Christ, and the fulfilment of His promise that against the Church He founded eighteen hundred years ago upon a Rock, the gates of hell should never prevail; that the living Church should continue, and its witness continue, un-conquered and unchanged, from age to age; the very gospel sounded forth by His lips, and by those of His apostles, sounding still as an undying testimony, from century to century, in the utterances of His faithful saints, until triumphant over



all opposition, it should fill the world as the voice of many waters and mighty thunders, and as the music of harpers harping with their harps.

And so we turn, though it be but for a brief and superficial examination, to the records of those days before the Reformation, and open the histories of the Albigenses, Waldenses, Lollards, and Hussites; the story of Constantine, of Sylvanus the Paulician, of Sergius; of Claude of Turin, of the Publicani in England; of the ancient Leonists, of the French Vallenses, and Peter Waldo; of Wycliffe and Huss, and Jerome of Prague.

The memorable story is told in such works as Sismondi's history of the crusade against the Albigenses; in Allix on the Churches of the Albigenses; in Faber's valuable book on the history and theology of the ancient Vallenses and Albigenses; in "Jean Leger's folio on the history of the Vaudois; in the "authentic details of the Valdenses "by Bresse; in Gilly's "Waldensian Researches"; in Dr. Alexis Mutton's "Israel of the Alps"; in the "Historical defence of the Waldenses "by Jeane Rodolphe Pegran ; in the valuable volume on "The Churches of Piedmont,"by Moreland, Cromwell's commissioner; in the illustrated book on the Protestant Valleys of Piedmont, Dauphiny, and the Ban de la Roche by Dr. Beattie ; in Foxe's "Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs"; in the writings of Wycliffe; in the voluminous works of John Huss; in the history of "The Reformation and Anti-reformation in Bohemia"; in McCree's history of the progress and suppression of the Reformation in Italy, and in Spain; in Limborch's massive work on the history of the Inquisition; in Llorente's history of the Inquisition in Spain from its establishment to the reign of Ferdinand VII, an author who had been "Secretary of the Inquisition "; and in Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae on "The Witnesses "of the Middle Ages; works which cast a flood of light on the history of the long line of Christian confessors in pre-Reformation times, and the noble army of martyrs of those never to be forgotten days.

And in the forefront of these testimonies we boldly place Bossuet's scornful work on the "Variations of the Protestant Churches" in which he pours forth the vials of contempt and obliquy on those despicable heretics the Waldenses, and Albigenses, and their predecessors the Paulicians of Armenia, and Bulgaria, the poor men of Lyons, the Bohemian Brethren, the impious and pernicious English arch-heretic Wycliffe, the Taborites, the Calix-tines, and others "of whom the world was not worthy. "As we turn over the pages of the eloquent Bishop of Meaux, the friend of Louis XIV, and persecutor of Madame Guyon and the Huguenots, we realize the truth of the Apocalyptic description of the Mediaeval "witnesses "to the gospel, which depicts them as "sackcloth clothed" for there in the pages of Bossuet's work these men of God stand dressed in the sackcloth of opprobrium. They are accused of ignorance, of error, of Manicheism, of schism, of hypocrisy, of presumption, of vain pretensions; they are treated as the scum of the earth, and "the oftscouring of all things."The learned and noble Leger, "one of the Vaudois Barbes (or pastors) and their most celebrated historian" is stigmatized "as unquestionably the most bold and ignorant of all mankind ! "Wycliffe, the blessed translator of the Bible into the English tongue, "subverted all order in the Church and State, and filled both with tumult and sedition."The poor men of Lyons were " obstinate heretics."Though St. Bernard testified of the

"Thoulousian heretics "that "their manners are irreproachable, they oppress none, they injure no man; their countenances are mortified and wan with fasting; they eat not their bread like sluggards, but labour to gain a livelihood,"yet "their piety is but disguise. Inspect the foundation, it was pride, it was hatred against the clergy, it was rancour against the Church; this made them drink in the whole poison of an abominable heresy."

These heretics "never ceased inveighing against human inventions, and citing the Holy Scriptures, whence they always had a text on hand on all occasions."This was their crime, and it was the crime which later on produced the Reformation, and gave birth to the temporal and spiritual liberties of the modern world.

We pursue Bossuet no further. Faber has answered him in his learned work on the true history and doctrines of the ancient Vallenses and Albigenses; and in "The Variations of Popery"Edgar has turned the tables on the Bishop of Meaux, and has shewn that it is the Church of Rome that has swerved from the teachings of the Apostles, not the Waldenses, Wycliffites, Hussites and Reformers, and that in all her leading and characteristic doctrines Rome has declined and departed from the faith of Apostolic times.

And now we reach the question, as to how this long line of Mediaeval witnesses to gospel truth interpreted the predictions in the Apocalypse, and kindred prophecies, with reference to the Antichrist, or "Man of Sin."Did they recognize the fulfilment of these prophecies in the papacy? Rome stood before them, revealed in her thousand superstitions, her proud pretensions, her persecuting actions, The head of that Apostate Church stood forth before their eyes crowned with the glittering tiara of a triple sovereignty, in heaven, earth, and hell, claiming to be the Vicar of Christ, and a Vice-God on earth. Did they recognize his portrait in the Word of God? Did they write his name beneath that portrait, and leave their testimony for the enlightenment of later years? They did. And having written it, they sealed the testimony with their blood. Two hundred and fifty years before Wycliffe stood forth as the champion of Protestant truth; three hundred years before Huss and Jerome confronted the Council of Constance; four hundred years before Luther published his ninety-five theses in Wittemberg, the Waldenses wrote their treatise on Antichrist, a copy of which is contained in Leger's folio volume, dated A . D . 1120. That treatise whose doctrine is the same as their catechism dated A . D . 1100, and was the doctrine they faithfully maintained century after century, thus begins—"Antichrist es falseta de damnation teterna cuberta de specie de la Verita . . . ap-pella Antichrist, O Babylonia, O quarta Bestia, O Meretrix, O home de pecca, filli de perdition."The treatise is given in full, with a French translation in Leger's work, pp. 71-83. In it is taught"that the Papal or Romish system was that of Antichrist, which from infancy in Apostolic times had grown gradually, by the increase of its constituent parts, to the stature of a full-grown man: that its prominent characteristics were to defraud God of the worship due to Him, rendering it to creatures, whether departed saints, relics, images, or Antichrist, ie: the antichristian body itself;—to defraud Christ, by attributing justification and forgiveness to Antichrist's authority and words, to saints' intercessions, to the merit of men's own

performances, and to the fire of purgatory ; to defraud the Holy Spirit, by Attributing regeneration and sanctification to the opus operatum of the two sacraments;—that the origin of this antichristian religion was the covetousness of the priesthood ; its tendency to lead men away from Christ; its essence a vain ceremonial; its foundations the false notions of grace and truth.”

“Antichrist,” says this treatise, “is covered with the appearance of truth and righteousness,” is “outwardly adorned with Christ’s name, offices, scriptures, and sacraments,” but though “covered and adorned with the semblance of Christ, His Church, and faithful members, opposes himself to the salvation wrought by Christ.” He “perverts unto himself” the worship “properly due to God alone,” “he robs and deprives Christ of His merits, with the whole sufficiency of grace, righteousness, regeneration, remission of sins, sanctification, confirmation, and spiritual nourishment; and imputes and attributes them to his own authority, to his own doings, or to the saints and their intercession, or to the fire of purgatory. Thus he separates the people from Christ, and leads them away to the things already mentioned.”<sup>1</sup> “He attributes the regeneration by the Holy Spirit to a dead outward faith”: “on which same faith he ministers orders and the other sacraments”: “he rests the whole religion and sanctity of the people upon his Mass”: “he does everything to be seen, and to glut his insatiable avarice.” “He allows manifest sins without, ecclesiastical censure and excommunication”; “he defends his unity not by the Holy Spirit, but by secular power”; “he hates, persecutes, and makes inquisition after, and robs and puts to death the members of Christ.” “These are the principal works of Antichrist.” And this “system” of iniquity “taken together is called Antichrist, or Babylon, or the fourth beast, or the Harlot, or the ‘Man of Sin,’ the son of perdition.”

Such also, was the belief of the Albigenses. “All agreed,” says Sismondi, “in regarding the Church of Rome as having absolutely perverted Christianity, and in maintaining that it was she who was designated in the Apocalypse by the name of the whore of Babylon.”

Even in the Romish Church the same view began to make its appearance towards the close of the twelfth century. The celebrated Joachim Abbas in his “Commentary on the Apocalypse,” written in 1183 declared that the harlot city reigning over the kings of the earth undoubtedly meant Rome, and that the false prophet foretold in the Apocalypse would probably issue out of the bosom of the Church; and that Antichrist might even then be in the world though the hour of his revelation had not yet come. Joachim was an abbot of the Roman Catholic Church in Calabria, learned in the Holy Scriptures, a deep student of the prophetic word. A few years later Almeric and his disciples taught that Rome was Babylon, and the Roman Pope Antichrist. Jean Pierre D’Olive, “another professed follower of Joachim, and leader in Languedoc of the austerer and more spiritual section of the recently formed Franciscan body, in a work entitled “Pastils on the Apocalypse,’ affirmed that ‘the Church of Rome was the whore of Babylon, the mother of harlots, the same that St. John beheld sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns,’ and the chief and proper Antichrist a pseudo-Pope; also very remarkably, that some reformation, with

fuller effusion of Gospel light might be expected prior to Rome's final predicted destruction, in order that, through its rejection of that light, God's destruction of it might be the rather justified before the world."

In the following century, Robert Grossthead, Bishop of Lincoln ( A . D . 1235-1253), boldly proclaimed the Pope to be Antichrist. "Christ came into the world to save and win souls,"said he, "therefore he that feareth not to destroy souls, may he not worthily be called Antichrist?"He foretold on his death-bed, with tokens of the deepest emotion that "the Church should not be delivered from her Egyptian servitude but by violence^ force, and the bloody sword."1

In the same century the immortal Dante ( A . D . 1265– 1321) denounced the Church of Rome as the Babylon of the Apocalypse, painting the papacy in his poem on Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, in vivid colours, as the world beheld it then.

"Woe to thee, Simon Magus. Woe to you  
His wretched followers, who the things of God  
Which should be wedded unto goodness, them  
Rapacious as ye are, do prostitute  
For gold and silver.

Your avarice  
O'ercasts the world with mourning, underfoot  
Treading the good, and raising bad men up.  
Of shepherds like to you the evangelist  
Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,  
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld;  
She who with seven heads towered at her birth,  
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,  
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.  
Of gold and silver ye have made your God,  
Differing wherein from the idolater,  
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?  
Ah, Constantine, to how much ill gave birth  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower  
Which the first wealthy Father gained from thee."

In his poem on Paradise he says:-

"My place he who usurps on earth hath made  
A common sewer of puddle and of blood.  
No purpose was of ours that the keys  
Which were vouchsafed me should for ensigns serve  
Unto the banners which do levy war  
On the baptized: nor I for vigil mark  
Set upon sold and lying privileges,  
Which makes me oft to bicker, and turn red.  
In shepherd's clothing, greedy wolves below  
Range wide o'er all the pastures. Arm of God Why longer sleepest thou?"

At the end of his poem on Paradise, he refers to the Apostle John as:-

“The seer  
That e'er he died, saw all the grievous times  
Of the fair bride, who with the lance and nails  
Was won.”

Dante died in 1321. Petrarch, who was crowned with the laurel of poetry by the Roman Senate in 1341, drew in eloquent words the same picture of the papacy.

Three years after Dante's death, or about the year 1324, Wycliffe was born, the Morning Star of the Reformation. Grand and solitary witness, he stood forth, Bible in hand, 150 years before the days of Luther, a light shining in the darkness of the Middle Ages; like some mountain-top, while all the rest of the world lies in darkness, illuminated with the glory of the unrisen sun. He wrote a library of learned and powerful disquisitions, but his great work was the translation of the Bible into the English language. “The Scripture only is true” was his golden maxim, and he circulated as well as translated the priceless Word of God.

Roused to concern about his soul in his twenty-third year, at the time of the fearful pestilence which cut off so large a proportion of the population of the world in 1345, he reached spiritual conviction which was deep and abiding. “The pestilence subsided in England in 1348. The earliest of the works attributed to Wycliffe bears the date 1356, eight years later. This piece is entitled “Last age of the Church.” The end of the world seemed to be approaching, and the coming of Antichrist at hand. In support of this view Wycliffe cites among others the Abbot Joachim, whose work on the Apocalypse he had read.

Later on Wycliffe came to regard the Pope of Rome seated in his blood-stained garments on the high altar in the Central Church of Christendom as the “Man of Sin,” sitting in the temple of God, the true Antichrist of prophecy. Opening his English Bible, whose facsimile in black letter print, lies before us, we turn with interest to the “secounde pistel to tessalonicentes,” and read the words bearing on the papacy as he wrote them in 1380, “that no man deceyve you in any maner for no but departyng awaye schal come firste: and the man of synne schal be schewide, the sone of perdicionne ... so that he sitte in the temple of God : shewyng hymself as he be God . . . the mysterie (or pry vete) of wickednesse worchith nowe.”

In his translation of the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, he writes concerning Babylon the great: “I siye a womman sittyng on a reed beast ful of names of blasfemye : havynge sevene hedys, and ten horns . . . a womman drunken of the blood of seyntis and of the blood of martiris of Jhu. (Jesus), and when I siye hire I wondride with greet wondryng”

Yes, Wycliffe beheld her, as did John the blessed disciple of our Lord; the one in the visions of prophecy, the other in the facts of history. Seeing Rome in her true character, Wycliffe wrote his treatise “Speculum de Antichristo” (Mirror of Antichrist) in which he unveils “the deceits of

Antichrist, and his clerkes."It is said openly, he observes, "that there is nothing lawful among Christian men without leave of the Bishop of Rome though he be Antichrist, full of simony and heresy. For commonly of all priests he is most contrary to Christ, both in life and teaching, and he maintaineth more sin by privileges, excommunications, and long pleas, and he is most proud against Christ's meekness, and most covetous of worldly goods and worships."To subject the Church to such a sovereignty, he says, must assuredly be to subject her to the power of Antichrist.

Sedulous to maintain the preaching of God's pure Gospel, in his tract entitled, "Of good preaching priests,"he says:- "The first general point of poor priests that preach in England is this—that the law of God be well known, taught, maintained, magnified. The second is— that great open sin that reigneth in divers states be destroyed, and also the heresy and hypocrisy of Antichrist and his followers."He calls the ravening prelates and their officers "the clerks of Antichrist,"and argues "that Christian men of the realm should not be robbed by simony of the first-fruits, to go to the Bishop of Rome . . . that Christian men should give more heed to Christ's gospel and His life than to any rules from the sinful bishops of the world; or else they forsake Christ, and take Antichrist and Satan for their chief governor. 1

"Worldly clerks show themselves traitors to God, and to their liege lord the king, whose law and regalia they destroy by their treason in favour of the Pope, whom they nourish in the works, of Antichrist, that they may have their worldly state, and opulence, and lusts maintained by him."2 "Antichrist and his clerks travail to destroy Holy Writ,"teaching " that the Church is of more authority and more credence than any gospel." Writing on Indulgences, Wycliffe says, "This doctrine is a manifold blasphemy against Christ, inasmuch as the Pope is extolled above his humanity and deity, and so above all that is called God— pretensions which according to the declaration of the apostle agree with the character of Antichrist."2

"The same may be said concerning the fiction of the keys of Antichrist ... as might be expected from Antichrist, he sets forth new laws, and insists under pain of the heaviest censure, that the whole Church militant shall believe in them, so that anything determined therein shall stand as though it were a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

". . . Arise,"he cries, "O soldiers of Christ. Be wise and fling away these things, along with the other fictions of the prince of darkness, and put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and confide undoubtedly in your own weapons, and sever from the Church such frauds of Antichrist, and teach the people that in Christ alone, and in His law, and in His members, they should trust; that in so doing they may be saved through His goodness, and learn above all things honestly to detect the devices of Antichrist"3

Summoned to appear before his judges at Oxford, Wycliffe stood alone and unfriended. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Lincoln, Norwich, Hereford, Worcester, Salisbury, and London were there, sitting in judgment, together with the Chancellor of the University, and many of the inferior clergy. Forty years had passed since Oxford had first become the home of the Reformer. He was now gray with age and toil, but full of mental activity and

divine illumination. Like another Elijah, he stood alone amid the generation of his countrymen, witnessing in clear, uncompromising terms to the eternal truths of God's Holy Word. Banished from Oxford he continued to write in defense of the gospel to the end of his days. His closing years were passed in full expectation of imprisonment and martyrdom. Seized with paralysis in December, 1384, on the last day of the month and of the year, his noble spirit passed into the world of rest, and everlasting reward.

Wycliffe's doctrines spread, not only over England, but to the continent, where they were the means of the enlightenment of John Huss. They were branded with condemnation by the Council of Constance, and the remains of the Reformer, by the command of the Pope, taken up and burned. His ashes were cast into the brook of Lutterworth, whence they were conveyed to the Avon, the Severn, and the sea; fit emblems of his doctrine now dispersed over the world.

A notable work entitled "The Ploughman's Complaint" written by an unknown author about the time of Wycliffe, and subsequently reprinted by Tyndale and Foxe, the martyrologist, after declaring that none is more against Christ than he that "maketh himselfe Christe's Vicar in earth," terminates with the prayer, "Lord, gene our king and his lords hart to defenden Thy true shepherdes and Thy sheepe from out of the wolves' mouthes, and grace to know Thee that Thou art the true Christ, the Son of the heavenly Father, from the Antichrist that is the source of pride. And, Lord, gene us Thy poore sheepe patience and strength to suffer for Thy law, the cruelness of the mischievous wolves. And, Lord, as Thou hast promised, shorten these days. Lord, we axen this now, for more need was there never."1

The followers of Wycliffe took the same ground. Boldly they tore away the mask from the pretended vicar of Christ. Among them Walter Brute occupies a place of prominence as a faithful witness to the truth, whose testimony is "detailed to us by the venerable Foxe from original documents."

Brought up in the University of Oxford, Walter Brute, then a graduate, was accused of declaring that "the Pope is Antichrist, and a seducer of the people, and utterly against the law and life of Christ." In speaking thus he had blasphemed against the High Priest of Christendom. He had blasphemed Christ in the person of His sole representative. What had he to say? Walter Brute stands there solitary, defenseless, but courageous. He dares to speak the truth before these scarlet-cloaked doctors of the Church. Familiar with Wycliffe's New Testament, a student of the Word of God, he grounds his defense on the inspired words of prophecy. Did not the Pope answer to the Man of Sin prophesied by St. Paul? Was he not the chief of the false Christs, prophesied by Christ, who were to come in His name? Was not Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse? Let it be admitted that this had been a mystery long hidden. "But if so, and only recently revealed, it would not be unaccordant with God's dealings and revelations. 'Make the heart of the people fat, that seeing they may not see,' was said by Isaiah of long-permitted judicial blindness in the Jews; and again by Daniel it was written, ' seal up the vision till the time of the end.' Now had come the time when the veil of mystery should be removed."2

"Very vain," he says, "had been the usual and long received ideas about Antichrist: ideas as of one that was to be born in Babylon of the tribe of Dan, to give himself out as the Messiah come for the Jews' salvation, and preach three and a half years where Christ preached; to kill Enoch and Elijah, and be himself finally slain by lightning." The times of Daniel and the Apocalypse, he argues, connected with the Antichrist, were symbolical of larger periods; and should be interpreted as the "seventy weeks" extending to the past advent of Messiah on the year-day scale. As the seventy "weeks" after which Christ was slain meant weeks of years, not days, so the 1,290 days of prophecy meant 1,290 years; a period which he noticed extended from the placing of the desolating idol by Hadrian in the Holy Place, to the "revealing, or in other words the exposure of Antichrist," in these latter days. As to that woman seated on the persecuting wild beast in Revelation 17, expounded by the angel to mean the city on seven hills, reigning over the kings of the earth, whose power was to continue forty-two months, or 1,260 days, this was Rome, whose duration was 1,260 years. Did not the ten days of Smyrna's suffering signify the ten years of Diocletian's persecution? Thus then, the 1,260 days represented 1,260 years. As to the Popes, "with their assumed kingly and priestly power, speaking like a dragon, and allowing none to sell their spiritual pardons but such as bore their mark, his name, identical with his number, 666, was Dux Cleri. "My counsel is," says Walter Brute, "let the buyer be aware of those marks of the beast. For after the fall of Babylon, "If any man hath worshipped the beast and his image, and hath received his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, he shall drink of the wine of God's wrath, and be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torments shall ascend evermore."

"John Huss and Jerome of Prague were contemporaries of Walter Brute, and bore the same testimony, for which they were burned at the stake by the Council of Constance in May, 1416. In a letter to Lord John de Clum, Huss declares that the Church of Rome is the Harlot Babylon "whereof mention is made in the Apocalypse." Writing to the people of Prague, he warns them to be "the more circumspect," because "Antichrist being stirred up against them deviseth divers persecutions."

When cast into prison for the Word of God, he wrote thus to his friends and followers:- "Master John Huss, in hope, the servant of God, to all the faithful who love Him and His statutes, wisheth the truth and grace of God. . . Surely even at this day is the malice, the abomination, and filthiness of Antichrist marked in the Pope and others of this Council. . . . Oh, how acceptable a thing should it be, if time would suffer me to disclose their wicked acts, which are now apparent; that the faithful servants of God might know them. I trust in God that He will send after me those that shall be more valiant; and there are also at this day that shall make more manifest the malice of Antichrist, and shall give their lives to the death for the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall give, both to you and me, the joys of life everlasting."

This epistle was "written upon St. John Baptist's Day, in prison and in cold irons. I having this meditation with myself that John was beheaded in his



prison and bonds for the word of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The year following that of the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome, witnessed the burning of Lord Cobham, at Smithfield. When brought before King Henry V and admonished to submit himself to the Pope as an obedient child, this was his answer:—“As touching the Pope, and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, forasmuch as I know him by the Scriptures to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the adversary of God, and an abomination standing in the Holy Place.”

For this testimony Lord Cobham was drawn on a hurdle to St. Giles’ Fields, and “hanged there by the middle in chains of iron and so consumed alive in the fire, praising the name of God as long as life lasted.”

## **II. The Pre-Reformation War Against the Protestant Witnesses.**

Not in a merely metaphorical sense was the persecution waged against the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and the Hussites, a “war” but in stern reality. It commenced by a crusade against the Albigenses in A . D . 1208. In his history of the period Sismondi tells us that “ Innocent III, impelled by hatred, had offered to those who should take up the cross against the Provincials the utmost extent of indulgence which his predecessors had ever granted to those who laboured for the deliverance of the Holy Land. As soon as these new Crusaders had assumed the sacred sign of the Cross, which to distinguish themselves from those of the East, they wore on the breast instead of the shoulders, they were instantly placed under the protection of the Holy See, freed from the payment of the interest of their debts, and exempted from the jurisdiction of all the tribunals; whilst the war which they were invited to carry on at their doors, almost without danger or expense, was to expiate all the vices and crimes of a whole life. . . . Never, therefore, had the Cross been taken up with a more unanimous consent.”

The first to engage through the commands of their pastors in this war which was denominated sacred were Eudes III, Duke of Burgundy, Simon de Montfort, Count of Leicester; the Counts of Nevers, of St. Paul, of Auxerre, of Geneve, and of Forez.

The Abbot of Citeaux with the Bernardines appropriated the preaching of the Crusade as their special province. “In the name of the Pope, and of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, they promised to all who should perish in this holy expedition plenary absolution of all sins committed from the day of their birth to the day of their death.” St. Dominic and his followers were sent by Innocent III to travel on foot, two by two, through the villages, to obtain full information about the so-called heretics, and to stir up persecution against them. Thus began the mission of the Dominicans, in subsequent times the terrible agents of the papacy in the work of the Inquisition. Descending the valley of the Rhone, by Lyons and Avignon, the principal army of the Crusaders began their dreadful work in Languedoc. “Men and women were all precipitated into the flames amidst the acclamations of the ferocious conquerors.” The cities of Beziers and Carcassonne had been armed by Raymond Roger against the advancing papal army, but were unable to resist the attack. When asked how the Catholics were to be distinguished from

the heretics in the slaughter which followed, Amalric, Abbot of Citeaux answered, "Kill them all; the Lord will well know those who are His."1 This command was carried out.

Vainly did the persecuted inhabitants of Beziers take refuge in the churches. In the great Cathedral of Saint Nicaise all were slaughtered; in the Church of the Magdalen seven thousand dead bodies were counted. The city was then fired, and reduced to a grand funeral pile. "Not a house remained standing, not a human being alive." This dreadful crusade was continued until the greater part of the Albigenses had perished. "During the six hundred years which followed these events, invariably as far as occasions have served, the Church of Rome has avowed the same principles, and perpetrated or stimulated the same deeds. As soon as the war against the Albigenses was terminated the Inquisition was brought into full and constant action, encouraged and supported by the Romish Church to the utmost of its power."2

We turn from the Albigenses and the South of France to the Vaudois in Piedmont. From the top of the famous Cathedral of Milan there is a magnificent view of the Alps of Piedmont. East and west they are seen to stretch as far as the eye can reach. The sun at noon falls full upon their crowded peaks. Dark forests mantling their lower slopes, they stand in silent sublimity, their summits crowned with glaciers and eternal snows. To the west among these, beyond the city of Turin rises the vast white cone of Monte Viso. Among the mountains at its base lie the Waldensian valleys. Five in number, they run up into narrow elevated gorges, winding among fir-clad steepes, and climbing to the region of the clouds which hover around the Alpine peaks. These valleys were the refuge and home of the "Israel of the Alps." Protestants before the Reformation, they constituted a faithful remnant of the Church who had never bowed the knee to Baal. The first combined measures taken by the secular authority at the instigation of Rome for the destruction of the Vaudois do not appear to date before 1209, during the period of the Pontificate of Innocent III, when the Archbishop of Turin was empowered to destroy them by force of arms. At the commencement of the fourteenth century, (about 1308), the Inquisitors re-newed their murderous warfare. In 1487, Innocent VIII fulminated against the Vaudois a bull of extermination. "Thousands of volunteers—vagabond adventurers, ambitious fanatics, reckless pillagers, merciless assassins—sembled from all parts of Italy to execute the behests of the pseudo- successor of St. Peter. This horde of brigands, suitable supporters of a profligate pontiff, marched against the valleys in the train of another army of 18,000 regular troops, contributed in common by the king of France and the sovereign of Piedmont." The Vaudois fled to the heights of the Alps, and sought to protect themselves against their foes. At the moment of their greatest danger they were sheltered by a thick fog; their enemies falling over the humid rocks into the fatal abyss below. The following year their assailants were more successful. The Vaudois had retired to the rugged slopes of Mont Pelvoux, 6,000 feet above the level of the valley. Here they had taken refuge in a huge cavern. Led by La Pelud, Cataneo's ferocious fanatics climbing above the cavern, descended on the Vaudois, and piling up wood at its entrance set fire to it; "those who attempted to issue forth were either destroyed by the flames, or by the sword of the enemy, while those who remained within were

stifled by the smoke. When the cavern was afterwards examined, there were found in it four hundred infants suffocated in their cradles, and the arms of their dead mothers. Altogether there perished in this cavern more than 3,000 Vaudois—including the entire population of Val Louise.”

We pause in the history of the Vaudois persecution to glance at the contemporaneous war waged against the Hussites in Bohemia. After the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome, their followers were subjected to the most cruel persecutions. “In the year 1421 the miseries of the Bohemians greatly increased. Besides the executions by drowning, by fire, and by the sword, several thousands of the followers of Huss, especially the Taborites, of all ranks, and both sexes, were thrown down the old ruins and pits of Kuttemberg. In one pit were thrown 1,700, in another 1,308, and in a third 1,321 persons.”<sup>1</sup> A monument still marks the place. This warfare against the Hussites continued until their testimony was silenced, and their name almost erased from the earth.

In his histories of the progress and suppression of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, McCrie has traced the propagation of the gospel in these lands by the instrumentality of the Albigenses in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. “Province and Languedoc were at that time more Arragonese than French.” “In consequence of the connection between the two countries some of the Vaudois had crossed the Pyrenees, and established themselves in Spain as early as the middle of the twelfth century.” From 1412 to 1425 a great number of persons who entertained the sentiments of the Vaudois were committed to the flames by the Inquisitors of Valencia, Rousillon, and Majorca. “In Italy many of the Vaudois and Albigenses established themselves in the year 1180. In 1231 Gregory IX published a furious bull against them, ordaining that they should be sought out and delivered to the secular arm to be punished. In 1370 the Vaudois from the valleys of Pragela emigrated to Calabria, and for a while flourished in peace. The colony received accessions to its numbers by the arrival of their brethren who fled from the persecutions raised against them in Piedmont and France; it continued to flourish when the Reformation dawned on Italy; and after subsisting for nearly two centuries, it was basely and barbarously exterminated.”<sup>2</sup>

The chief instrument in the suppression of the Reformation in these lands was the infamous Inquisition, whose infernal cruelties have made its name a horror to this day. That Satanic tribunal! What shall we say of it? Before us lie the two quarto volumes of Limborch’s history of the Inquisition; together with Llorente’s detailed and dispassionate account; also Rule’s book, in two volumes, and other works on the Inquisition in English and Spanish. When the Cjuemadero was opened at Madrid in 1870, and the ashes of the martyrs who had been burned by the Inquisition brought to light, we were present, and saw that thick bank of human remains, and stood breast deep in the ashes. We have seen in Mexico skeletons of victims of the Inquisition who had been buried alive; have visited the Inquisition in Rome; have seen its prisons, and conversed with its Inquisitors. Cold blooded tribunal! Ne plus ultra of tyranny! Its history, written in tears and blood, fills next to the story of the Crucifixion of Christ, the darkest page in the records of humanity. Llorente, who was secretary of the Inquisition in Madrid from 1789 to 1791,

and in whose hands its archives were placed at the date of its suppression in 1811, has lifted the veil of secrecy which hid its diabolical character; has described its processes, and confirmed the copious witness of its victims to the almost incredible account of its cruelties. By his aid we see its all-powerful judges sitting in secret, during long centuries, under a succession of forty-four Inquisitor-generals, who in denial of every principle of justice, never permitted the accused to know the accusations laid to his charge, to face his accusers, or "to know more of his own cause than he could learn of it by the interrogations and accusations to which he was compelled to reply; "who extracted the confessions they sought by the infliction of the most ingenious, the most prolonged and the most exquisite tortures the mind of man has ever invented; putting into operation "water, weights, fire, pulleys, screws,—all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost: "renewing those tortures from day to day; alternating the dungeon and the rack; until pain and anguish had done their work on the wreck of body and mind which remained in their hands, and then committing the victim to the flames, to burn like a fagot in the fire, until nothing; remained but his ashes encumbering the chain which hung around the blackened stake. The Holy Inquisition! The Holy Office! Foe of truth and justice; minister of Satan; thy name has yet to be invented, for no one word employed by human lips can adequately describe thee. Miscalled preserver of the faith, thou hast been the nurse of hypocrisy, the parent of fear, of falsehood, of slavery; mental and moral degradation and national ruin have followed in thy wake. Monster of mediaeval cruelty, thy black shadow flees from the light of modern days, pursued by the abhorrence and execration of the world.

The following is a numerical summary of victims who suffered during, the years 1481 to 1498, under the Inquisition in Spain:

1481. Burned alive in Seville, 2,000; burned in effigy 2,000; penitents, 17,000.

1482. Burned alive, 88; burned in effigy, 44; penitents, 625.

1483. About the same as in preceding year in Seville, and in Cordova; in Jaen and Toledo, burned alive, 688; burned in effigy, 644; penitents 5,725.

1484. About the same in Seville; and in the other places, burned alive, 220; burned in effigy, 110; penitents, 1,561.

1485. Seville, Cordova, as the year preceding. In Estra-madeira, Valladolid, Calaborra, Murcia, Cuenza, Zaragoza, and Valencia, there were burned alive 1 620; burned in effigy, 510; and penitents, 13,471

1486. In Seville and Cordova as the year before. In other places burned alive, 528; burned in effigy, 264; penitents, 3,745.

1487. About the same as the year before, and in Barcelona and Majorca many more, making in all, burned alive, 928; burned in effigy, 664; and penitents, 7,145.

1488. In the thirteen Inquisitions, burned alive, 616; burned in effigy, 308; and penitents 4,379.

1489. About the same as the preceding year.

1490. Burned alive, 324; burned in effigy, 112; and penitents, 4,369.

1491 to 1498. At about the same rate.

“Torquemada, Inquisitor-General of Spain, during the eighteen years of his inquisitorial ministry, caused 10,220 victims to perish in the flames ; burned the effigies of 6,860 who died in the Inquisition, or fled under fear of persecution; and 97,321 were punished with infamy, confiscation of goods, perpetual imprisonment, or disqualification for office, under colour of penance; so that no fewer than 114,401 families must have been irrecoverably ruined. 1 And the most moderate calculation gathered from the records of the Inquisition by the laborious Secretary, Llorente, up to the year 1523, when the fourth Inquisitor died, exhibits the fearful aggregate of 18,320 burned alive, 9,660 in effigy, 206,526 penitents. Total number of sufferers, 234,506, under the first four inquisitors-general.”

#### THE WITNESSES SILENCED

The Inquisition continued its career of persecution under its forty-four inquisitors-general till 1820, when it was finally suppressed. But as early as the Lateran Council in 1514. the whole of the pre- reformation witnesses to the gospel in P Vance, Spain, Piedmont, Italy and Bohemia, by means of the sword, the rack, and the stake, had been crushed and silenced. In England the Lollards were extinct. None remained to witness to New Testament truth. The orator of the session, ascending the pulpit, addressed to the assembled members of the Lateran Council, the memorable exclamation of triumph :—“ There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion; opposers there exist no more.”

“After three days I will rise again.”—Matt. 27:63.

IT was on the 5th day of May, 1514, at the ninth session of the Lateran Council that the Papal Orator “pronounced his pasan of triumph over the extinction of heretics and schismatics.”

“Jam nemo reclamat, nutlus obsistit.”

“There is an end of resistance to the papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more.”

Three years and a half later on, to a day, on October Jist, 1517, Luther posted up his Theses at Wittemberg. “The voice of an obscure monk rang through Europe, like the mighty thunder peal; awakening men from the slumber of ages, and shaking to its foundation the usurped dominion of Romanism.”<sup>1</sup> In Luther and the Reformers the slaughtered witnesses to the truth of the gospel, risen from the dead, stood once more upon their feet before Rome and the world.

This was what the martyr Huss, a hundred years before, had foretold. "I am no vain dreamer," he said, "but hold for certain that the image of Christ shall never be effaced. They wish to destroy it: but it shall be painted afresh in the hearts of gospel-preachers better than myself. And I, awaking as it were from the dead, and rising from the grave, shall rejoice with exceeding great joy."

Jerome of Prague, his fellow martyr, named the interval one hundred years, "after which their memory would be vindicated, their cause triumphant."

This double prophecy was fulfilled.

Pope Adrian, Leo X's successor, in a brief addressed to the diet of Nuremberg in 1523, wrote thus: "The heretics Huss and Jerome seem now to be alive again in the person of Luther." "Not in the compass of the whole ecclesiastical history of Christendom, save and except in the death and resurrection of Christ Himself, is there any such example of the sudden, mighty, and triumphant resuscitation of His cause and Church from a state of deep depression." Their lofty and animated descriptions of this divine revival are clothed by the writers of the period in metaphors borrowed from the pages of the Apocalypse. Thus Milton wrote:-

"When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the Church; how the bright and blissful Reformation, by divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-christian tyranny, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathes his soul with the fragrant of heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it; the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues, the princes and cities now trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation; the martyrs with the irresistible might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon."

A new era had dawned upon the world: an era of Light, Liberty, Life, Progress; the Age of the Book. Then was the Bible translated into the vernacular languages of Europe, and later on into all the leading languages of the world, its sacred pages opened in the eyes of the nations, its truths expounded in their ears, its records placed in their hands, yea, its teachings written in the hearts, and reflected in the lives of millions emancipated from the prison house of papal bondage.

Then, to use the language of the historian, Gibbon, "the lofty fabric of superstition, from the abuse of indulgences to the intercession of the Virgin, was levelled with the ground. Myriads of both sexes of the monastic profession were restored to the liberty and labours of social life. An hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities, were stripped of their temporal power . . . their images and relics banished from the Church; and the credulity of the people no longer nourished with the daily repetition of miracles and visions. The imitation of paganism was

supplanted by a pure and spiritual worship of prayer and thanksgiving . . . The chain of authority was broken . . . the popes, fathers, and councils, were no longer the supreme and infallible judges of the world; and each Christian was taught to acknowledge no law but the Scriptures, no interpreter but his own conscience."

## **ADVANCE IN PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION**

The advent of the Reformation shed a broad beam of light upon the very centre and heart of Apocalyptic prophecy. It illuminated the visions in the tenth and eleventh chapters, removing the obscurity which had hitherto hung upon their meaning; and caused the trumpet call to God's people in the eighteenth chapter, to come out of Babylon, to sound forth as never before.

Now was the mighty cloud-clothed, rainbow crowned angel of the vision in the tenth chapter seen as it were to descend from heaven holding in his hand a little book open • and setting his feet on land and sea, he was heard to cry aloud as when a lion roareth. Then were heard the seven thunders of Rome's anathemas, pealing forth their defiant reply. Then did the Reformers take from the hands of the angel the "little book" of the newly-opened Word of God, and eating it themselves, as Ezekiel had done before them, renew their prophecy, "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."1 Then did the Reformers "rise and measure the temple of God" as commanded, "and the altar and them that worship therein," leaving out, or casting out, as bidden, "the outer court" as given to the Gentiles to remain unreformed, and continue trodden under foot. Then too, was "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" denounced as such; 2 and the prophesying of Christ's sackcloth clothed witnesses, like that of the Jewish prophets in the days of the Baalitical and Babylonian apostasies, clearly recognized: the "olive trees" or anointed ones, like the faithful reformers in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, after the return of Judah from the ancient typical Babylon seen to be "candlesticks" or light bearers, "standing before the God of the earth."

Now was the mystery cleared up; now was the meaning of these wondrous visions revealed, and the testimony of prophecy confirmed the faith, and justified the position of the Reformers. What Ezra and Nehemiah, Joshua and Zerubbabel had been in the great work of the restoration of Judah from Babylonish captivity, of the rebuilding of the altar, and temple of God, and of the ruined walls of Jerusalem, such were the modern Reformers in the still more glorious work of the Reformation of the Church After her long captivity in the anti-typical "Babylon the Great"; and the visions of the Apocalypse based as to their symbolism, upon the history of Judah's restoration, stood forth explained by the events of modern history; a brilliant lamp lighting the Reformers.' feet; a miracle of divine prescience ; a seal of approbation upon the Reformation movement; a warrant for its work, a pledge of its success.

## **A TWOFOLD DISCOVERY**

The Reformation was born of a twofold discovery; the discovery of Christ, and the discovery of Antichrist. This discovery was first developed in the mind of Luther; and from his mind it passed into the mind of Western Europe; from whence it has since gone forth throughout the world. It arose from Luther's

finding a Bible. To the awakened monk God revealed through His word the glorious gospel of salvation. Profoundly convinced of sin, Luther embraced "the righteousness of God" revealed in the Scriptures, and justification by faith in contrast with justification by works became the thrilling theme of his testimony.

There followed the posting up in October, 1517, of Luther's ninety-five theses against indulgences, which he affixed to the door of the chief church at Wittenberg, boldly offering to maintain them against all impugnors. "The truths most prominently asserted in them were the Pope's utter insufficiency to confer forgiveness of sin, or salvation,—Christ's all-sufficiency,—and the true spiritual penitent's participation, by God's free gift, independently altogether of papal indulgence or absolution, not merely in the blessing of forgiveness, but in all the riches of Christ. There were added other declarations also, very notable as to the gospel of the glory and grace of God, not the merits of saints, "being the true and precious treasure of the Church ",—a denunciation of the avarice and soul deceivings of the priestly traffickers in indulgences;—and a closing exhortation to Christians to follow Christ as their Chief, even through crosses and tribulation, thereby at length to attain to His heavenly kingdom. Bold indeed were the words thus published; and the effect such that the evening of their publication I have been remembered ever afterwards, and is ever memorable, as the Epoch of the Reformation." 2

Following Luther's discovery of Christ came his discovery of Antichrist. In the month of June, 1520, the Pope hurled a thunderbolt at Luther, condemning his doctrines in a bull, and ordering that " unless within sixty days he retracted his errors, he was to be seized and sent as a prisoner to Rome."

On December 20th, 1520, "a pile of wood was erected at the east gate of Wittenberg. One of the oldest members of the university lighted it. As the flames arose, Luther advanced arrayed in his frock and cowl, and amid bursts of approbation from the doctors, professors and students, hurled into the fire the Canon Law, the Decretals, and the Papal Bull." "The defiance of Wittenberg was followed by the emancipation of half the nations of Europe from their spiritual and temporal bondage." 1

Hidden from his persecutors in a lonely castle in the Wartburg forest, Luther now translated the New Testament into vernacular German. He prefixed to the Apocalypse, in his great edition of the German Bible, in 1534, an outline of his views as to the meaning of the prophecy. He considered it contained a prefiguration of the chief events in the history of the Christian Church. The woman clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, who flees to the wilderness from her persecutors, represents in his view, the true Church; and the two witnesses a succession of faithful witnesses for Christ. Of the opposing wild beast powers, the first beast represents the papal secular revived Roman Empire; and the second beast the Pope's ecclesiastical or spiritual empire. The number of the beast, 666, signifies according to Luther, the number of years that the beast may be destined to endure, measured, he says in his Table Talk, from Gregory, or perhaps Phocas. The Antichrist is, in his view, an ecclesiastical person. In his "De Antichristo," he says, "The Turk cannot be Antichrist, because he is not in



the Church of God." "Whoever so came in Christ's name," he exclaims, "as did the Pope?"

As the Reformation advanced, the true meaning of the predictions in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Apocalypse more and more forced itself upon men's minds. Bullinger, at Zurich, in his expository discourses on the Apocalypse, published in 1557, boldly explains the angel vision in Apocalypse 10, as representing Christ's intervention through the Reformers. The "little open book" in the hand of the angel he interprets as the gospel, opened to men by the Reformers, and given to the world with the aid of the newly invented art of printing. He says the oath in the tenth chapter alludes to the three and a half "times" of Daniel 12, and surmises that the redemption of the Church at Christ's coming, to raise the dead and transform the living was even then drawing nigh. As to the witnesses, the number two indicated that they were to be few, yet sufficient. The great city of their slaughter is the empire of Papal Rome. The falling of the tenth of the city represented the mighty defections already begun from the Papal Church and Empire. On the seventh trumpet he says, "It must come soon, therefore our redemption draweth nigh." He explains the second beast as the Papal Antichrist, rising under Gregory I, and his successor Boniface, to the position of Universal Bishop. "On the name and number of the beast he adopts Irenaeus' solution, dwelling on the Latinism of the Papacy, much like Dr. More afterwards."

Bale, Bishop of Ossory under Edward VI, published an Apocalyptic Commentary entitled "Image of Both Churches," i.e. the true and the false. He explains the vision of Apocalypse like Bullinger, as representing the Reformation; the book opened being the Scriptures—then newly translated into the vernacular languages, and expounded by gospel-preachers. The measuring rod in Revelation II he explains as God's Word, "now graciously sent as out of Zion," the temple as God's congregation or Church, distinguished by His Word from the synagogue of Satan; the witnesses as faithful protestors for Christ that continue with God's people all through the time of the Church's oppression by her so-called "Gentile" foes. The fall of the tenth part of the city, represents the diminution of the Papal Church. We have here, says Bale, "what is done already, and what is to come under this sixth trumpet, whereunder we are now; which all belongeth to the second woe."

In David Chytrceus' *Explicatio Apocalypsis*, published at Wittemberg, in 1571, the 1,260 days of the Gentiles treading down the holy city are explained as 1,260 years, to be calculated either from Alaric's taking of Rome in A . D . , 412, or from Pboacas' decree, A.D., 606; and thus to end in A . D . , 1672, or in A . D . , 1866. The resurrection of the witnesses he explains of their speedy revival "on each individual occasion of their temporary suppression by Antichrist."

Augustin Marlorafs exposition of the Revelation of St. John, published in 1574, under Queen Elizabeth, "is professedly collected out of divers notable writers of the Protestant Churches, viz:— Bullinger, Calvin, Caspar Meyander, Justus Jonas, Lambertus, Musculus, JEcolampadius, Pellicanus, Meyer, Furet." On Apocalypse 10 he sets forth "the clear decisive explanation of its Angel-vision usual among the Reformers, as figuring the opening of the Scriptures and revived gospel preaching at the Reformation: also the

exclusion of the outer court in Apocalypse 11, as signifying the exclusion of Papists."

Thus similarly the venerable martyrologist John Foxe in his exposition of the Apocalypse written in the year 1586, —a work interrupted by his death,—applies the magnificent vision of Christ in Apocalypse 10 to the restoration of gospel preaching, the book in the angel's hand representing God's Word. The temple of Apocalypse he takes to be the Church; its inner court the true worshippers; its outer the false; the measuring of the temple its separation and reformation "as in our day," implying a previous corruption under Antichrist. All this had been done under the sixth, or Turkish trumpet, whose end he considered to be near. Under the seventh trumpet which would follow, the Church would have its time of blessedness accomplished, in Christ's coming, and the saints' resurrection.

Brightman's "Commentary on the Apocalypse "dedicated to " the holy reformed churches of Brittany, Germany and France," was published in A . D . 1600 or 1601, before the death of Queen Elizabeth. In this remarkable work which was deservedly popular with the Protestant Churches of the time, Brightman rightly identifies the locust woe of the fifth trumpet with the Saracen invasion, and the Euphratean woe of the sixth trumpet with the Turkish. The casting down of the dragon in Apocalypse 12, and his restoration in a new form under the beast of Apocalypse 13, he applies to the casting down of the rule of heathen Rome under Constantine, and the subsequent revival of Roman rule under the Popes ; the head of the empire being wounded J:o death by the Gothic invasions, and healed by Justinian and Pboocas in the exaltation of the papacy in the restored empire.

Considering the Apocalyptic interpretation of the sixteenth century as a whole we recognize not only a considerable advance in the understanding of the prophecy, but a practical application and use of its leading predictions of the highest importance. The glorious work of the Reformation was built upon doctrinal, practical, and prophetic grounds. Apocalyptic prophecy was accorded a prominent position among the stately pillars of its foundation. To the reformers the Church of Rome was "Babylon the great" of the Apocalypse, clad in purple and scarlet, adorned with "gold, and precious stones, and pearls," a faithless harlot seated on a wild beast power, intoxicating the nations with the cup of her idolatries and superstitions, and drunken with "the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus." The duty of separation from the Church of Rome was boldly proclaimed on the ground of the divine command in Revelation 18, "Come out of her my people that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The duty to reform the Church was urged on the authority of the command in Revelation n, "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." While Rome excommunicated the Reformers, the Reformers excomm- unicated Rome in obedience to the command in Revelation 11, "The court which is without the temple, leave out (or rather 'cast out') and measure it not." The Pope of Rome was resisted and condemned as "the Man of Sin," "the Antichrist," the "standard-bearer" as Calvin calls him, "of an abominable apostasy." The long line of pre- reformation martyrs, and the reformers and martyrs of the Reformation, were regarded as the sackcloth clothed and faithful witnesses of

the Apocalypse, God's anointed "prophets," like Elijah and Elisha in the days of the Baalitical apostasy of Israel, and Ezra and Nehemiah in the time of the restoration of Jerusalem, and rebuilding of the temple, who, warred against and overcome by the wild beast power, had been figuratively raised from the dead, and exalted in full view of their amazed antagonists. To the Reformers of the sixteenth century the era of the seventh trumpet was at hand, when "The kingdoms of this world" would become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." And they awaited the predicted and proximate hour when "like a great millstone " "that great city Babylon" should be "thrown down and found no more at all," and the "great voice of much people in heaven " should lift up the rejoicing utterance, with thrice repeated hallelujahs, "salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand." The prominence of Apocalyptic interpretation in the voluminous writings of the Reformers is one of their most marked features. They wielded the word of prophecy as the sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit, "piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." And while God sealed their testimony with lasting spiritual success, they, on their part, sealed their witness with their blood. They inaugurated an era of light and liberty such as the world had never seen before, which remains as the colossal confirmation of their testimony, as interpreters and teachers of "the Word of God which endureth forever."

IN tracing the development of the interpretation of the Apocalypse as ceaselessly following the unveiling of the plan of Providence by the events of history-, we direct our attention at this stage to the fresh page of history which lay before the eyes of prophetic interpreters in the seventeenth century.

I. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was succeeded by the great Papal Reaction of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; a movement which included the founding of the Order of the Jesuits, the Marian persecutions, the wars in France against the Huguenots; the Auto-da-fes of the Inquisition in Spain; the decrees and anathemas of the Council of Trent; the diabolical attempt of the Duke of Alva to exterminate the Protestants in the Netherlands, of whom 18,000 were slaughtered in six years; the fearful massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572; the invasion of the Spanish Armada in 1588 ; the Jesuit attempts on the life of Queen Elizabeth; the Gunpowder plot in 1605; the sanguinary thirty years' war beginning 1618; the massacre of 20,000 Protestants in Magdeburg in 1631; the diabolical barbarities of Count Tilly in Saxony; the massacre of 40,000 Protestants in Ireland in 1641; and wholesale slaughter of the Waldenses in 1655; together with other wars, massacres, and persecutions too numerous to be mentioned. By these dreadful acts the papacy was revealed as the persecuting Antichrist, in colours so glaring and terrible as to compel universal recognition. It is noteworthy that while the Church of England in her Thirty-nine Articles drawn up at an earlier date, in 1562—articles strongly Anti-Romish in character—refrains from identifying the Pope with the predicted " Man of Sin," the Confession of the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1647 (a confession ratified and

established by Act of Parliament in 1649), does so identify him; as witness the following article,—“There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that Antichrist, that Man of Sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God.” Thus also the Articles of the Church of Ireland, drawn up in 1615, declare “The Bishop of Rome is so far from being the Supreme Head of the Universal Church, that his works and his doctrines do plainly discover him to be that “Man of Sin foretold in the Holy Scriptures, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and abolish with the brightness of His coming.” With these solemn affirmations of the Protestant Churches of the seventeenth century the voices of all the leading prophetic interpreters of the period agree. Their works are before us as we write. We have carefully examined their teachings, from those of Lord Napier’s “Commentary on the Apocalypse” published in 1593, to Vitringa’s, a century later, including Cressener’s “demonstrations” of the principles of Apocalyptic interpretation in 1690; the works of Dent (1607), Taffin (1614), Forbes (1614), Brightman (1615), Bernard (1617), Cowper (1619), Taylor (1633), Goodwin (1639,) Mede (1643), Pareus (1643), Cotton (1645 and 1655), Roberts (1649), Holland (1650), Homes (1654), Tillinghast (1654), Stephens (1656), Guild (1656), Durham (1680), More (1680), Jurieu (1687), Marckius (1689), Cressener (1690), Vitringa (1695), Cradock (1697), and others. All these seventeenth century writers are agreed as to the historical principle of interpretation, and as to the general outline of events fulfilling Apocalyptic prophecy. Their views on the thirteenth chapter of Revelation are especially important in their clear recognition of the papacy as heading the second, or revived stage of the wild beast power; and its persecution of the saints during the forty-two prophetic “months,” or 1,260 years, of its domination. Cressener’s works may be especially mentioned as containing a powerful demonstration of this view.

II. Turning now to events in eastern Christendom we note that the capture of Constantinople, and overthrow of the Eastern Roman Empire by the Turks in 1453 was too near in point of time to the opening of the sixteenth century to be properly judged of by the Reformers. The event was one of such enormous magnitude as to require a more distant standpoint for its correct appreciation. But in the course of the sixteenth century its full character and effects became plainly visible. The Saracenic and Turkish conquests in the time of Solomon the Magnificent, and the Amariths and Achmets of the age were seen in their true colours. The House of Othman was “lord of the ascendant, and numerous and fair provinces had been torn from the Christians, and heaped together to increase its already ample dominions.” The fulfilment of the locust and Euphratean woes of the fifth and sixth trumpets, in the conquests of the Saracens and Turks was now clearly recognized. In 1615 Brightman explained the 150 days ravages of the Locust horsemen as the 150 years of Saracenic conquests reckoned from their first ravages of Syria about A . D . 630. The year, month and day of Turkish conquests he reckons as 396 years (365 + 30+1)5 measuring it from the revival of the Othmans A . D . 1300, to the then future date of 1696. It is remarkable that the peace of Carlowitz in 1699, terminating seventeen years of war with Turkey, marked a closing crisis of Turkish power. “From that time forth,” says Sir Edward Creasy, “all serious dread of the military power of Turkey ceased in

Europe."The prophetic period may be reckoned as 391 years (360+30 + 1), 1 and as extending from the reign of Alp Arslan (1063-1072 according to Gibbon) to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Under Alp Arslan the Turks crossed the Euphrates, and invaded Europe. "The myriads of Turkish horse"says Gibbon, "overspread a frontier of 600 miles from Tauris to Erzeroum, and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet."The story of the Turks in Eastern Europe is that of a succession of dreadful massacres without a parallel in the history of the world. With the capture of Constantinople, when Constantine XIV, the last Christian Emperor of the East fell and was "buried under a mountain of the slain,"Gibbon terminates his history of "the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

Goodwin (1639), expounds the fallen star of the fifth trumpet as Mahomet, fallen from the profession of"Christianity; and the smoke issuing from the pit as the false religion of the prophet. Of the sixth trumpet, or Euphratean woe, he says, "No prophecy doth or can more punctually describe any nation or event than this doth the Turks, and their irruption upon the Eastern Empire, who when they came first out of their native country, about the year 1040 after Christ, did seat themselves first by the River Euphrates, and were divided into four several governments or kingdoms,"etc., and completed their conquest of the Roman Empire "in the year 1453, which is 186 years since, who possess that whole Eastern Empire unto this day."Mede (1643), reckons the Turkish woe from 1057 to 1453; and More (1680), does the same. There is perhaps no point on which historical interpreters of the Apocalypse from Mede and Goodwin onwards are more agreed than in the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets to the overthrow of the corrupt and apostate Eastern Empire by the Saracens and Turks.

III. The recognition of the fall of the Western and Eastern Empires, under the six first trumpets, led Mede, to the view that the Apocalypse contains two principal prophecies; first the prophecy relating to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the West, and in the East, figured under the seals, and six first trumpets; and secondly, the prophecy concerning the fortunes of the Christian Church, beginning with the vision of the descent of the angel in Chapter X, holding in his hand "a little book open."An analogous twofold feature certainly characterizes the prophecies of Daniel, which consist of an earlier series relating to the Thrones, or governments of the world, and a later series relating to the Temple, and people of God, and the approaching Advent of Messiah. Throne prophecies followed by Temple prophecies,—such is the twofold order both in the book of Daniel and in the Apocalypse.

IV. From the fourth and fifth centuries up to the time of the Reformation the binding of Satan introducing the millennium was regarded as a past event. The Church of the Middle Ages imagined itself to be living in the millennium, and the Reformers considered that the outbreak of Papal persecution at the close of the Middle Ages was the fulfilment of the loosing of Satan for "a little season," prior to the Great Day of Judgment.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the imagined "little season "of Satan's loosing had so lengthened out as to prove the error of this interpretation. Mede was the first to appreciate the fact. His demonstration of the futurity of the millennium was an immense advance, and created an era

in Apocalyptic interpretation. Elliott truly describes it as "a mighty step of change from the long continued explanation of the symbol as meant of Satan's 1,000 years' binding from Christ's time, or Constantine's." The futurity of the millennium has held its ground as a Canon of interpretation from Mede's time to the present day.

V. In harmony with this view, Mede, like the oldest Patristic Expositors, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, etc., interpreted the first resurrection as a literal resurrection of the Saints to be accomplished at the time of Antichrist's destruction, at the commencement of the Millennial Age. In this Mede was followed by an imposing array of Puritan Expositors. This was a return to primitive doctrine resulting from the abandonment of the false millennium of the Middle Ages. Dr. Twisse, then prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in an admirable and appreciative preface to Mede's "Commentary on the Apocalypse," gives a summary outline of the Apocalyptic interpretation of this learned Puritan, and says of him "many interpreters have done excellently, but he surmounteth them all."

VI. Mede's Synchronisms form the leading feature of his "Key to the Apocalypse." He laid down the principle that in order to the correct understanding of this mysterious prophecy, it is necessary in the first place to fix the order of its principal visions, apart altogether from the question of their interpretation. In doing this he gives central prominence to the five times recurring period of 1,260 days, forty-two months, or three and a half "Times"; and locates the chief visions of the prophecy by their relation to this period, as preceding it, cotemporizing with it, or succeeding it. 1

The first synchronism established by Mede is that of what he calls "a noble quaternion of prophecies," remarkable by reason of the equality of their times : -

1. The woman remaining in the wilderness three and one-half "Times," or 1,260 "days."
2. The revived Beast ruling forty-two "months."
3. The outer court trodden down forty-two "months."
4. The witnesses prophesying in sackcloth 1,260 "days."

These periods, Mede shows, are not only equal, but begin at the same time, and end together; and therefore, synchronize throughout. As the various Apocalyptic visions are connected with this central period, as introducing it, cotemporizing with it, or succeeding it, their place in the Apocalyptic drama is clearly indicated.

## **THE 1,260 YEARS OF PROPHECY**

VII. The lapse of time now led to a further important development of the historic interpretation. Sixteen and a half centuries had rolled by since the commencement of the Christian era; thirteen and a half centuries from the

fall of Paganism in the days of Constantine; and twelve and a half centuries since the invasion of the Roman Empire by Alaric, the initial act of its Gothic overthrow.

The principle of the "year day interpretation" of the prophetic times was already recognized, and the fulfilment of the great prophetic period of 1,260 years now forced itself on general attention, —a period occurring in different forms no less than seven times in Daniel and the Apocalypse.

Room at last existed in Christian history for the location of this great prophetic period, and from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards it was accorded a prominent place in the historical interpretation of prophecy.

Naturally, with the lapse of time, and the progressive fulfilment of the predictions relating to the Papal downfall, the location of the period was shifted forward from earlier to later dates. The fall of the Papacy has been gradual, like its rise ; and the period in question was found to measure with remarkable accuracy the intervals which extended from the principal dates connected with its commencement, to corresponding dates in its decline and overthrow.

Lord Napier in his "Commentary on the Apocalypse," published in 1593, places the first commencement of the 1,260 years "between the year of Christ 300 and 316," and its corresponding end "about the year 1560," at which date "the tenth part of the Papistical Empire was reformed." He indicates a second possible fulfilment of the period in the interval extending from the accession of Justinian—a notable date in the rise of the Papacy—to the then future year 1786 ; which was a remarkable anticipation for the time, of the date of the French Revolution. Had Lord Napier dated the 1,260 years from the decree of Justinian in 533, constituting the Bishop of Rome "head of all the holy Churches and of all the holy priests of God," he would have correctly anticipated its primary termination in the central year of the French Revolution, 1793,—the year of the execution of Louis XVI, and of the reign of terror, in which the Papal Church and State were overthrown as if by the explosion of a volcano.

Mede in 1642, placed the commencement of the 1,260 years at Alaric's irruption, in 395; the date according to his view of the sounding of the first of the four trumpets connected with the overthrow of the Western Empire. Reckoning it thus, the termination fell in the then future year 1655, the year of the great massacre of the Protestant witnesses in Piedmont of which Milton wrote his memorable sonnet.

*"Avenge O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold."*

This location of the 1,260 years is prominent in Mede's Chart of the Visions in the Apocalypse.

Pareus, whose valuable "Commentary on the Apocalypse " was published in 1643, shortly after Mede's, places the beginning of 1,260 years in A . D . 606,

when Boniface III was exalted by a decree of the Emperor Phocas to "the chaire of universal pestilence." "From the yeare of Christ therefore 606, until this time the holy citie hath been trodden under foot by the Romane Gentiles, which is the space of 1,073 yeers, and is yet to be trodden down 223 yeers more, to wit, until the yeere of Christ 1866." We have lived to see the correctness of this remarkable anticipation.

In the year 1866 the overthrow of Papal Austria by Protestant Prussia took place, and the Papal invitation to all Catholic bishops to "celebrate the eighteenth century of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul" was sent forth: 599 bishops were present at the Allocution delivered by the Pope in 1867. The Pope's encyclical letter summoning the Vatican Council was issued in 1868, and the decree of Papal infallibility coinciding with the outbreak of the Franco-German war, together with the fall of the French Empire and the Papal Temporal Power took place in 1870. In the four years 1866-1870 Papal power was overthrown in Austria, Spain, France, and Italy; and since 1870 the Pope has ceased to possess even a shadow of political sovereignty.

Pareus was not the first to point out 1866 as the termination of the 1,260 years. David Chytrceus in A . D . 1571 indicated Alaric A . D . 412, and the decree of Phocas, A . D . 606, as possible starting-points of the period. But the anticipation of Pareus was more definite in character; and he takes a leading place in the list of prophetic interpreters who during the last two hundred years have fixed on A . D . 606 and 1866 as the chief termini of the 1,260 years period of Papal rule.

It is a noteworthy fact that the historic interpretation of prophecy, constantly developing century by century with the unveilings of Providence, assumed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as to its leading outlines, a definite form from which it has never since departed. One has but to compare Mede's diagram of the historical fulfilment of the Apocalyptic visions (1641), and that of Whiston (1706), with that of Elliott (1844-1862), to be convinced of the fact.

HERE we reach the beginning of the last act of the Papal tragedy. Louis XIV sat on the throne of France at Versailles. At his side was Madame de Maintenon. Behind her stood the Jesuit Confessor Pere la Chaise. Behind him again the Pope, and his inspirer the Prince of Darkness.

In Piedmont the trembling remnant of Protestants left by the great massacre of 1655 still clung to their native rocks, and Alpine fastnesses.

In England James II was struggling to restore Papal supremacy, and enslave the children of the Puritans who had bought their liberties at so great a price.

Behind the scene historically lay ages of darkness; before it ages of light.

O thou who wouldst draw near to behold this sight—the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed, take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground.



Clear away the mists of ignorance which hide the great tragedy from thine eyes. Thou art the heir of freedom purchased by the sufferings and sacrifices of these martyr days. Gaze then upon the sublime and touching spectacle, and let it fix itself in thy memory forever.

Fear not to enter this gloomy region for light shall spring from the sepulchral darkness; life from the ashes of the dead.

Hark! a wail bursts forth from the lips of thousands of Protestant parents robbed of their children. That wail is the prelude of the last great Papal persecution of the Huguenots; a persecution which was followed by the French Revolution, inaugurating the modern era of civil and religious liberty.

"A terrible law strikes dismay into the hearts of fathers and mothers—a law that will bring us to the determination to go and cast ourselves at the feet of the king; begging him to grant us either death, or freedom of conscience for us and for our children; or permission, leaving behind us our property, to forsake the nation, and drag out a languishing existence, scattered in every country of the globe." It is Pierre Jurieu who utters this bitter cry in his "Last Efforts of Afflicted Innocence," relating to the effects of the statute of Louis XIV, of June, 1681.

And what was this law? It was a law which struck at the existence of the family; which authorized the wholesale compulsory conversion of all the children of the Protestants throughout France to the Roman Catholic Church. It authorized children of the tender age of seven years to renounce the religion of their Protestant parents, and gave freedom to the Romish priests and population to ensnare them into an enforced confession of the Romish faith; a mere sentence, a word expressing admission of some popish doctrine sufficing; forbidding the poor innocent to take back its words; and thus tearing the child from its parents and its home, and hurrying it, in spite of frantic protests from the father and the mother, into some nunnery or other place, to be there immured until "conversion" was complete.

A refinement of cruelty this, unmatched even in the persecutions of old heathen Rome.

Institutions spring up at once all over France, Nouveaux Catholiques for boys; Nouvelles Catholiques for girls; they are quickly crowded. Bereaved Protestant parents sit in their desolated homes, weeping over the children who have been torn away from them. "All the torments that have heretofore been inflicted upon us are as nothing," say they, "in comparison with this." It is, however, but the beginning of the tragedy. The parents are not yet converted. Unreasonable parents! The elder brothers and sisters still remain Protestants. They dare to hold prayer-meetings in their desolated homes. They bow down on their knees, and hide their weeping faces in their hands. They cry to the Father in heaven. What infamy! A stop must be put to this.

But how? Had Satan ingenuity equal to the occasion? How were the parents and elder sons and daughters to be compelled to come wholesale into the Catholic fold? By a new method. By Dragonnades. The army of Louis XIV was vast and powerful; his soldiers unscrupulous, ungodly, superstitious, lustful,

intolerant, ready instruments for ardy abomination. Quarter the soldiers in the homes of the Protestants. Commission these "booted evangelists " to convert them; give them leave to do as they will in these homes with the women, as well as the men; with the mothers and the daughters. Set them to work. Let them stable their horses in the parlours; break the furniture; devour the provisions; tie the fathers hand and foot, and violate in their presence the wives and daughters. Let them prevent the wretched Huguenots from closing their eyes in sleep until they have renounced their Protestantism.

Keep the heretics awake; beat them; drag them about. Shout at them, walk them up and down the rooms all night long, Keep up this fiendish treatment day and night till they submit. Cursed heretics, what right have they to resist the will of Louis XIV, and the almighty Pope of Rome?

And these horrors were done; done throughout all France. The soldiers quartered on the Protestants "pinched them, prodded them, hung them up by ropes, tormented them in a hundred other ways, until their unhappy victims scarcely knew what they were doing." They spat in the faces of women, made them lie down on burning coals, made them put their heads into ovens whose hot flames stifled them."The new mission went forward rapidly, Louis XIV directing. "From Guyenne and Upper Languedoc the Dragonnades extended to Saintonage, Aunis, and Poitou on the west, and to Vivarais on the East. Next came the turn of the province of Lyonnaise, of the Cevennes, of Lower Languedoc, of Province, of Gex. Later still the rest of the kingdom became a prey to the hideous work of the " bootied mission "as it was called-Normandy, Burgundy, and the central provinces, even to far-off Brittany, and to Paris itself." "The horrors the dragoons inspired, the crimes they perpetrated, the sufferings the wretched victims endured,"who shall describe? But this was only the beginning of the tragedy.

A statute still remained-the Edict of Nantes-protecting the lives and liberties of the Huguenots. By one fell stroke this last, protection was swept away. The Edict was revoked. The floodgates were opened, and persecution in its worst, form rolled over the Protestant population of France.

The fatal day of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the 17th of October, 1685.

The first article of the new law recalled all legislation favourable to the Huguenots.

The second forbade all gatherings of Protestants for the services of their religion.

The three following had reference to Protestant ministers. All these were commanded to leave France within fifteen days from the publication of the Edict, on pain of the galleys.

The seventh article abolished all private schools for the instruction of Protestant children.

The eighth prescribed that all children hereafter born of Protestant parents should be baptized by the parish priests, and brought up in the Roman Catholic religion. Recalcitrant parents incurred a fine of five hundred livres or more.

In the tenth article the king issued "very express and repeated prohibitions to all his Protestant subjects against leaving his kingdom, or allowing their wives or children to leave it, and against exporting their goods and chattels. The penalty was the galleys for men, and confiscation of body and goods for women."

All the Protestant churches throughout France were shut or pulled down. Nothing but ruins remained. The pastors were exiled, and the flocks forbidden to follow them. An entire people, the best and noblest of the land, lay crushed under the cruel heel, the iron hoof, of the relentless Papal persecutor.

Then followed the great Exodus. Nothing could arrest it. Thousands on thousands of Huguenots fled from France.

The frontiers were guarded in vain. Disguised in all manner of ways, their faces disfigured, their garments rent, in the darkness of night, by sequestered paths, through forests, across mountains, and over the seas in open boats, they fled, and still fled, until half a million had escaped. They fled to Switzerland, to Holland, to England, and other countries. Four hundred thousand perished in the effort to escape. The prisons were crowded. The homes of the Protestants emptied, their houses left tenantless.

Thousands of Protestants had broken down under the strain, and professed submission to their Roman Catholic persecutors; but the great mass of the Huguenots had remained faithful. No power could conquer their convictions, or compel them to deny their Lord. Chained to the oars in the horrible galleys, and brutally beaten and bastinadoed by their captors, they remained faithful. Crammed into filthy jails, left to rot in dungeons, they remained faithful. Broken on the wheel they remained faithful. Aged pastors lay bound by their limbs to that cruel instrument, while through a long agony, protracted sometimes for hours, every bone in their body was broken. Stroke followed stroke while life remained. Groans went up from the galleys, from the prisons, from the lands of exile. In The Tower of Constance Huguenot women were immured without hope of release. The walls were nearly ninety feet high, and eighteen feet in thickness. It contained two great circular vaulted chambers one above the other. High and narrow loopholes admitted a feeble light. By that ray one of the noble women imprisoned there wrote on the wall."Rhistez ." Yes, they "resisted unto blood" in that awful strife. Who were the victors in that struggle? Louis XIV and the Pope and priests of Rome, or the suffering Huguenots? Was not the Crucified the Conqueror? Is not the martyr the Victor? So they overcame. "When young Chamier underwent his horrible torture, for the scene of which, by a refinement of cruelty, the street in front of his paternal home had been selected, it was his mother that chiefly urged him to fortitude in suffering for the faith. "I have yet," said she, "three children whom I shall cheerfully give up, if they be called to die for religion's sake."

Like the noble martyrs of primitive times "they loved not their lives unto the death." They overcame; for greater is He who was in them, than he who was in the opposing world. Rome believed and boasted that she had triumphed. She rang her joybells. She struck Commemoration Medals. On one of them the crowned monarch stands on the steps of the altar, and extends to France, represented by a kneeling suppliant the sceptre of his mercy, while around are inscribed the words *Sacra Romana Restituta.*—"The Roman religion restored."

The Queen of Sweden received and sheltered some of the refugees. "I pray with all my heart," said she, "that the false joy and triumph of the Church may not some day cost her tears and sorrows." What it did cost France history has since related. In the Vaudois valleys at this same period the wave of persecution had reached its highest altitude. "In thy book," cried Milton,

*"record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled  
Mother with infants down the rocks. Their groans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they To heaven."*

The Vaudois Protestants were cut up alive, roasted over fires, impaled on stakes, disembowelled, torn limb from limb, tortured in ways too horrible to describe. Leger's volume contains pictures of all these horrors, and gives the names and numbers of the sufferers.

In 1686 Louis XIV sent 14,000 men under the Marquis de Catinat to join the Piedmontese army, to enforce the submission of the Vaudois. Following his victory over the Protestants of the Valleys the Duke condemned 14,000 of them to the prisons of Turin: of these 11,000 perished by heat, cold, hunger, and thirst in their imprisonment. The remaining three thousand on emancipation from prison fled over the mountains to Switzerland and Brandenburg. The republic of Geneva extended to the exiles a touching welcome.

In England James II had opened negotiations with the Pope. Papists were in full patronage and Jeffreys was holding his "bloody assizes." In the army Protestant officers were replaced by Romanists; the Papal Nuncio was received at Windsor, and the seven Bishops sent to the Tower, the people venting their feelings in tears and prayers.

A storm was brewing, and a dark cloud hung over the land.

This closing crisis of Papal persecution had long been expected. Students of prophecy in the days of the Reformation and of the Puritan Revolution had forecast its advent and sought to calculate the period of its occurrence. They knew that the Protestant religion would be suppressed in some unprecedented way before the final judgments of God were poured forth on their persecutors.

They believed that the Protestant "witnesses" were yet to be slain; that they were to lie unburied for three and a half years, and then to be raised from death, and exalted to power and supremacy.

Peter Jurieu, one of the exiled Huguenot ministers wrote a book in 1687, a copy of which lies before us, entitled, "The accomplishment of the Scripture prophecies on the approaching deliverance of the Church, proving that the present persecution may end in three years and a half; after which the destruction of the Antichrist shall begin, which shall be finished in the beginning of the next age, and then the Kingdom of Christ shall come upon earth."

It is a volume of six hundred pages, and remarkable for the clearness and force of its argument.

Was Jurieu mistaken?

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes took place on the 17th of October, 1685.

The English Revolution followed in 1688, and the coronation of William of Orange and Queen Mary took place on the 4th of April, 1689.

From October, 1685, to April, 1689, the interval is three and a half years.

The English Revolution marked the end of Papal supremacy in England, and Papal persecution on any widely extended scale in the world. It was the first stage in the inauguration of a new era.

In 1688, James II, the last Popish King of England, abandoned his throne, and fled. The victories of William of Orange in Ireland and on the continent followed; including those of Marlborough over the armies of Louis XIV, in the nine years' war with France from May, 1689, to January 1697.

The almost unexampled series of English victories of this war was succeeded by the Treaty of Ryswck in September, 1697, and the full establishment of civil and religious liberty.

Encouraged by the English Revolution in 1689, the Vaudois refugees in Switzerland resolved to attempt to return to their country. Embarking at Nyon on the 16th of August, 1689, they crossed the Lake of Geneva, ascended the opposite heights, crossed the bridge of Marni, passed the towns of Cluse and Sallenches; crossed Mount Haute Luce, Mount Bon Hornme, and the River Isere; crossed Mount Tisserand and Mount Cenis, Mount Tourliers, the Valley of Jaillon, by Chamont above Suza, Mount Sei, and descended into the Valley of Pragela, the most northern of the Vaudois valleys. In this long and perilous journey across the Alps, they were led by Henry Arnaud. Though opposed by 10,000 French and 12,000 Piedmontese, they cut their way through, losing only thirty of their number in their numerous encounters with their enemies.

Climbing the precipitous Alps, crossing the snows, sleeping on the bare ground: subsisting only on bread and herbs, they escaped or put to flight their foes, preserved as by a miracle from all the perils of the way. Their return to their native valleys celebrated as "La Rentree Glorouse" was effected three and half years after their total dissipation.

We have said that Jurieu published a work on the "Approaching deliverance of

the Church," in 1687, in which he anticipated that the Restoration of Protestantism would follow three and a half years after its overthrow at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Another work on the Apocalypse written in 1685 by an exiled French minister contains the same anticipation. Copies of both of these works are lying before us. The latter contains the following reference to its authorship on the title-page, – "written by a French minister in the year 1685, and finished but two days before the Dragoons plundered him of all except this Treatise."

It is a small volume of about 300 pages. Fallen to pieces with age, with broken binding, and separated leaves, my copy is tied together with string to preserve it from destruction; an eloquent witness to the last great Papal persecution, and the anticipation based on the sure word of prophecy, of the speedy restoration of Protestant liberties. The author tells us that he was unacquainted with Jurieu's view when he wrote. "There were divers of the refugees," says he, "who had the sight of this discourse when they were in France. For the author had finished it near the end of August, 1685, about two days before the arrival of the new missionaries, the Dragoons, who plundered him of all he had. So that this was the whole that he was able to save out of that doleful shipwreck; which since his arrival at a place of security he hath reviewed and corrected, in several places. And having met with "the Accomplishment of Prophecies," written by the famous Monsieur Jurieu, the author was exceedingly pleased to find that he had explained the eleventh chapter (of Revelation) as promissory of the reestablishment of the Reformed in France, according as that great man hath done."

Not in France, however, but chiefly in England whither great numbers of the refugees had come, and in the Waldensian Valleys, was the restoration of Protestantism to be effected. It came at the expected time. A darker experience awaited France, the execution of terrible judgments in retribution for her cruel and long continued persecution of the Huguenots. Regarded in its widest aspects, the English Revolution under William of Orange marked the commencement of the modern era of full Protestant liberties, and the political ascendancy of Protestant power in Europe, and throughout the world.

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