

The Approaching End of the Age by H. Grattan Guinness – Part III. Chapter II. The Man of Sin, or Antichrist.

Part I.



Continued from [Part III. Foretold and Fulfilled. Chapter I.](#)

A GREAT FOURFOLD PROPHECY OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE (DAN. VII. 7-27; REV. XIII. 1-9 } REV. XVII; 2 THESS, II).— THE ROMAN POWER.—ITS LAST FORM AS PREDICTED HERE. INDIVIDUAL AND DYNASTIC USE OF THE WORD "KING,"— AN APOSTATE, BLASPHEMOUS, AND PERSECUTING POWER,— EXACTLY ANSWERING TO THE ONE HERE PREDICTED, HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR MORE THAN TWELVE CENTURIES, IN THE SUCCESSION OF THE POPES OF ROME.—ORIGIN OF THIS POWER.—ITS MORAL CHARACTER.—ITS SELF-EXALTING UTTERANCES,—ITS SELF-EXALTING ACTS,—ITS SUBTLETIES, FALSE DOCTRINES, AND LYING WONDERS.—ITS IDOLATRIES. ITS DOMINION.—ITS PERSECUTION OF THE SAINTS,—ITS DURATION.—ITS DOOM.

INTIMATELY associated with the Apocalyptic prophecy of Babylon the Great, which foretold, as we have seen, the existence, character, career, and doom, of the apostate church of Rome, is another prophecy so closely related to it, that the one cannot fairly be considered apart from the other.

The woman which symbolises the corrupt church, is seen seated on a "scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." As the angelic interpretation connects the woman with Rome, by the words: "the woman which thou sawest is that great city which ruleth over the kings of the earth," so it also connects this "beast" with Rome; for, interpreting its seven heads as seven successive forms of government, the angel says of them, "five are fallen, and ONE IS." Under one of its seven forms, then, the power here intended *was the ruling power in the days when the Apocalypse was granted*. That power was, as we know, the Roman Empire; it was by the tyrant Domitian that the Apostle John was exiled to Patmos, and it was under the Pagan persecutions of the Roman Emperors, that the saints of that age were suffering martyrdom. .

The past as well as the future history of this power, is sketched by the angel. Five of its forms of government had, at that time, already passed away. The sixth was then in existence, a seventh was to follow and last a short time, and then should come the eighth and last; and it was on the beast as governed by this eighth and last head, that the woman was seen seated.

Speaking of the "heads," or forms of government, the angel says, "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space; and the beast which thou sawest . . . *he is the eighth*, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

This scarlet-coloured beast is then a symbol of *the final form of the Roman power*, the last phase of that power whose entire course is represented by the fourth great beast of Daniel. (Dan. vii.) A careful perusal of these prophecies, leaves no room to doubt, that the same power is symbolised a third time in the "beast from the abyss," described in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. These scriptures present a threefold prophetic history, of one and the same power; and that power, beyond all question, is the great, the terrible, the exceeding strong, ROMAN Empire, the fourth universal monarchy from that of Babylon, the one which, both in Daniel's vision of the four beasts, and in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image, is represented as continuing, till the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of the God of heaven.

In common with the three preceding empires this power is represented as a *beast*, that is as degraded, ignorant, and ferocious. Daniel, in the days of Belshazzar, long before the first Advent, saw it as a one-headed beast, John in the days of Domitian, when it had already been more than eight centuries in existence, saw it as a seven-headed beast, fuller detail being naturally revealed to the later seer.

As a matter of fact, the great Roman power, did actually exist under seven distinct and constantly recognised forms of government, enumerated by Livy, Tacitus, and historians in general, as such. Rome was ruled successively by kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, military emperors, and despotic emperors; the form of government being entirely dissimilar under these two last, though the name Emperor was common to both.

This empire is represented as existing first in an undivided state, and secondly in a divided *tenfold* state. As a matter of history, it is notorious that the Roman power has done this. From its rise to the fourth century it was one and undivided; since its decline and fall as an empire, it has been broken up into many independent sovereignties, held together by a common submission to the Popes of Rome. The number of distinct kingdoms into which the Roman Empire in Europe has been divided, has always been about ten, at times exactly ten, sinking at other times to eight or nine, and rising occasionally to twelve or thirteen, but averaging on the whole *ten*.* This is generally admitted, and indeed cannot be denied; the fact lies on the surface of the history of Europe since the break-up of the Roman Empire, and serves as an important clue to the true scope and fulfilment of these predictions.

* "It seems unnecessary," says Wordsworth, present Bishop of Lincoln, "to specify ten particular kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided; or even to demonstrate that it was divided into precisely *ten* Kingdoms, The most ancient passage of Scripture in which the prophecy of the future division of the Roman Empire is found, is the vision of the image (Dan. ii. 42), where these kingdoms are represented by the toes of the image. Being toes they must be ten. Hence, when this dismemberment is described in other successive prophecies this denary number is retained: and thus the number *ten* connects all these prophecies together, and serves to show that they all point to the same object."

(Wordsworth on the Apocalypse, p. 524.)

The point of supreme importance, in connection with this thrice-symbolised Roman Empire, is (to judge from the great prominence given to it by the inspiring Spirit), *its connection in its second stage with a peculiar and diabolical power of evil*, the rise, character, and actings of which, are delineated with greater fulness, than are those of the Empire itself. It is evident that the "little horn" of Dan, vii, and the "eighth head" of the beast in Rev. xiii, and xvii, represent *some important and mysterious power of evil*, distinct from, and yet connected with, the Roman Empire, in its second or divided stage. How important this power is in the Divine estimation, may be gathered from the fact, that more than ten times as much space is devoted to a description of *it*, than is occupied by the whole course and continuance, of either of the first three universal monarchies. These are each dismissed in a single verse; the little horn occupies ten or eleven, as if ten times more importance were attached to this strange power destined to arise in the second stage of the Roman dominion, than to any one of the vast and mighty empires of antiquity. Moreover, it is evidently the character and actings of this horn, or head, or power, that determine the doom of the beast.

Before we inquire *what this power is*, we must associate a fourth prophecy with these three, and consider very briefly St. Paul's prediction of the *man of sin*.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come A FALLING AWAY first, and that MAN OF SIN be revealed, the SON OF PERDITION; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now YE KNOW what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall THAT WICKED be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after *the working of Satan* with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Tess. ii, 1-11).

In this passage, Paul,—in his endeavour to remove from the minds of the Thessalonians, the erroneous expectation of the immediate advent of Christ, which they were entertaining, and which they had perhaps derived from the expression in his previous epistle, "we who are alive and remain,"—reminds them of something he had before *told* them, that certain events had to intervene, that an apostasy had to take place in the church, whose incipient workings might already be detected. It was to issue in the development of a terrible power of evil, which he proceeds to describe, but which he tells

them, could not be fully manifested, till a certain hindrance, (and what that is, he adds, "*you know*") should be removed.

The very earliest traditions tell us, that the hindrance here alluded to *was the Roman Empire* as then existing, and that Paul having previously by word of mouth made known that fact to the church, avoided, from prudential reasons, more explicit reference to it in this written communication. He did not wish to expose the persecuted Christians to fresh dangers, by putting into the hand of their enemies, proof of what would by them have been considered, a seditious creed.

Tradition is often an unsafe guide; but in this case it seems peculiarly entitled to respect. The point was both an *important*, and a *simple* one; those who received the information from the apostle were not likely to forget it, and could scarcely err in repeating it; and from no other source than tradition, could the church of later ages learn, a fact, *communicated by word of mouth only*, and *purposely* omitted from the inspired letter of the apostle. We may therefore be thankful, that the tradition as to what this hindrance was, is of a very early date, is explicit, and agrees with what we learn from other scriptures; as well as that there is no counter-tradition on the point. From Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp the contemporary of St, John, we first hear, that the hindrance mentioned by Paul when he was with the Thessalonians, and alluded to in his second epistle, was THE ROMAN EMPIRE; and from him downwards the fathers are unanimous in this assertion. Paul says to the early church, "*ye know;*" the early church, (though not the identical generation,) tell us what they knew, and who are we, that we should say they are mistaken? How can we be in a position to correct *their* error?

Besides, there is the strongest presumption that they were right, for how should Irenaeus and the fathers invent such an improbable notion? They were far more likely to imagine the Roman Emperor to be Antichrist, than to imagine him to be the great obstacle to Antichrist's development! Its truth alone can account for the existence of this tradition, at the date at which we first meet it.

The point is important, because his connection with THE Roman Empire, is one of the links in the chain of evidence, which proves, that the "man of sin" and "son of perdition" here foretold, is identical with the power described in the three prophecies we have just considered. He was to reign at Rome, else why would the then regnant power be a hindrance to his development? He was to succeed soon after the fall of the Roman Emperors, "*then shall that wicked be revealed;*" he was to emanate from Satan, "*whose coming is after the working of Satan;*" he was to wield an ecclesiastical power, though succeeding purely secular rulers, "*the temple of God,*" or Christian church, being the special scene of his ostentation and pride; he was to be an opposer of Christ and his laws; and he was to be consumed like the "*little horn,*" by the brightness of Christ's coming. In all these respects, the power here foretold by Paul exactly resembles that predicted by Daniel and John, and as two such powers could not co-exist, it must be the same power. Its rise, actings, character, and doom, are here foretold in plain words, while in the other prophecies, they are veiled in symbolic language.

In seeking the fulfilment of this fourfold prediction, we must therefore combine the features given in each separate prophecy, and, recognising the principle of progressive revelation, we must modify the views derived from the earlier, by the later prophecies, and those derived from the later by the latest.

The particulars revealed about this great and peculiar power of evil, or "man of sin," are neither few nor vague; but, like those given by the spirit of prophecy respecting the Lord Jesus Christ before his advent,—they are numerous, full, and most definite. They comprise explicit information as to the time, place, and mode of his origin, and as to the attendant circumstances; they assign to him various and deeply significant names; they describe his character and his actings toward God and toward man; his official position; his pride; his idolatries; his blasphemies; his lying wonders and false miracles; the extent of his dominion; his coadjutors; his persecutions of the saints of God; his opposition to the Lamb of God; the duration of his prosperity and power; the causes of his decay and fall; his end, and his eternal portion. There is added, besides, a mysterious numerical mark, designed to secure his recognition by the wise. This is indeed the object for which this prophetic portrait is given to the church, that she might recognise her great enemy when he should appear, be sustained in her sufferings under him, and be encouraged to resist him even to blood. It is not a portrait easily to be mistaken: the features are too terrible and too peculiar, to belong to more than one incarnation of evil.

Interpreting, then, by the help of Scripture itself, the symbols under which realities are veiled, and blending in our minds the scattered intimations of this fourfold prophecy of the man of sin, and son of perdition, we will endeavour to point out the power, that in every respect answers to the portrait, sketched by the pen of inspiration. That power we are fully persuaded, and hope to be able to prove to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced reader, is **the succession of the Roman Pontiffs, the line of tiara-crowned monarchs, who for more than twelve centuries governed Papal Europe, who ranked as temporal sovereigns, and united under their sway the kingdoms of western Christendom.**

As the Futurist school of interpreters hold a contrary view to this, and maintain that the fourfold prophecy in question refers to a single individual, and not to a succession of rulers, we must examine the symbols employed, and the statements made in these predictions, to see which view has most Scripture authority.

In Daniel's vision, the power in question is represented as a horn of the Roman beast—"a little horn." Now a horn in these symbolical prophecies signifies sometimes an individual king, and sometimes a dynasty or race of rulers. In the "notable horn" of the he-goat, or Grecian Empire, universally admitted to have prefigured Alexander the Great, we have an instance of the use of the symbol in the former sense; and in the "four horns," which came up in the place of that notable horn, and represented the dynasties of the Ptolemies, the Seleucidae, etc., we have an instance of its use in the latter sense.

It is an exceedingly important inquiry, in *which* sense is the symbol used in the prophecy we are considering. Are the ten horns and their contemporary the "little horn" *individual rulers*, or are they *races of rulers*? We turn to the angelic interpretation of the vision for additional light. "The ten horns are the ten *kings* which shall arise, and another shall rise after them." If the word "king" here, necessarily signifies an individual monarch, the question is answered; the ten horns must be ten individual kings, and their contemporary, the "little horn," must in that case be an individual also. If this be so, the Futurists are right; for since we know the "man of sin" is to be in existence at the coming of Christ, it follows, that his career is *future*; since an individual can live only the ordinary life of mortals. *If*, we say again, a "king" *must* signify one man, and not a race of men, then the whole Protestant system of interpretation is erroneous; then the innumerable multitude of martyrs, confessors, and commentators, who have deemed that they recognised Antichrist, and heard his voice, and felt his oppressions, were deluded, and betrayed into gross perversion of the Word of God; then the Waldenses, and the Wickliffites, and John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and all their fellow-sufferers were deceived on this most important subject; and then, moreover, the event, which the church of the 19th century has to expect, is not the speedy coming of Christ, but, as the Futurists assert, the very same that the Thessalonians of the first century were directed to look for, a prior advent and revelation of Antichrist.

It is therefore a momentous inquiry, which must not be lightly passed over. *Does the word "king," in common and in Scripture usage, necessarily mean an individual?* On the answer to this question, depends in great measure our judgment, as to whether the long-predicted Antichrist is a past and present power, or whether we are still to look forward to his reign as a future event.

It is a maxim of the English Constitution that "the king cannot die." Does that maxim assert the immortality of an individual? or does it not rather assert the perpetuity of *the Royal Office*? "The king of England is a constitutional monarch," is a statement, which as much includes Queen Victoria as George III., though she is not a king at all, because it asserts what is characteristic of the whole line of English monarchs. If we read "the king of Prussia was at war with the emperor of France," we do not imagine that the two men were fighting a duel, but perceive that the word is used in a *representative* sense, the "king" including his kingdom, and the emperor representing his empire. In ordinary language, then, the word "king" may have a personal, an official, or a representative force; the context must in each case determine its signification. In treating of brief periods, and trivial events, the word is generally used in the *personal* sense; but in treating of long stretches of history, and great abstract principles, in the *official* or *representative* sense.

As far as ordinary usage can be a guide, the extended sense of the word, is therefore most likely to be the true one in the passage under consideration, which treats of the succession of empires, and gives an outline of the world's history to the end of time.

But we are not left to this presumption; the prophecy itself uses the

expression in the extended official sense, immediately before the sentence in question. (Dan. vii. 17.) "These great beasts which are four, are four *kings* which shall arise out of the earth." Did this mean four individuals? Nay! but *four great universal empires*, each of which endured for centuries, under a succession of monarchs.

This proves that the ten horns and the little horn *may* be dynasties and not individuals; it does not prove that they *must*. It shows that Scripture uses the word in both senses, and many confirmatory instances of this official use of it, might be quoted. (Compare Jer. xxv. 9-12; xxvii. 6, 7.)

The great question is, how is it used in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel? A little investigation will show that *out of six instances in which it occurs, five require the extended official sense, and in the other, the two meanings of the word coincide*. The *probability*, therefore, is that governments, and not individual men, are intended by the ten horns and the little horn.

A further argument for the same view is found in the fact that these prophecies are evidently *continuous*. There are no gaps, between the parts of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar; the ten toes, (which are evidently identical with these ten horns,) are joined on to the legs of iron. The interpretation links the history in the same way. Every subsequent stage follows immediately on the preceding one. There was no interval between the fall of Belshazzar and the rise of Darius the Mede. "In that night he took the kingdom." So in each case. How contrary then to all analogy to suppose an interval of over 1200 years, between the close of the undivided state of the Roman Empire, and the commencement of the divided state, which is presented as immediately succeeding! And this, when it is an undeniable and notorious *fact*, that a tenfold division *did* take place immediately after the dissolution of the old Roman Empire, and has continued more or less definitely from that day to this!

Prophecy foretells that *the Roman Empire, when it ceased to exist as one kingdom, should begin to exist as ten*; history tells us that it did so; and as we adoringly admire this correspondence, between the prediction and the fact, Futurist interpreters try to persuade us, that the prophecy does not predict this fact at all, that the ten horns do not symbolise the ten kingdoms into which the old Roman Empire was broken up; but that, leaping over the *twelve centuries marked by this fact* to a period still future, it predicts the rise, of ten individual men, whose brief career of a few years, is to be terminated by the Epiphany of Christ!

Is not this to make the prophecy of God of none effect through their interpretation?

And further, as we shall hereafter prove, the chronology of these visions, is as symbolic as their other features, and is expressed on the year-day scale. The duration assigned to this great power of evil, is therefore 1260 years (time, times, and half a time); and this alone decides the question. The ten horns, and their contemporary the little horn, represent *dynasties*, like the four horns of the Grecian he-goat and the two horns of the Medo-Persian ram.

The symbol employed in the Apocalyptic prophecy to prefigure this evil power, equally demands its dynastic character, and forbids the thought that an individual man is intended. It is represented as an *eighth head* of the Roman beast, an eighth form of government, having its seat at Rome. Now none of the previous "heads" of the Roman world, were individual rulers; but each consisted of a *series of rulers*. Seven kings formed the first head, and lasted 220 years; consuls, tribunes, decemvirs, and dictators, were the next four heads, and governed Rome in turn for nearly 500 years; sixty-five emperors followed, and ruled the Roman world for 500 years more. Now the man of sin, Antichrist, is to be the last, *and the most important "head" of this same Roman beast*. If he be a race of rulers enthroned at Rome, and governing thence the Roman world for more than twelve centuries, it is in harmony with all the rest. But if the eighth head represent one individual man, who exercises authority for only three years and a half, there is an utter violation of all symmetry and proportion in the symbol. Analogy demands that the last head, be like all the previous ones, *a race or succession of rulers*.

The Thessalonian prophecy leads us to the same conclusion. The mystery of iniquity was already working in the apostle's day; that mystery which was to result in the development of the man of sin. Now, *if* he be not yet come, and *if* when he comes he is to reign only three and a half years, we have this extraordinary fact; that it has taken Satan eighteen or nineteen centuries to produce this single short-lived enemy of the church. [*Reductio ad absurdum!*](#)

If, on the other hand, Antichrist rose on the fall of the Roman Empire, all is reasonable and natural. Satan worked secretly for three or four centuries, corrupting the church by false doctrine, worldliness, etc., and at last, having gradually prepared the world and the church to receive him, he enthroned the Antichrist at Rome, in a race of rulers, who, combining temporal and spiritual power, and using both to hinder the spread of the truth, were to be for more than twelve centuries, his principal agents upon earth.

It is not denied that the Thessalonian prophecy gives the impression, *on a cursory perusal*, that it predicts a single individual. This is exactly in harmony with the style of prophetic chronology, with that mysterious year-day system which was selected by God to keep alive the hope and expectation of the coming of Christ, throughout the whole course of the dispensation. Had the dynastic character and real period of the son of perdition been revealed clearly, the return of Christ would to the early Christians, have been postponed to a hopelessly distant future. But, though the early church knew (after the publication of second Thessalonians) that the advent of Antichrist was to precede the advent of Christ, they supposed he would be an individual, whose period would be brief; and the expectation formed no hindrance to their watching and waiting for the Lord's return.

Many other arguments in favour of the dynastic character of the power answering to the "little horn" and "eighth head," might be adduced; but these must suffice. *The fulfilment is the great proof*. Such a power as is here

predicted, *has existed*, has done the things this power was to do, has borne the character and undergone the experiences here described; it rose at the crisis here indicated, lasted the period here assigned, answered in every point with the most marvellous exactitude to these prophetic prefigurations, and was recognised by those who suffered under it, as *the* power here intended. If a singularly complex lock is opened by a key equally complex in its structure, who doubts that the one was made to fit the other?

So copious is the evidence of the fulfilment in the history of the Popedom of this remarkable fourfold prophecy, that it is almost impossible fairly to present it in a brief compass. Learned and able writers have filled volumes without number, with proofs, that the Papacy has accomplished every clause of these predictions. Every history of the middle ages, every description of the monastic orders, and of the Jesuits, every narrative of the Papacy and its proceedings, every bull, and every decretal, issued by the sovereign Pontiffs, many a monument, and many a medal, and many a mournful martyrology, lend their witness to the fact. Space obliges us to confine ourselves here, to the *merest* outline of the overwhelming mass of historic testimony that might be adduced on the subject. We append a list of works from which fuller information may be obtained.*

* See Appendix A

I. ORIGIN.

The "little horn," in Daniel, is a horn of the ROMAN beast, that is a political power, which rules over part of the territory formerly governed by the Caesars. The eighth head in Revelation is similarly a head of the Roman beast, the same beast that was in power when the Apocalypse was written, and had been for centuries previously. Two intimations exist that Rome ITSELF was to be the seat of this ruling power: it is an *eighth head*, and the seven previous ones had all ruled at Rome; and Paul says that the removal of the Imperial power *from* Rome, was a needful preliminary to its rise.

As a *horn*, this power was to be little—"a little horn;" its dominions were never to be territorially large, nor its *mere* political influence great; and yet it was to be more influential and important than all the rest. It was to displace three horns, as it grew up among the ten, but these were apparently to be replaced, for the horns are always spoken of as "ten." Though only a *horn*, this power has some of the attributes of a head, for its "eyes and mouth" impart to it an incontestable superiority over the rest. In the later vision of John, the same power is represented as a *head*, an "eighth head," representing a former seventh head, which had received a deadly wound. By both emblems it is presented, as in some important sense a *prolongation of the power of the old Roman Empire*. The immediately preceding head, or form of government, was to receive a deadly wound, so that the beast should seem to be for a time destroyed; but under this eighth head it should revive, and become as strong as ever. The one original Empire was to be broken up; in its stead a number of smaller kingdoms were to arise; and contemporaneously with their rise, was to spring up also this mysterious, peculiar, "little horn," this unique and singularly evil power, territorially small, but yet so all-influential, that it would take the lead of the rest, become their head, and

so reunite, by a new bond, the recently dissevered and independent portions of the Western Empire of Rome.

Now to any one familiar with the history of Europe from the division of the Roman Empire, into Eastern and Western under Valens and Valentinian, to the time of the Reformation, this prophecy *reads like history*. So exact, so singularly descriptive is the figuration, that if it were proposed as a problem, to present the phenomena attending the rise of the Papacy, in a single symbol, it would be impossible to discover one more appropriate.

What are the notorious facts of the case, facts attested by historians of unquestionable accuracy and impartiality, admitted by Roman Catholic writers, and confirmed by redundant evidence? Briefly these,—

After the reception of Christianity by Constantine, and its establishment as the religion of the Empire, corruption and worldliness, which had long been rife in the Church, increased with fearful rapidity. At the close of the fourth century, the bishopric of Rome was already deeply sunk in these and other vices, and full of earthly ambition; rival bishops contended for the episcopal authority with the carnal weapons and fierce passions of secular rulers, and indulged in luxury and pomp that imitated those of the Emperors themselves.

When the Empire expired under Augustulus, (the hindrance mentioned in Thessalonians, being at last removed,) the mystery of iniquity so long working, began to develop itself rapidly. The spiritual power and pretensions of the Papacy were great, though some time still elapsed ere it became a *temporal power*. When the dismemberment of the Roman world by the barbarian invasions began, Italy fell first to the share of Odoacer and the Heruli. But theirs was never a firm or strong kingdom. The bishops of Rome hated the authority to which they were obliged to submit, and desired its overthrow. In about twenty years from its establishment, this was accomplished, and the *first "horn"* that had sprung up in Italy and hindered (like the defunct Empire) the development of the little horn, was rooted up before it.

A new power, however, succeeded, and for two generations held dominion over Rome and her bishops. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, became master of Italy, and the Popes for sixty years had to own him and his successors as superiors and rulers. But their own pretensions and claims were rapidly increasing, and keeping pace with the growing corruption of the Church. The Gothic yoke became unbearable to them, and, mainly through the influence of the Popes, Belisarius, the great general of the Eastern Emperor Justinian, expelled the Ostrogoths from Italy. A *second* horn had now fallen before the rising power; the Exarchate of Ravenna was established, and very shortly a *third* barbarian power obtained the greater part of Italy. Alboin and his Lombard followers held sway over its fairest territories, though they avoided making Rome their capital. Degraded to the rank of a second city, Rome was left to the care of her bishops, whose authority began to assume a mixed temporal and spiritual character. They had as yet no temporal *dominions*, but they were striving to take their place among earthly sovereigns, and even already asserting a superiority to them in certain respects. The ancient metropolis of the world had at this time sunk very low in political influence and power.

"The lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command, and the messengers of victory, no longer met on the Appian Way, and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt, and continually feared. . . . The Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters impure, and the air infectious. . . . Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, *if the city had not been animated by a vital principle, which again restored her to honour and dominion.* A vague tradition was embraced, that two Jewish teachers, a tent-maker and a fisherman, had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero; and at the end of 500 years their genuine or fictitious relics, were adored as the Palladium of Christian Rome. . . . The temporal power of the Popes insensibly arose from the calamities of the times, and the Roman bishops who have (since) deluged Europe and Asia with blood, were compelled to reign as the ministers of charity and peace. . . . The misfortunes of Rome involved the apostolical pastor in the business of peace and war."*

* Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. xlv., p. 791.

The Lombard sway, in its turn, became intolerable to the ambitious Popes of Rome; and at last, through their earnest entreaties, and awful threats, Pepin and Charlemagne came to their rescue, uprooted the Lombards from Italy, overthrew their power, *and presented their dominions as a free gift to the Pope.*

The *third horn* had fallen before the rising power of the Papacy, and it stood forth at last firmly settled in its place on the head of the Roman beast. "The ancient patrimony of the Roman Church, consisting of houses and farms, was transformed by the bounty of these kings, into *the temporal dominions of cities, and provinces*; and the donation of the Exarchate to the Pope was the first-fruits of the victories of Pepin. . . . The splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion, and the world beheld for the first time, *a Christian Bishop, invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince*: the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, the wealth of the Palace of Ravenna."*

* Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. xlix., p. 885.

Thus as to the time, place, and manner of its origin, the power of the Popes of Rome fulfilled the symbolic predictions: "I considered the horns; and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." :The ten horns out of this (fourth) kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

The following extract, is from a recent work by a Roman Catholic writer who has given a description of the rise of the Papacy, which could hardly have been differently worded, had he intended to point out its fulfilment of the prophecy of the "little horn."

"The rise of the temporal power of the Popes, presents to the mind one of the most extraordinary phenomena, which the annals of the human race, offer to our wonder and admiration. By a singular combination of concurring circumstances, *a new power and a new dominion, grew up, silently but steadily, on the ruins of that Roman empire*, which had extended its sway over, or made itself respected by, nearly all the nations, peoples, and races, that lived in the period of its strength and glory; and that *new power, of lowly origin*, struck a deeper root, and soon exercised a *wider authority*, than the empire whose gigantic ruins, it saw shivered into fragments, and mouldering in dust. In Rome itself, the power of the successor of Peter, grew side by side with and under the protecting shadow of that of the Emperor; and such was the increasing influence of the Popes, that the majesty of the supreme Pontiff was likely ere long, to dim the splendour of the purple. The removal by Constantine of the seat of empire from the West, to the East, from the historic banks of the Tiber to the beautiful shores of the Bosphorus, laid the first broad foundation, of a sovereignty, which in reality commences from that momentous change. Practically, almost from that day, Rome which had witnessed the birth, the youth, the splendour, and the decay, of the mighty race by whom her name had been carried with her eagles, to the remotest regions of the then known world, was gradually abandoned by the inheritors of her renown; and its people, deserted by the Emperors, and an easy prey to the ravages of the barbarians, whom they had no longer the courage to resist, beheld in the bishop of Rome, their guardian, their protector, their father. Year by year the temporal authority of the Popes, grew into shape and hardened into strength; without violence, without bloodshed, without fraud, by the force of overwhelming circumstances, fashioned, as if visibly, by the hand of God."

II. CHARACTER.

The circumstances connected with the *origin* of the Papacy fulfil then the indications of the prophecy. Has the *character* of this power, answered to that attributed to the predicted Antichrist? Certain definite phases of evil, expressly noted in the prophetic word, will be considered further on; but we ask now, What has been the *general* character of the Papal power? If the question were proposed, do the prophecies of the Messiah of Israel, find a fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth? It might be answered, not only by an appeal to definite predictions exactly fulfilled, but by a comprehensive glance at the general scope of the mass of Messianic prophecy. The coming Messiah was to be a wondrous supernatural being, endued with heavenly power and wisdom, marked by matchless meekness, pure and holy, just and merciful, great yet lowly, a sufferer and yet a king, a victim and yet a judge, a servant of God, and yet Lord of all. By these general features, Jesus Christ was demonstrated to be the hope of Israel, as well as by His being born at Bethlehem, and brought up at Nazareth,

Now the Antichrist has similarly his broad characteristics; his very names imply some of them. He is called "that wicked," or the lawless one, who sets God's revealed will at defiance; his coming is "after the working of Satan;" he "opposeth and exalteth himself," against God, and against His people. He is to be the "man of SIN," the outcome of the working of "a mystery of

iniquity." He is the very opposite of all that is holy and good, the oppressor of all that love God, for Satan animates him. Further, he is called "the son of perdition," and this name, applied by our Lord to Judas Iscariot, the traitor, would prepare us to find the man of sin, the Antichrist,* *not* in some openly and avowedly infidel power, but in a *professedly Christian* one. The "son of perdition" was an apostate disciple, who betrayed his Lord with a kiss of seeming reverence and affection. This name would lead us to expect that a *Judas character* will attach to the great apostacy and its head, and lead us therefore to look for it *in the professing Christian Church*, the sphere in which Paul indeed distinctly states, that it will be revealed

* "Antichrist" is a name used only in John, in four passages, as follows, "Children, it is the last time: and *as ye have heard that the Antichrist cometh*, even now are there many Antichrists" (1 John ii. 18). "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist which denieth the Father and the Son" (ii, 22). "This is the spirit of *the Antichrist, respecting which ye have heard that it cometh*" (1 John iv. 3). "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is the deceiver and the Antichrist."

The repeated statements that Christians *had heard* of the coming of this Antichrist, prove that John alludes under this name to the "little horn" of Daniel, and the "man of sin" of Paul. The name itself means, not as is sometimes asserted, an avowed *antagonist* of Christ, but one professing to be a *Vice-Christ, a rival-Christ*, one who would assume the character, occupy the place, and fulfill the functions of Christ. The incipient Antichrists of John's own day, denied the Father and the Son, *by their false doctrines about them*. Etymologically the word does not mean a person opposed to Christ, but *an opposing Christ*, a vice-Christ, one assuming to be Christ.

So dark is the moral aspect of the power predicted, whatever it be, that many conceive that *no* power that ever has had an existence, can approach its enormity of guilt and evil; and they look, in consequence, for some future monster of iniquity who shall better fulfill the predictions of Scripture.

When this impression is not the result of ignorance of history, it illustrates the mournful facility with which familiarity with evil, diminishes its enormity in our sight; for it may be safely asserted that all, not to say more than all, these prophecies foretell, has found its realization in the line of Roman Pontiffs.

It must be remembered that the Popes of Rome are guilty before God, not only for all the sins they have committed, but for all the sins they have connived at, for all the sins they have suggested, for all the sins they have encouraged and sanctioned, and, above all, for the sins they have commanded. When their personal character and the influence of their examples, are considered, when the tendency of the institutions they have invented and maintained are examined, when their bulls and laws are studied, and their effects observed; and when all these results are multiplied, by the extent of their dominion, the length of its duration, and the assumption of infallibility and *Divine* authority that accompanied it, the impression of unparalleled iniquity produced on the mind, defies all power of expression; language seems too weak to embody it, and the words of inspiration seem to fall short of, rather than to exceed, the reality.

Not only have an appalling number of the Roman Pontiffs been personally,

exceedingly wicked men, as reference to any authentic history of the Popedom will show, (so wicked that it were a shame even to speak of the things that were done by them;) not only have they thus abused their high position, by setting examples of sin of the most flagrant kind; but by their laws, exempting their innumerable clergy in all lands from the jurisdiction of the civil power, they have protected others in sinning in the same way: and they have, by their countless sinful and sin-causing enactments and institutions, *led others into sin*, on a scale that it is positively appalling to contemplate.

Take for instance Papal doctrines and practices on the subject of forgiveness of sin—*indulgences*. The Pope made a bargain with sinners, and on certain conditions, such as the joining in a crusade, the helping to extirpate so-called heresy, the performance of certain pilgrimages, the repetition of prescribed formulas, or the payment of money, he agreed to give them *pardons for sin*. Finding this traffic singularly lucrative—for what will not men do to indulge in sin with impunity,—it was developed into a system of fabulous wickedness. Indulgences for the dead, as well as for the living, were freely sold, and thus the affections as well as the selfishness of men, were turned to account for the replenishment of the papal treasury. Some of these indulgences expressly mentioned the very sins, which the Scriptures declare, exclude from the kingdom of heaven, and bade those who practised them not doubt of eternal salvation, if they bought a papal indulgence.

The number of years by which the torments of purgatory were to be abridged by some of these indulgences, was extravagant to the last degree. John XII. granted “ninety thousand years of pardon for deadly sins,” for the devout repetition of three prayers, written in the chapel of the Holy Cross at Rome. Indeed, such has been the profligate extravagance with which these pardons have been dispensed, and the excessive facility with which they may be procured, that if they had been made available according to the intention of the Church, then must purgatory, again and again, have been swept out,—nay more, it must for ever be kept empty, and the sins of all the sinners that ever lived, must have been forgiven over and over again.

The sale of these indulgences for money, was the proximate cause of the glorious Reformation. The intense disgust, and the utter abhorrence, with which they came to be regarded, in consequence of the unblushing effrontery, and shameless trickery, connected with their sale, roused all Germany to resist their introduction, and stirred up Martin Luther to examine into the rotten foundation on which they rested.

The deeply interesting story must not be told here—how Tetzel the indulgence-monger, bearing the bull of Leo X. on a velvet cushion, travelled in state from town to town in a gay equipage, took his station in the thronged church, and proclaimed to the credulous multitudes:

“Indulgences are the most precious and sublime of God’s gifts; this red cross has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ. Draw near, and I will give you letters duly sealed, by which even the sins *you shall hereafter desire to commit*, shall be all forgiven you. There is no sin so great that indulgence cannot remit. Pay, only pay largely, and you shall be forgiven. But more than

all this, indulgences save not the living alone, they also save the dead. Ye priests, ye nobles, ye tradesmen, ye wives, ye maidens, ye young men, hearken to your departed parents and friends, who call to you from the bottomless abyss, 'We are enduring horrible torment, a small alms would deliver us, you *can* give it, *will* you not?' The moment the money clinks at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies to heaven, With ten groschen you can deliver your father from purgatory. Our Lord God no longer deals with us as God—he has given all power to the Pope."

The indulgences sold were in the following form "Our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, M. N.; and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy sufferings, I, in virtue of the apostolic power committed to me, absolve thee from all...excesses, sins, and crimes, that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be, and of whatever kind. . . . I remit the pains thou wouldest have had to endure in purgatory, . . . I restore thee to the innocence and purity of thy baptism, so that at the moment of death, the gates of the place of torment shall be shut against thee, and the gates of Paradise open to thee. And if thou shouldest live long, this grace continueth unchangeable, till the time of thy end. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. The brother John Tetzel, commissary, hath signed this with his own hand."

For the wonderful and horrible account of the excesses of this abandoned agent of the Popes, we must refer the reader to D'Aubigné's History of the great Reformation, and similar works.

(To be continued!)