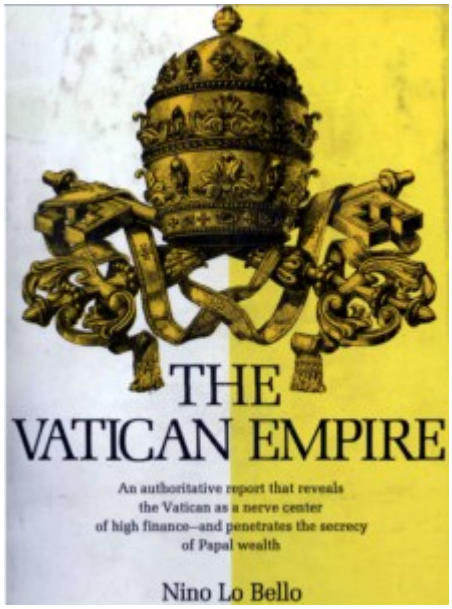
The Papacy Is The Antichrist – By Rev. J. A. Wylie



James Aitken Wylie

"The Papacy Is The Antichrist" is a classic work By Rev. J. A. WYLIE, LL.D. James Aitken Wylie (1808-1890) was a Scottish historian of religion and Presbyterian minister. He was a prolific writer and is most famous for writing The History of Protestantism.

My good friend Walt Stickel of http://granddesignexposed.com/ linked to http://seawaves.us/na/web4/papacyantichrist.html from his website from which I got this article. The font on that site is too small and hard on my eyes to read which is why I am re-posting it on my own website. I also hope for this article to be more accessible for everyone. Thanks to WordPress technology, it's simple to re-post classic books to make them easier for me to read. And also thanks to an on-line tool I used to remove unnecessary link breaks.

PREFACE.

The following demonstration is rested on no narrow basis. Its two postulates, like two posterns, admit us into the edifice, but they are not its foundations. The whole economy of Redemption, and the whole course of History are the broad substructions on which the argument is based and built up; and the author humbly submits that it cannot be overturned, or the conclusion arrived at set aside, without dislocating and shaking the structure of both Revelation and providence. The same line of proof which establishes that Christ is the promised Messiah, conversely applied, establishes that the Roman system is the predicted Apostacy. In the life of Christ we behold the converse of what the Antichrist must be; and in the prophecy of the

Antichrist we are shown the converse of what Christ must be, and was. And when we place the Papacy between the two, and compare it with each, we find, on the one hand, that it is the perfect converse of Christ as seen in His life; and, on the other, that it is the perfect image of the Antichrist, as shown in the prophecy of him. We conclude, therefore, that if Jesus of Nazareth be the Christ, the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist.

We shall not go far afield in this discussion: nor is it in the least necessary to do so. The materials for a right decision on the question before us lie close at hand. The Apostle John, speaking of the great apostacy to arise in Christendom, calls it the "Antichrist." And the Pope has taken to himself, as the name that best describes his office, the title "Vicar of Christ." All we shall ask as the basis of our argument are these two accepted facts, namely, that John styles the "apostacy," "the Antichrist," and that the head of the Roman system styles himself "Christ's Vicar."

The Papacy holds in its name the key of its meaning. We shall make use of that key in unlocking its mystery and true character. The Papacy cannot complain though we adopt this line of interpretation. We do nothing more than use the key it has put into our hands.

The Apostle John, we have said, speaking of the apostacy, the coming of which he predicts, styles it the "Antichrist." And we have also said that the Papacy, speaking through its representative and head, calls itself the "Vicar of Christ." The first, "Antichrist," is a Greek word, the second, "Vicar," is an English word; but the two are in reality one, for both words have the same meaning. Antichrist translated into English is Vice-Christ, or Vicar of Christ; and Vicar of Christ, rendered into Greek is Antichrist – Antichristos. If we can establish this –and the ordinary use of the word by those to whom the Greek was a vernacular, is decisive on the point –we shall have no difficulty in showing that this is the meaning of the word "Antichrist," –even a Vice-Christ. And if so, then every time the Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ, he pleads at the bar of the world that he is the "Antichrist."

Moreover, this will clear our way and simplify our discussion. For, let it be noted, if Antichrist signifies a Vice-Christ –that is, one who comes in the room of Christ –deception, dissimulation, counterfeit, must be an essential element in his character. In whatever persons or systems that fundamental characteristic is lacking, we fail to find the "Antichrist," whatever may be their general opposition to Christ and to Christianity, or whatever other features of the Antichrist they may bear. They may have every other characteristic by which prophecy had described this noted adversary of Christ and his gospel, yet, lacking this fundamental one, their claim to this pre-eminently evil distinction cannot be admitted. This enables us to dismiss summarily and at once a host of Antichrists which have been conjured up by persons who have drawn upon their imagination, rather than followed any sound principle of prophetic interpretation. The cause of the papacy is served by the false glosses and mistaken interpretations of Scripture which interpose a pseudo-antichrist betwixt it and Prophecy, which unfolds against it so black a record, and suspends above it so terrible a doom.

We shall suppose that an atheist or an infidel has been put to the bar to answer to a charge of being the Antichrist. He has manifested a Satanic malignity against the Gospel, and has laboured to the utmost of his power to destroy it. He has blasphemed God, execrated Christ, and derided, vilified, and persecuted all who profess His name, and on these grounds he has been assumed to be the Antichrist. The case is no imaginary one. Atheists and scoffers in former ages, Voltaire and Paine in later times, Communists and Pantheists in our own day, have all been arraigned as the Antichrist.

Well, let us suppose that one or other of these notoriously wicked personages or systems has been put to the bar, on the charge of being the "adversary" predicted by John. "Who are you?" says the judge. "Are you a Vice-Christ? So you make a profession of Christianity, and under that pretext seek to undermine and destroy it? "No," replies the accused. "I am no counterfeit. Christ and His Gospel I hate; but I am an open enemy, I fight under no mask." Turning to the likeness drawn by Paul and John of Christ's great rival and opponent, and finding the outstanding and essential feature in the portrait absent in the accused, the judge would be constrained to say, "I do not find the charge proven. Go your way; you are not the Antichrist."

Mohammedanism comes nearer than any other of the opposing systems to the Antichrist of the Bible; yet it falls a long way short of it. Mohamet did not disavow the mission of Jesus; on the contrary, he professed to hold Him in honour as a prophet. And in much the same way do His followers still feel towards Christ. But Islam does not profess to be an imitation of Christianity. Any counterfeit that can be discovered in Mohammedanism is partial and shadowy when placed alongside the bold, sharp-cut counterfeit of Romanism. It requires a violent stretch of imagination to accept Mohammedanism, or, indeed, any other known ism, as a Vice-Christ. Of all systems that ever were on the earth, or are now upon it, Romanism alone meets all the requirements of prophecy, and exhibits all the features of the Vice-Christ; and it does so with a completeness and a truthfulness which enable the man who permits himself to be guided by the statements of the Word of God on the one hand, and the facts of history on the other, to say at once, "This is the Antichrist."

What we have said is meant to indicate the lines on which our demonstration will proceed. We must trace the parallelism betwixt their respective chiefs, Christ and the Pope, along the entire line of their career. In this parallelism lies the essence of Antichristianism, and of course the strength of our argument. It is this counterfeit, so exact and complete, which has misled the world into the belief that this is Christianity, to the waste of ages not a few, the unsettling and overthrow of kingdoms, the stunting of the human understanding, and the loss of millions of immortal souls.

It is somewhat remarkable that the clearest, fullest, and most life-like description of Antichrist we possess is that which was given of him before he arose. The Papacy —if we may be allowed to anticipate what it will be the object of the following pages to demonstrate —the Papacy has been twelve hundred years in existence, and during all these centuries, it has been one of the main actors in the world: neither time nor opportunity has been

lacking to it for the display of its spirit and aims. The record of its deeds lies open to the world, and he that runs may read it; and after so long, and, we may add, so dismal an acquaintance with it, it might be supposed that we should now be able to give a fuller and truer description of it than any that could possibly be given before it had come into existence. Yet no. Incomparably the most life-like portrait of the Papacy that exists, is that which was given by Paul in the first century, when writing to the Thessalonian Christians, and which we give below.

Paul's is not the only painting of Popery on the page of the Bible. Daniel, centuries before, had foreshadowed the rise of this system in imagery of graphic vividness and dramatic grandeur. A little while after Paul, John, in symbols equally majestic and awful, foretold the advent of the same power. The vision was doubled, because the thing was sure. Paul comes in between these two prophecies —two, yet one — as their inspired interpreter. He employs neither figure nor symbol, but in words, plain yet solemn, he lifts the veil and lays bare the infernal origin and Satanic character of that power, which, when he wrote, was so near, that the Christians to whom he addressed his epistle might almost hear the sound of its approaching footsteps, and see the shadow which it had already begun to project upon the Church and the world. We quote the passage, 2 Thess. ii. 1-11.

"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."

In order to introduce ourselves to our subject, we have taken it for granted that the system described by Paul in the passage we have just quoted is the papacy. This is the thing to be established. We now proceed to prove this, and provided we shall show on good and conclusive grounds that the system depicted by Paul is the Roman apostacy, and that this is the same system which Daniel and John have portrayed under symbolic imagery, it will follow that one who admits the Bible to be the Word of God, and that Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, must believe that the Papacy —that is, the Roman apostacy —is the Antichrist of Scripture.

This is not point of mere speculation. It is a question that has attendant upon it great practical issues. This inquiry has for its object the ascertainment of the true meaning of an important part of the Word of God, even the better half of its prophecies. Moreover, on this question must rest the verdict we are to pronounce on that society which calls itself “the church,” as also the revelations in which we are to stand to it. And on it, too, must depend whether we shall abandon or whether we shall continue to occupy the ground which we have been accustomed to regard as our divine central position in our war with Popery; or, rather, whether we ought not to end this war, and confess that we have been fighting all along under a mistake.

Who is Antichrist? It will help us to the right answer to this question if we shall first determine, What is Antichrist?

Antichrist is an enemy who makes war with the Son of God. Of that there is no doubt. But what is the form of this war, and under what character does Antichrist carry it on? Does he wage it openly, or does he fight it under a mask? Does he take the field as an open rebel and a declared foe, or does he come as a friendly adherent who professes to bring support and help to the cause which, in reality, he seeks to undermine and destroy? To determine this point, let us look at the meaning of the word Antichrist as employed in Scripture.

The reader sees that the term is a composite one, being made up of two words anti and Christ. The name is one of new formation; being compounded, it would seem, for this very enemy, and by its etymology expressing more exactly and perfectly his character than any older word could. The precise question now before us is this —What is the precise sense of anti in this connection? Does it designate an enemy who says openly and truly, “I am against Christ.” Or does it designate one who says plausibly, yet falsely, “I am for Christ.” Which?

To determine this, let us look at the force given to this prefix by writers in both classic literature and Holy Scripture. First, the old classic writers. By these the preposition anti is often employed to designate a substitute. This is, in fact, a very common use of it in the classic writers. For instance, anti-basileus, he who is the locum tenens of a king, or as we now should say viceroy: anti having in this case the force of the English term vice. He who filled the place of consul was antihupatos, pro-counsul. He who took the place of an absent guest at a feast was styled antideipnos. The preposition is used in this sense of the great Substitute Himself. Christ is said to have given Himself as an antilutron, a ransom in the stead of all. Classic usage does not require us to give only one sense to this word, and restrict it to one who seeks openly, and by force, to seat himself in the place of another, and by violent usurpation bring that other’s authority to an end. We are at liberty to apply it to one who steals into the office of another under the mask of friendship; and while professing to uphold his interest, labours to destroy them. This leaves us free to turn to the use of the word in Scripture.

The Antichrist comes first into view in our Lord’s discourse recorded in

Matt.xxiv. 24, and Mark xiii. 22. “For false Christs (pseudoxristos) and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.’ Our Lord does not, indeed, use the word Antichrist, but what is almost its synonym pseudo-Christ. Nevertheless, the persons whose coming He foretells are in the line of Antichrist; they belong to the same family, and their grand characteristic is deception. Manifestly, they are not open enemies, but pretended friends; they are “false Christs and false prophets,” and as such are forerunners of that great Antichrist who is to succeed them, and in whom they are to find their fuller development and final consummation. They shall seek by “signs and wonders,” false, of course, to obscure the glory of Christ’s true miracles, to weaken the evidence of His Messiahship arising therefrom, and to draw men away from Him, and after themselves.

The other place in the New Testament in which reference is made to Antichrist is the 1st and 2nd Epistles of John. The idea which John presents of the Antichrist is quite in harmony with that of our Lord. John looks for him in the guise of a Deceiver. “Little children,” says John (1st Epistle ii. 18), “it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists.” After this announcement of a special and great Antichrist, to follow in the wake of those minor Antichrists that were already arrived, and were urging their claims on the attention of the world, he comes to look more closely at the giant who was to stand up after these dwarfs had passed away. He notes prominently one characteristic of him, and it is his falsehood. Antichrist, says John, is to be a liar (verse 22). “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”

“St John’s words,” says Archbishop Trench, “seem to me decisive on the matter, that resistance to, and defiance of, Christ, not the false assumption if his character and offices, is the essential mark of Antichrist.” (Synonyms of the New Testament, by R.C. Trench, B.D., p.120 Cambridge and London, 1854) Such is Dr Trench’s opinion; but he gives no grounds for it, and we are unable to imagine any. We draw the exactly opposite conclusion from the apostle’s words, even that the “false assumption of His character and offices” is an essential mark of Antichrist. “He is a liar,” says John. But if he comes boldly and truthfully avowing himself the enemy of Christ, how is he a liar? If he avows, without concealment, his impious design of overthrowing Christ, with what truth can he be spoken of as a deceiver? But such is the character plainly ascribed to him by John (2nd epistle, verse 7): -“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.” Plainly the exegesis, or rather supposition, of Dr Trench is inadmissible.

Dr Chalmers had no difficulty in seeing the Roman system in the “apostacy” predicted by Paul. We find him saying in his Scripture Readings: -“Save us, O Lord, from falling away, lest we share in the perdition that waiteth on the great apostacy. We hold the usurpation of Rome to be evidently pointed at, and therefore let us maintain our distance, and keep up our resolute protest against its great abominations.” (Dr Chalmers’ Sabbath Scripture Readings, vol. I., p.310. Edinburgh, 1848.)

Archbishop Trench was misled, it may be, by the strength of the term deny. “He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.” But he who does not confess when he is called to do so, denies. Such is the use of the word in these applications all through the New Testament. Such is the use John makes of it in this very passage: -“for many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” It is clear that Antichrist, as depicted by our Lord and by His Apostle John, is to wear a mask, and to profess one thing and act another. He is to enter the church as Judas entered the garden —professedly to kiss his Master, but in reality to betray Him. He is to come with words of peace in his mouth but war in his heart. He is to be a counterfeit Christ —Christ’s likeness stamped on base metal. He is to be an imitation of Christ, -a close, clever, and astute imitation, which will deceive the world for ages, those only excepted who, taught by the Holy Spirit, shall be able to see through the disguise and detect the enemy under the mask of the friend.

Antichrist, then, is a counterfeit. But this one mark is not alone sufficient to identify the person on whom it is found as the great apostate. All deceit in religion is anti-Christian; the other marks must come along with this one to warrant us to say that we have found that pre-eminently wicked one, and that portentous combination of all evil that is to form the Antichrist. Yet this one mark enables us to test certain theories which have been advanced on this subject. If Antichrist must necessarily be a deceiver —a false Christ —then no Atheist or body of Atheists can be Antichrist. No Pantheist of body of Pantheists can be Antichrist. They are not deceivers; they are open enemies. They make war in defiance of God and Christ, and under the protestation that there is no such person as the Bible affirms filling the office of the world’s Mediator and Saviour. They hold the whole affair to be an invention of priests. Antichrist dare make no such avowal. It would be fatal to him. Were he to affirm that Christianity is a fable, and out and out imposture, he would cut away the ground from under his own feet. He would deny the very first postulate in his system; for there must first be a Christ before there can be an Antichrist.

And not less does this mark shut us up to the rejection of the theory which has been advanced with much earnestness and some plausibility, that Antichrist is a political character, or potentate, some frightfully tyrannical and portentously wicked King, who is to arise, and for a short space devastate the world by arms. This is an altogether different Antichrist from that Antichrist which prophecy foreshadows. He may resemble, nay, surpass him, in open violence, but he lacks the profound dissimulation under which Antichrist is to commit his atrocities. The rage of the mere tyrant is indiscriminately vented upon the world at large; Antichrist’s rage is concentrated on one particular object and cause; nor with any propriety can such a one be said to sit in the “temple of God,” the seat on which the mock-Christ specially delights to show himself. Prophecy absolutely refuses to see in either of these theories the altogether unique and over-topping system of hypocrisy, blasphemy, and tyranny which it has foretold. So far we are helped in our search. When we are able to put aside some of the false Antichrists, we come more within sight of the true one. We turn now to the prophecy of

Paul, and we shall be blind indeed, if, after the study of it, we shall be in any doubt as to whose likeness it is that looks forth upon us from this remarkable prediction.

The name Antichrist, it is true, does not occur in this prophecy. It is not needed. John had given the name. Paul presents us with his portrait. He limns the Antichrist with a power, a truth, an accuracy and a fulness which have left nothing for the eighteen centuries which have since rolled past to supplement, much less to correct or amend. The strokes with which this portrait is drawn are few, but each is a lightning-flash, and every member and feature of the terrible Colossus stands revealed. Paul did not paint this portrait and leave it as a riddle to perplex and baffle future ages. With history in our hands, there is no room for a moment's doubt about it.

Since Paul wrote, there has been only one system to which this portrait can apply. It applies to it in every particular, as the photograph agrees in every lineament with the living face from which it was taken; but it will agree with no other system that now is or ever was on the earth, even as the photograph will not agree with any countenance but that which stamped itself upon the plate of the artist. So clearly did the spirit of prophecy foresee the coming of Antichrist, and so truthfully did he enable Paul to depict him.

The key of this prophecy is in the seventh verse, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work!" "The mystery of iniquity!" The phrase is a striking one. It is not simply iniquity, it is the "mystery of iniquity." Since the time when the first transgression in Eden opened the door for the its entrance, iniquity had never been absent from the earth. History is little else than a sorrowful recital of iniquities. But now a new epoch was to be opened in the career of evil. A hitherto unexampled and unthought-of organization of iniquity was about to appear. The phrase "mystery of iniquity" suggests a secret and terrible conspiracy to sin, amongst beings of various ranks and faculties, and perhaps also of various natures. Not a mere series of isolated acts, but a skillfully-constructed system, the several parts nicely adjusted to one another, and their joint working educing a product of tremendous evil character, surpassing what any former age had witnessed. That "mystery" was as yet undivulged, but it was even now, when Paul wrote, travelling towards the light, and would be revealed in due time.

"The Mystery of Iniquity."

This is our true standpoint, whence we may look around over the whole passage. When surveyed from this position, Paul's prophecy will be seen to have an amplitude of meaning and a depth of import as profound as its range is vast. We venture to think that the height and depth of this prophecy have not yet been very accurately measured, or its meaning fully fathomed.

What is the "mystery of iniquity?" The phrase suggests another —the "mystery of godliness." Paul writing to Timothy says (1 Epistle, chap. ii. 16): - "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." These two phrases stand alone in the Bible. We read but once of the "mystery of godliness," and but once of the "mystery of iniquity." They are the two pre-eminently grand

mysteries of Revelation. They stand over against each other: the “mystery of iniquity,” fashioning its outward character and semblance upon the “mystery of godliness,” making it its pattern, till at last the “mystery of iniquity” presents itself to the world a perfect imitation and counterfeit of the “mystery of godliness.”

Seeing the two mysteries stand so related to each other, the one mystery interprets the other. We must give the same height and depth, the same length and breadth, to the one as to the other, so far as the diverse origin and character of the two will permit.

We ask, then, what is the precise idea of the Holy Spirit in the phrase the “mystery of godliness?” Does the phrase denote simply that system of spiritual truth which God has been developing during the successive ages of the world, which now at last stands fully manifested in the Gospel? No doubt this is part of the “mystery of godliness,” but it is not the whole, nor indeed is it the principle part of it. The “mystery of godliness” is not the development of a system only, it is the development of a person. So does the apostle define it. “Without controversy,” says he, “great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” It was the gradual development of certain great and supernatural principles and truths through symbols, prophecies and typical persons, till at last they attained their completed development and full manifestation in the person of the Son of God.

The “mystery of iniquity,” which stands over against the “mystery of godliness” as its parallel and counterfeit, must be like it —like it in having its source outside the world, like it in its slow and gradual development, and like it in its final culmination. Of it, too, we must say it is not the development of a system only, it is the development of a person. It is the gathering together of all the principles of evil, and the marshalling of them into one organization or host, and their embodiment at last in a representative person or head —Antichrist. He was to be the grand outcome of the apostacy; not its mere ornamental head, but its executive. He was to guide its counsels, inspire its policy, execute its decrees; in short, he was to be the organ through which it terrible powers were to be put forth.

This we take to be the ruling idea in the passage. Just as the “mystery of godliness” is not merely the manifestation of the system of godliness, but the manifestation of God Himself, so the “mystery of iniquity” is not merely the manifestation of the system of iniquity, but the manifestation of the person or author of iniquity. The prophecy brings before us two mysteries, the one the counterfeit in all points of the other. We have an invisible agent, even God, beneath the one; we have an invisible agent, even Satan, beneath the other. We have the one mystery culminating at last in an incarnation, “God manifest in the flesh.” We see the other in like manner culminating in an incarnation, in a loose sense; for all its principles concentrate themselves in and show themselves to the world through its living head on earth, Antichrist. We may go even farther and say that there is as real an incarnation of the spirit and mind of Satan in the “mystery of iniquity,” as there is of the spirit and mind of God in the “mystery of godliness.” And as in Christ God and man meet; so in Antichrist, his counterfeit and rival, the human and the superhuman meet and act together

—earth-born man and arch-angel fallen.

The apostle having brought these two mysteries upon the stage, and shown them to us standing face to face, goes on to trace the parallel between the two. This parallel is distinctly discernible in every stage of their career. The apostle traces it first in their rise; second, in their coming; and third, in their full and completed development. Let us follow the parallelism, step by step and stage by stage.

In their rise. “for the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” It was already in existence, its energies were all astir, but it worked in secret, and was inaudible to the world. It worked as leaven doth in the meal, which keeps silently fermenting in the mass till the whole has been leavened. It worked as the seed does in the soil, which, germinating in the darkness, pierces the clod, bursts into the light, and receiving an accession of strength from the sun and air, shoots up in the stem and at last culminates in flower and fruit.

The mystery of iniquity worked as treason works. The conspirators meet in secret conclave, they concert their plans unknown to the world, they speak in whispers, but their schemes at length ripen, and now they come abroad into the light of day, and proclaim in the house-tops what they had hatched in darkness. So did the “mystery of iniquity” work.

So, too, did the “mystery of godliness” work. Even at this initial stage of the two mysteries we trace a resemblance between them. Let us think how long the Gospel worked before it issued in the incarnation of the Son of God. For ages and for generations Christianity was a hidden mystery. The redemption of men by means of the incarnation of the Son of God was a secret profoundly hidden in the councils of God in eternity, and even after time had begun its course it long remained a secret unknown to the world. Bit by bit this mystery revealed itself. First, the idea of incarnation was dimly made known. In the first promise, mention was made of the “seed of the woman,” and on this obscure intimation was built the hope of a Deliverer, and that hope descended the ages with the race. The idea of expiation was next revealed in the appointment of sacrifice, which also, with the hope which is expressed and sustained, came down the stream of time. Next a complete system of ceremonial worship was instituted, to reveal the coming redemption in the amplitude of its blessings. Still the veil was upon it. It stood before the world in type. There arose an illustrious series of august personages, who were forerunners or types of Christ. They exhibited to the church the offices which her incarnate Saviour was to fill, and the work He was to execute. There stood up an order of prophetical men who prefigured Him as the Great Teacher; there stood up an order of sacrificial men who prefigured Him as the One Priest. There stood up an order of kingly men who prefigured Him as a Monarch, and a Monarch who was to be higher and mightier than any of the monarchs of earth. The Kings of the House of Judah foreshadowed Him as sprung of a royal stock, and the heir of a throne which all nations should serve, and before which all kings should bow.

Thus did the “mystery of godliness” work, unfolding and still unfolding

itself as the ages passed on —the type growing ever the clearer, and the prophecy ever the fuller — till at last the “mystery” stepped out from behind the veil, and stood before the world, perfected, finished, and fully revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ — “God manifest in the flesh;” and centering in His person, and flowing out from it, through His life and ministry and death, as rays from the sun, were all the glorious doctrines of the Gospel.

In like manner the “mystery of iniquity” kept travelling, by the same stages, towards the day of its final revelation. It was not the production of one but many ages. The fashion of the world changed: great empires which had filled the earth with their glory and burdened it with their oppression, went down into the grave. Worships arose with their powerful hierarchies and grand ceremonials, and when their day was over passed away, leaving only ruined fanes and deserted altars to tell that they had ever been. But the “mystery of iniquity” as if deathless, like the Being which inspired it, refused to succumb to these shocks. It kept on its course, over broken thrones and desecrated altars, ever reaching forth to that high goal where it should show itself to the nations and be the wonder of all that dwell upon the earth.

Silently and stealthily this “mystery” pursued its course. For ages and for generations it too was a hidden mystery. Paul tells us that it was working in his day. This warrants us to say that Antichrist was then born, and was making trial of his infantile powers. The world did not hear his working, but Paul, by the spirit of prophecy did so, and sounded an alarm to the church. The Gnostics and other teachers of error that had gone forth into the world so early as Paul’s day, were Antichrists, and those in especial who propagated the delusion that it was a phantom which the Jews seized, and crucified on Calvary. They seemed to admit the mission of Christ, yet they subverted the great end of His coming by denying His incarnation, and, by consequence, the whole work of redemption. But, though these teachers were anti-Christian, they were not the Antichrist. After them, Paul gave warning there should come one far mightier than they, “the latchet of whose shoes they were not worthy to loose.” They were misgrown and misshapen Antichrists; their system of error was immature, and their power of attack contemptible, compared with that full-grown anti-Christianism which would stand up on after days, and say to the world, “I am Christ,” and under that colour make war upon the true Christ.

Nay, even before the apostle’s day the “mystery of iniquity” has begun to work. From the beginning Satan had made the line of error to run parallel with the line of truth. He had been a close observer of God’s plan from the first, and he made it the model on which to form his own. Never was the Divine plan advanced a stage without Satan making a corresponding advance in his plan, as like to the other as it was possible to make it, in all outward respects, but essentially antagonistic to it in principle and spirit. Satan has been a counterfeit from the beginning. Even in the times of Paganism he never showed himself as an avowed adversary, or waged open war. He nowhere established a system of Atheism. He permitted the great idea of a God to be received in the Pagan world; but he took care to intercept the influence of that great truth in the heart and life by seducing men to the worship of

“gods many,” and these gods in man’s own likeness. He set up altar against altar, priesthood against priesthood, and sacrifice against sacrifice; and he enlarged and beautified his ritual in the heathen world till it seemed no unworthy rival of the divinely instituted ceremonial on Mount Moriah.

Moreover, he sent forth pioneers to keep alive expectation in the pagan world of some Great One yet to come. He showed to the world a colossal picture of the Antichrist while yet he was at a distance. For what were the Caesars, king and priest of the Roman world, but types of that more terrible power, temporal and spiritual, that was to centre in the chair of the Popes? That colossal image he kept full in the world’s view, till the “fulness of the time” for Antichrist’s appearance had arrived, and then he withdrew the image, and brought forward the great reality, the “Man of Sin” now come to his full birth, though not as yet to his full stature, and he found for him a seat and throne on the Seven Hills.

Beginning his career in the days of Paul, it was not till the thirteenth century that the “Man of Sin” reached his maturity, and stood before the world full grown. During all these ages, he kept stretching himself higher and higher, piling assumption upon assumption, and prerogative upon prerogative, till at last, he raised himself to a height from which he looked down not only upon all churches, but upon all kings and kingdoms. He claimed to be the world’s one bishop and world’s one monarch. In the first century he is seen as the humble pastor, whose only care is to feed his flock, and who looks for no crown save that which the chief shepherd may be pleased to give him at his appearing. In the thirteenth he is beheld as a mighty potentate, who stands with his foot planted on every throne and realm of Christendom. He writes himself a “King of Kings,” and he claims by divine right to administer all the affairs of earth. If we except Christianity, there is no similar example in history of what was at first so small, becoming in the end so great. Three hundred Popes and more are seen, one after the other, steadily prosecuting this idea, without once relaxing in their efforts or turning aside from the pursuit. Each in succession takes up the plan at the point where his predecessor had left it, and carries it a stage nearer its consummation. For thirteen hundred years on end, we see the enterprise pushed forward with an undeviating constancy, and an unflinching courage, with a perseverance and a subtilty, -in short, a combination of powers never before seen working together for the realization of any other project. There is more than man here. The spirit who conceived this plan, who inspired the actors and kept them working century after century, on the same lines, till at last the goal was reached, was more than human. Paul tells us that its author was Satan.

A great apostacy was to precede the rise of the Antichrist. In truth, the “Man of Sin” was to grow out of that apostacy. Be not “troubled” or alarmed says the apostle writing to the Thessalonians, as if time were to be wound up, and Christ were to return (Thess. 2:2,3): -“That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed.” Not a falling away, but, the falling away, as it is in the original Greek -some great and notable apostacy: the Church must pass through a dark and terrible shadow before Christ shall return. The prophets had spoken not obscurely of

that evil time. It was the burden of Daniel's prophecy; it was repeated in the symbolic picturings of John. Paul in his other writings had referred to it, portraying with brief but vivid touches the essential characteristics of the power which at that era was to cast his dark shadow on the world.

Hardly had the early persecutions ceased till that falling away set in. Jerome lifts the veil in the fourth century, and disclosed a truly melancholy picture. In vain we look for the humility, the simplicity, and the purity of the early Church. The gold refined in the furnace of ten persecutions is waxing dim. The vine which Paul planted at Rome is being transformed into the vine of Sodom. The pastors of the church are becoming inflamed with the love of riches, and are striving with one another for pre-eminence. Rome daily sees her bishop ride forth in a gilded chariot, drawn by prancing steeds. Her clergy show themselves attired in robes of silk. The members of their flock crowd alternately the church and the theatre, and rush with indecent haste from superstitious rites performed at the tombs of the martyrs to the games and sports of the circus. The "apostacy" has fairly set in. The corruption grows with the current of the centuries. It shapes itself into system, it builds error upon error, and buttresses itself all round with assumptions and falsehoods. The organization in which it enshrines itself necessarily and naturally finds for itself a chief or head. Now comes the Pope and his hierarchy. The "Man of Sin" has appeared.

He is seen to rise out of the earth of a paganised Christianity. Like the soil from which he is sprung, he is pagan in essence though Christian in appearance. Several notable events helped him to attain his full stature. We must indicate, a few -not all-of these, for it is impossible to write the history of thirteen centuries in one short chapter. The first event which contributed, and contributed essentially to the development of the Papacy was the removal of the Emperor from Rome. Had Caesar continued to reside in his old capital, he would, as the phrase is, have "sat" upon the Pope, and this aspiring ecclesiastic could not have shot up into the powerful potentate which prophecy had foretold. But Constantine (A.D. 334) removed to the new Rome on the Bosphorus, leaving the old capital of the world to the Bishop of Rome, who was henceforth the first and most influential personage in that city. It was then, probably, that the idea of founding an ecclesiastical monarchy suggested itself to him. He had fallen heir, by what must have seemed a lucky accident, to the old capital of the world; he was, moreover, possessor of the chair of Peter, or believed himself to be so, and out of these two -the old town of the Caesars and the old chair of the apostle, it might even be possible -so, doubtless, he reasoned, to fabricate an empire that would one day rival and even overtop that of the emperors. These, it might have been thought beforehand, were but slender materials to bear the weight of so great an enterprise; yet with their help, and aided, doubtless, by deeper that mere human counsel, he projected a sovereignty which has not had its like on earth, which survived the fall of the Roman Empire, which lived through all the convulsions and overturnings of the Middle Ages, and which has come down to our day, and has the art, when men believe it to be about to expire, of rallying its powers, and coming back upon the world.

About this time, moreover, the equality which had reigned among the pastors

of the church in the primitive age was broken. The bishops claimed superiority above the presbyters. Nor was there equality even among the bishops themselves. They took precedence, not according to their learning, or their talents, or their piety, but according to the rank of the city in which their see was placed. Finally, a new and loftier order arose overtopping the episcopate. Christendom was partitioned into five great patriarchates -Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. These were the five great cities of the empire, and their bishops were constituted the five great princes of the church.

Now came the momentous question, for a while so keenly agitated, Which of the five shall be the first? Constantinople claimed this honour for her patriarch, on the ground that it was the residence of the Emperor. Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem each put in its claim, but to no effect. Constantinople found, however, a powerful rival in the old city on the banks of the Tiber. Rome had been the head of the world, the throne of the Caesars; around it was still the halo of a thousand victories, and that gave it a mysterious influence over the imaginations of men, who began to see in its bishop the first ecclesiastic of the Christian world. The popular suffrage had pronounced in favour of the Roman bishop before his rank had received imperial ratification. He was installed as the first of the five patriarchs in A.D. 606. The Emperor Phocas, displeased with the bishop of Constantinople, who had condemned the murder of Maurice, by which Phocas opened his way to the imperial dignity, made Boniface III. universal bishop. The imperial edict, however, gave to the Roman bishop only the precedence among the five patriarchs; it gave him no power or jurisdiction over them.

Mere rank the bishops of Rome held to be but an empty honour. What they coveted was substantial power. Their policy was now shaped with the view of reducing the whole clergy of the church into obedience to the Roman chair, and exalting the popes to supreme and absolute sovereignity. Centuries passed away, in the course of which, by the help of many an artifice, and under cover of many a pretext, the Roman bishops slowly extended their power over the West. The darkness which accompanied the descent of the Gothic nations favoured their project in a high degree. “Bad wares,’ says Puffendorf, in his Introduction to the History of Europe, “are best vended in the dark, or at least in a dim light.”

Some of the “wares” vended in these “dark” times were sufficiently remarkable. Out of many we give but two examples. The Emperor Constantine, by his last will and testament, was made to bequeath to Silvester, Bishop of Rome, the whole Western Empire, including palace, regalia, and all the belongings of the master of the world. A goodly dowry, verily, for the poor fisherman. Then came another “windfall” to the papacy, in the shape of the decretals of Isidore. This last showed the church, to her equal surprise and delight, that her Popes from Peter downwards had held the same state, lived in the same magnificence, and promulgated their pontifical will in briefs, edicts, and bulls in the same authoritative and lordly style, as the grand Popes of the Middle Ages. Both documents, it is unnecessary to say, were sheer forgeries. They are acknowledged by Romanists to be so. They could not have stood a moment’s scrutiny in an enlightened age. But they were accepted

as genuine in the darkness of the times that gave them birth, and vast conclusions were founded upon them. The fabrications of Isidore were made the substructions of canon law, and that stupendous fabric of legislation is still maintained to be of divine authority, despite that it is now acknowledged to be founded on a forgery.

The northern nations arrived in southern Europe in the fifth and succeeding centuries ignorant of Christianity. This was another cause that favored the advancement of the “Man of Sin.” These nations, on their arrival in Italy, beheld a great spiritual potentate seated in the chair of Caesar. He told them that he was the successor of Peter the Apostle, whom Christ had constituted his Vicar on earth, with power to transmit all his prerogatives, spiritual and temporal, to his successors in his office. This was the only Gospel the Pope ever preached to the barbarian tribes. They had no means of testing the legitimacy of these mighty claims. In the Pope himself they recognised no very distant resemblance to their own arch-druid; the rites of the Roman temples were not unlike the worship they had practiced in their pagan homes; they had easy access to the baptismal fount, their pagan beliefs and manners forming no impediment; nation after nation entered the Roman pale, the Franks leading the way, and earning for themselves the title of the “eldest son of the Church.” The Gothic nations had found in the Pope, before whose chair they now bowed down, a common spiritual Father. Thus was accomplished another notable stage in the development of the Papacy.

His dignity enhanced by this vast accession of new subjects, the Pope set himself to strengthen his power within the Church by completing the subjection and vassalage of the clergy. He let slip no opportunity that offered to compass this end. Since the fifth century the bishops who lived on this side the Alps used to go to Rome to visit the sepulchres of the Apostles Peter and Paul. This journey was a voluntary one, being undertaken to gratify the devout or superstitious feelings of the pious excursionist. In no long time it was made obligatory, and those who failed to present themselves at the apostolic threshold were subjected to rebuke, as lukewarm in their devotion to the Holy Chair. It was next interpreted in the sense that the itinerant bishops had sought confirmation at Rome, and that all bishops ought to go thither for that end. Thus there came another accession of prerogative and dignity to the papal chair.

Further, it was a usual practice of churches and bishops to ask the advice of the Roman Church in matters of consequence and difficulty, or crave the right interpretation of particular cannons. When they at Rome perceived that their advice was taken as a decision, they began to send their decrees before they were demanded, on pretence that Rome being the first See of the Christian world, her bishop ought to take care that the canons and ecclesiastical laws were duly kept. Hence another encroachment upon the liberties of churches and pastors, and another accession to papal dignity and jurisdiction. And further, when differences or quarrels arose betwixt bishop and bishop, or betwixt church and church, nothing was more natural that for the parties at variance to solicit the mediation of the Bishop of Rome. The Pope willingly undertook the task of composing their contentions, but the price he exacted was a still further surrender of the liberties of the Church. He thence took

occasion to assume the office of a judge, and to represent his chair as a tribunal to which he had a right to summon parties. At times he came in betwixt the Metropolitan and his diocesan, and on one pretext or other, deposed the latter, to the wakening of the jurisdiction of the former, Moreover, it sometimes happened that parties who had been condemned before provincial tribunals were encouraged to appeal to Rome, where the cause was reheard and the provincial sentence, it might be, revoked. By these stealthy and persistent steps, the Pope contrived to keep on the ascending grade.

There followed other most ingenious devices, all for the same end. Among these was the pall of consecration. The pall was sent to all bishops from the Pope, at first as a gift. It was next represented as indispensable, and that without it no bishops could discharge the functions of his office. Thus a new hold was obtained over the clergy, and a new method invented of replenishing the papal coffers; for a high price was put on this mystic article of dress, which was woven of the wool of the lambs of St Agnes.

To the same end were annats imposed. This was the sum paid by bishops when they changed from one see to another, a practice allowed by the Pope for the gain it brought him. The multiplication of monks and friars tended to the same end. The Pope summoned into existence the corps of the regular clergy to play them off against the army of the seculars. He acted on the maxim, “divide, and conquer.” The monks were a check upon the bishops; they watched their proceedings and carried their report to Rome. They had acquired a vast reputation for holiness, and the direction of consciences through the confessional was mainly in their hands. They had discovered the secret of amassing riches by the arts of mendicancy. They swarmed over Europe, and were thoroughly devoted to the interests of the papal see; and if any bishop set himself in opposition to the Pope, they raised such a clamour against him as speedily convinced him that the had no alternative but submission.

Especially did the English monk Winfrid, who changed his name to Boniface, enlarge the papal dominion. This man is commonly but erroneously credited with the first Christianization of Germany. Invested with the authority of the pope’s legate, he traversed the countries on the east of the Rhine, rooting out the schools and churches of the Evangelical faith which had been numerously planted in that region of Europe by the Culdee missionaries of the Irish and Scottish nations, substituting in their room Roman monasteries and cathedrals. This was the work of Boniface; a work well pleasing to Rome, inasmuch as it greatly widened the bounds of the pontificial sway.

Among the events of these disastrous ages, contributing to the growth of the papal power, not the least influential were the Crusades. They evoked a mighty outburst of enthusiasm around the papal chair. They place powerful kings, vast treasures, and countless soldiers at the service of the pope. He took into his own management the estates of those who went to fight for the recovery of the Holy Land; exempting their owners from the jurisdiction of the civil power in both civil and criminal causes. When the fury of the Crusades had spent itself, it was found that the spirit of princes was broken, their resources dried up, their realms impoverished by the loss of their subjects, and the only institution that had profited by the frenzy was the Papacy, which now, every other interest abased, rose aloft in greater

grandeur than ever. Nor was this the end of the matter. The fanatical fury which had found its first fearful discharge on the plains of Syria, was diverted back to the land whence it had come, and there it vented without exhausting itself in those bloody persecutions and wars against heretics, which rage for centuries in Christendom.

The Crusades have carried us into the thirteenth century. We must turn back to the eighth and ninth centuries, and note certain political changes that occurred in those ages, which contributed material aid to the Papacy in fulfilling its destiny.

It was the deep aim of the Pope to plant his seat in a place where he should owe no subjection to any civil power. He desired to have a country of his own, such as might be sufficient to maintain his grandeur, and whence he should reign as a temporal king as well as a spiritual sovereign. For a business like this, much time and labour were needed. The project was manifestly unattainable so long as an emperor reigned in the West, or the Gothic monarchy subsisted in Italy. But strange to say, events conspired to make empty and void a place where the Pope might set up his combined spiritual and temporal sovereignty, so long his cherished but unavowed aim. The first step was the overthrow of the Gothic power in Italy by Justinian. Italy and Rome now became a province of the Eastern Empire. The jurisdiction of the absent emperor was henceforward shadowy and weak; but even that slight restraint was impatiently borne, and Pope Gregory II. began to plot how to be rid of it altogether. The conflict betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches on the subject of image-worship was then raging. The Romans zealously maintained the cause of images. The emperor, with the Eastern Church, were ranged in opposition. Pope Gregory instigated the Romans to refuse the tribute to the emperor. The revolt was successful; the imperial representative at Ravenna was slain, and the last vestiges of the emperor’s jurisdiction over Rome and Italy were annihilated. (It is worthy of note, by the way, that the Romans by their revolt against their lawful emperor put their necks under a yoke that continued to gall them for twelve centuries. They did not succeed in breaking it till 1870.)

The Pope was now in sight of independent temporal sovereignty, but he had not yet fully achieved it. Tidings out of the north troubled him. The Longobards had crossed the Alps, and were already at Ravenna. There was no power in the spiritual artillery to arrest the victorious advance of these hardy warriors. In his extremity, Pope Zachary turned his eyes to Pepin, who, from Grand Marshal had become King of France. The Pope did not supplicate in vain. Pepin first, and his son Charlemagne next (774). Conquered the Longobards, and endowed the papal chair with all the cities and lands in Italy which had been subject to the jurisdiction of the Greek rulers. The Pope was now a crowned monarch.

This was the third intervention by arms in the Pope’s behalf, and the third Gothic power which had fallen before him. First, the Vandals established themselves in the diocese proper of the Pope, occupying his pre-destined domain, and hindering his predestined development. The arms of Justinian under his general Belisarius, swept them off. Second, the Ostrogoths planted

themselves in Italy, and their near neighborhood overawed the Pope, and prevented his expansion. They, too, were rooted out by the arms of Justinian. Last came, as we have said, the Longobards, pressing onwards to the gates of Rome. The sword of France drove them back. Thus, a field was kept clear on which the Pope might develop both his spiritual and temporal sovereignty; and thus was fulfilled what Daniel (Daniel vii. 8) had foretold, that of the ten horns, or dynasties of the modern Europe, three should be “plucked up” before the little horn, or papacy. Their kingdoms and crowns were given to the Pope, and it is probable that it was in memory of these events that it became customary for the Pope, in the following centuries, to array himself in a tiara. The pastor of the Tiber had become a monarch with a triple crown.

Was the Pope now content? He sat amid the princes and kings of earth as their equal. But to be simply their equal he held to be an affront to his superhuman office as God’s vicegerent. He aspired to plant his throne among the stars, and thence look down upon all the dignities and princedoms of earth. And to this dazzling height he at last climbed up.

There arose in the eleventh century a Pope of vast capacity, of inflexible resolution, and towering pride, Gregory VII. -Hildebrand. He put before the world, with a precision, a boldness, and an argumentative force, never till then brought to its support, the claim to be the Vicar of Christ. This was the foundation-stone on which he rested his scheme of pontificial jurisdiction and grandeur. As Christ’s Vicar, he claimed to surpass all earthly monarchs in glory and power, as far as the sun surpasses the moon in brightness. He claimed, in short, to be God upon the earth. There followed a series of popes who struggled through two dreadful centuries of war and bloodshed to convert Gregory’s theory into fact. The struggle was successful in the end: the mitre triumphed over the empire. The scheme of Gregory VII. In all its amplitude of jurisdiction and magnificence -and, we may add, in all its amplitude of despotism and blasphemy -was exhibited to the world in the person and reign of Innocent III. , in the thirteenth century. The history of the world does not show another achievement of equal magnitude. The glory of the Pharaohs; the state and power of the Kings of Babylon; the victories and magnificence of the Caesars, all pale before this great conquest of the Popes. Now had come the noon of the Papacy; but, as we have remarked elsewhere, the noon of the Popedom was the midnight of the world.

The career both of Christ and of Antichrist was to end on a throne; though each was to reach his destined elevation by a very different road. Not till we find them on their respective thrones shall we see the parallelism perfected and completed. This we must reserve for a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile we pursue the parallelism through its successive preparatory stages, till it reaches this great climax.

We advance to another point in the parallelism betwixt Christ and Antichrist. We find it in the pretended miracles by which the Papacy has sought to persuade the world that it was not the adversary but the friend of Christ. This pretence of miracles was to form a far too prominent feature in the coming Antichrist to be left out in Paul’s great portraiture of him. “Whose coming is after the manner of Satan,” says the apostle, speaking by the

Spirit (2 Thess. 2: 9), “with all power and signs and lying wonders.” The essential characteristic of Antichristianism, we have said, is its assumption of a character the very opposite of its true character. It was to be a secret undermining of Christianity under the show of being itself Christianity; a deadly war waged against Christ, under the bold assertion that itself is Christ. This necessitated, on the part of the Papacy, a profound study of the mission and character and life of Christ, in order to make its imitation as close and perfect as possible, and so draw the world away from him, and after itself. It must not be a vague and shadowy resemblance, traceable in only a few points. If the world is to be deceived, the counterfeit must be skillfully executed -the work of a great master -and it must be consistently sustained throughout. Ancient paganism was no lame or despicable counterfeit of the divinely-appointed worship at Jerusalem. Ancient paganism, however, was but a first attempt; and it was far from having exhausted the ingenuity and resource of its author. His subtilty and craft were to be set a-working a second time, and the result was to be a perfect and finished counterfeit -a masterpiece.

“Whose coming is after the working of Satan.” The two comings here contrasted -we say contrasted, for the parallelism is only on the surface, beneath, all is contrast, and contrariety -are the coming of God in the mission of His Son, and the coming of Satan in the mission of Antichrist. God is the author of truth, and the manner of His coming is by the propagation of great truths which dispel the darkness around the soul of man, and chase the night of error from the world. Satan is the author of falsehood; he has been a deceiver from the beginning, and he comes in the propagation of deceits, chicaneries, lies, errors and delusion, which, blinding the mind, only prepare men for being plunged into still greater errors and delusions.

“With all power.” Let us mark how like Antichrist was to be to Christ in the particular just noted “all power.” Antichrist was to come with an assumption of power, an air of majesty, as if to say, “I am the Son of the Highest.” His look how lofty! His words how stout! So had Daniel, in the night visions, beheld him. “He waxed exceeding great,” says Daniel, “toward the south and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” He stood before the prophet, his feet planted on the earth, his head among the stars, claiming lordship over both worlds. “He waxed great even to the host of heaven; and he cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.” (Daniel viii.10.)

“All power,” said Christ to His disciples, “is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” This power was the eternal gift of the Father to the Son as Mediator. This power he wielded from the first moment of His entering on His work of mediation. Though veiling it during the days of His humiliation on earth, this power was in Him, and showed itself at times in some stupendous act. The elements of nature were obedient to Him, so, too, were the spirits of darkness, and not less the angels of heaven. If need were, He had only to pray to His Father, and the celestial squadrons would have hastened to His aid. Satan could gather enough from ancient prophecy and song to show him that such power was to be the attribute of the Messiah. “I will make Him, my first-born, higher that the kings of the earth.” So sang David. “He shall

have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. The Kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve Him." Such was the glory which the coming Messiah cast before Him in prophecy, ages before He came. Satan must needs send forth his counterfeit Messiah with the mock symbols and attributes of a like power.

Antichrist, too, cast his shadow before him in prophecy before his actual coming as the triple-crowned chief of the Papacy. Daniel had seen his day afar off. How he contemplated and spoke of him we have already seen. With a few graphic strokes he paints the whole history of the Papacy. He traces it from its insignificant beginnings till it reaches its amazing and portentous height. We see the first sprouting of the "little horn." We see Caesar vacate his seat; we see the "Vandal," the "Ostrogoth," and the "Longobard" plucked up before it. We see it rising by "leaps and bounds," and now its head is among the stars. We see its "stout looks," we hear its "great words," and we witness with an awe bordering on terror its truculent deeds. He tramples on thrones; he roots up nations, he plucks the stars from their orbits; in fine, he dies all his pleasure, and there is none who can withstand his power, or say to him, "What doest thou?" John had a nearer view of the Antichrist in the visions of Patmos. He, too, like Daniel, is struck with his mighty and apparently irresistible power, and he makes this attribute prominent in his portraiture of him. John had known the vast prerogative of the Roman emperors; but here was a measure of power which surpassed that of the old "masters of the world," and which appeared to the apostle more that human. In fact he expressly calls it the "gift" of the "dragon." "The dragon gave him his power." What the dragon gave to the Antichrist was not the power of the old Roman empire, but his own – that is, the dragon's power. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power to the beast" -that is, the temporal and spiritual monarchy which forms the Papacy. "And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? "And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Rev.xiii. 2,4,7.)

In His intercessory prayer we find Christ saying, -"Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." The power here said to be given the Son over all flesh was not His power as God. That could not be given Him, for He possessed it inherently. It was His power as Mediator, and the end for which it was given is specially noted, "that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." (John xvii. 1,2.)

In like manner the power "over all kindreds and tongues and nations" which the dragon gave to the deputy whom he sent into the world, was a gift; and it was given for a draconic end. And, accordingly, no sooner is this power conferred, that we hear a chorus of worship ascending to the dragon from all them that dwell upon the earth, "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,"(Rev. xiii. 8.)an obvious contrast to the company referred to in our Lord's intercessory

prayer, “them whom thou hast given Me.” And, next, in meet accompaniment of the worship offered by those who had made the dragon their god is the roar of blasphemy which is heard rising and swelling to heaven. There is given to Antichrist a mouth, and the opening of his mouth is as the opening of the doors of the pit; there issue out of it “great things and blasphemies.” “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” And the scene finds fitting outcome in the proclamation of “war” against the saints, which continues to be carried on all through his predicted term of power.

Yes, verily, prophecy makes no mistakes. And history makes none in interpreting it. He who “hath understanding” may read off the visions which were seen on the banks of “the river of Ulai” and in the “Isle of Patmos,” in the events which have since passed over Europe. Let us open the roll of Christendom. Let us survey its ages from the fifth to the fifteenth century. We are conscious at first of gazing only at chaos. The crowd of actors and the conflict of events but distract and perplex the mind. Europe is a tumbling sea in which the old nations are being engulphed, and new and barbarian races are arriving to take their place. We can discover neither unity nor progress in the drama; all is tumult and darkness. Let us shut up the roll. But stay; before putting it away, let us search it again, and, it may be, we shall find footsteps in these great waters. The cloud begins to lift, and order to appear. The ferment in the minds of men gives birth to a great system, as yet without form or name. The materials of which this system, not yet constituted, is composed, are drawn from a great variety of sources. Ancient Paganism, Druidic and Scandinavian superstition, Jewish Rabbinism, and Oriental philosophy, all contribute their share to it. A corrupt “Church” arranges, combines and concatenates these heterogeneous elements, and stamping them with its own impress, presents it to the world as Christianity.

The new worship must have celebrants. A human agency gathers round it, and that agency comes gradually to be summed up and embodied in one great personality. Let us mark this Colossus. His visage grows as the centuries revolve, and comes at last to look forth upon us, distinct and stout and terrible; but it is not new. We have seen it before. It is the same that looked forth upon us from the prophecies of Daniel and John. It is the same that shows itself incarnated in the Popes of the Middle Ages. Let us mark how complete and perfect an incarnation we have of it in Innocent III., in whom the popedom came to its full growth, and showed itself to the world in all it superhuman magnificence and grandeur. During the terrible pontificate of this man all that prophecy had spoken of the Antichrist was verified in fullest measure. Its predicted height of arrogance, of blasphemy and of domination was reached, While this mighty Pope stood over it, Christendom was still with fear. The stricken kings and nations cowered beneath him. He was God’s vicegerent, and claimed to be obeyed with the instant and profound submission which is due to the Eternal King. He promulgated the dogma of transubstantiation; he initiated the ‘holy” office of the inquisition; he launched the crusades against heresy and heretics, and dealt his thunder bolts of interdict and excommunication all round Christendom, and beyond it, crushing everyone and everything that dared to lift up the heel against his

pontifical will. If this is not the Antichrist, then Antichrist we never can see; for what more can we have of any prophecy than a complete and perfect fulfilment? And this is a complete and perfect fulfilment of the prophecy of the power and pride of Antichrist.

The “power” of the “Man of Sin” will come again before us farther on; meanwhile we pass to another point in the parallelism.

This was to be a notable characteristic of the Antichrist, “whose coming,” says the apostle (2 Thess. ii. 9). “is with signs and lying wonders.” These words were fitted to turn the eyes of the early Christians back upon the prophecy of Daniel, in which it had been foretold of the Antichrist that he should “practise and prosper.”(* Dan. Viii. 12.) The phrase is suggestive of imposing by delusive arts upon the senses and understandings of men, and so gaining an ascendency over them. Of a like meaning is the phrase which occurs farther on (v. 25) in the same chapter, “he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.” Still clearer on this point are the prophecies of John, not yet given, it is true, but which were to close the volume of inspiration, and be the guide of Christians in the next age, in their outlook for the Antichrist. The claim to work miracles is here set down as one of his notable marks.

“And he doeth great wonders,” says John, speaking of the second beast or ecclesiastical organisation of the Antichrist, “so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell in the earth, by the means of those miracles which he hath power to do.”(Rev. xiii. 18, 14.) This is in full agreement with Paul, who had already warned the primitive church that Antichrist would make his appearance as a miracle-worker.

Let us reflect how imperative it was on the Antichrist that he should claim the power of working miracles. Had he come as an open enemy, he would have had no need to pretend to such power; but, coming as the substitute and vicar of Christ, he must necessarily in this as in other points, imitate him whose substitute and vicar he professed to be.

The coming of Christ was signalised by mighty signs and wonders. The glory of miracle illustrated every step of His progress through the towns and villages of Galilee and Judea. The ancient prophets had performed miracles, but in none of them was seen the same affluence of miraculous power as in Christ. As light is in the stars, so was power in the prophets, but as light is in the sun, so was power in Christ. As He passed through the crowds of stricken men virtue flowed out of Him, and to “touch the hem of His garment, ” or hear the accents of His voice, was to be healed. Sight was given to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength was infused into the withered limb, reason resumed its office in the brain of the maniac, and the pulse in which fever throbbed and burned became calm and cool at His word or at His touch. Even the grave owned His power, and opened its doors in obedience to His summons. And gave back its tenant to the world of the living. Such were the “signs and wonders” that heralded the advent and attested the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Papacy, as the Vice-Christ, has, in like manner, sought to announce its

advent, and certify its mission by the performance of “signs and wonders.” Scarce is there a miracle recorded of the Son of God which the Church of Rome does not profess to have wrought. She pretends to have opened blind eyes, to have unstopped deaf ears, to have cured fevers, agues, palsies, madness, to have cast out devils, to have driven away pestilence, stayed the ravages of blight, and done things which it were too tedious to mention. Extending still farther the sphere of her miraculous operation, she has entered the realms of the grave and shown that there too she wields power by pretending to give life to the dead. Certain of her “saints” have possessed the “gift of miracles” in an eminent degree, and their “lives” are one long record of prodigy and wonder. They have dried up rivers, walked upon the waves of the sea, and stilled tempests. Angels have descended to minister to them, and preternatural stars have shone out to lead them in the dark. In short, the Church of Rome claims to have wielded the same unbounded power over both the visible and the invisible world which Christ did, and to have imitated Him in all things, save the meekness of His spirit, the purity of His doctrine, and the holiness of His life.

Popery professes, too, to work spiritual wonders -those divine and saving changes on the heart and soul of man which Christianity accomplishes, and which it is the prerogative of Christianity alone to accomplish. The Church of Rome professes in baptism to regenerate the soul, and change the eternal destinies of the baptised. By anointing with oil, she fills men with the Holy Ghost; by her sacraments she replenishes them with grace; by ordination she bridges over eighteen centuries and joins the priest to Peter. Five words spoken at the altar change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Two words uttered in the confessional effect the pardon of the “penitent,” and the viaticum gives assurance to the man, setting out on his last journey, that he shall find the gates of Paradise open to give him entrance among the blessed. These are mighty wonders. It is thus that the false Christ has carried on the war against the true Christ.

But a single term is thrown in which effectually breaks the spell, and dissolves the power of these wonders over all who are not willfully subject to their illusion. The “mystery of iniquity” was to come with “lying wonders;” a most essential difference, which it becomes all to note who have a mind not to be deceived to their eternal loss.

The miracles of Christ were done in the light of day, in the presence of thousands who could sift them and subject them to infallible tests, and, who, having done so were forced to the conclusion that either the miracle was true, or their senses were false. Of those who saw them done not a few were the bitter enemies of the person who wrought them, and would have been glad to find that they were cheats, and not slow to have proclaimed the imposture to the world; and yet these miracles remained uncontradicted. No one in all the nation of the Jews ventured to deny the truth of any one miracle of Jesus. The farthest that malevolence and slander deemed it prudent to go was to insinuate that the miracle had been wrought by Satanic power. The reply to the accusation given on the spot, and at the time, was as conclusive as it was dignified, and it has lost none of its force even yet: “Can Satan cast out Satan?”

But let us mark how different it is with the other class of miracles, and how lacking they are in that indubitable evidence that attested the mission of the Son of God. There is not one of them that could maintain its claim as a veritable fact before a tribunal of unbiased and enlightened judges. Some of these miracles were evidently cheats on those in whose presence they were wrought. Of late many startling discoveries have been made of the machinery by which these “miracles” were done. Many of these wonders were not published to the world till some hundreds of years after they were said to have been wrought. Their workers would seem to have been unambitious of living fame, seeing they hid their light under a bushel. And some of these miracles are so childish that it is an insult to our understandings to ask us to believe that God ever interposed His power to work such deeds. Prophecy gave them the right name before they were done. They are lying wonders.

The Spiritual performances of the Church of Rome are emphatically “lying wonders.” Baptismal regeneration is a lying wonder, sacramental grace is a lying wonder, priestly power is a lying wonder, the absolution of the Confessional is a lying wonder, transubstantiation is the biggest wonder and the greatest lie of all, and extreme unction is a last and fatal lie. There is no reality behind any of these things, and they are the more to be deplored that they have immediate reference to the eternal world, and that millions take their departure to the world fully confiding in these lies for salvation.

Let us mark the parallelism. It is at once a parallel and a contrast. The Gospel came amid the effulgence of real miracles which were wrought by God, and were a Divine attestation to the Messiahship of His Son. Popery came amid the murky and delusive glare of false miracles, which were wrought by Satan, and which were his sign manual, bearing witness to all that the system in behalf of which they were done was the “Mystery of Iniquity.”

There is another class of wonders that the Papacy professes to do, and which are of a nature not quite so innocent and harmless as those enumerated above. Though equally false, they owe the terror they inspired and the suffering they inflicted to the belief that they were true and real. Speaking of the two-horned lamb like beast of the earth, John says, “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men.”(Apoc. xiii. 13.

The prophecy found a striking fulfilment in the papal interdicts and excommunications so frequent in the Middle Ages, and not unknown in even our own day. These ebullitions of pontifical vengeance, it was pretended, were fire out of heaven: the fire of the wrath of God which the Pope had power to evoke, therewith to burn up his enemies. The blinded nations believed that in the voice of the Pope they heard the voice of God, and that the fulminations of the Vatican were the thunderings and lightnings of Divine wrath. A papal excommunication was more dreadful than the invasion of thousands of armed men. When launched against a kingdom what dismay, misery, and wailing overspread it. The whole course of life was instantly stopped. The lights were extinguished at the altar; the church doors were closed; the bells would not be tolled; marriages were celebrated in the graveyard; and the dead were

buried in ditches. Men dared not make merry, for a sense of doom weighed upon their spirits. These terrible edicts pursued men into the other world, and souls arriving from the unhappy realm overhung by the papal curse found the gates of paradise shut, and had to wander forlorn till it should please the divinity of the Seven hills to lift off his sentence. Thus did the Papacy cause “fire” to come down from God out of heaven, and men, believing it to be real fire, were scorched by it. In the days of King John England lay under interdict for more than six years.

To the mightiest sovereign even the papal excommunication was a dreadful affair. He shook and trembled on his throne for his army could give him no protection; it was well, indeed, if both soldiers and subjects did not unite in carrying out the papal behest by driving him from his kingdom, if some fanatic monk, by the more quick despatch of the dagger, did not save them the trouble. European history furnishes a list of more than sixty-four emperors and kings deposed by the Popes. In the number is Henry II. of England, deposed by Alexander III.; King John, by Innocent III.; Richard and Edward, by Boniface IX., Henry VIII., by Clement VII., and again by Paul III.; Elizabeth, by Pius V. Even King Robert the Bruce had this terrible curse launched against him, but thanks to the Culdee element still strong in Scotland, King Robert and his subjects held the Pope’s fulmination but a brutum fulmen, and so it did not harm them. Almost all the bulls against crowned heads have contained clauses stripping them of their territories, and empowering their neighbour kings to invade and seize them; and influenced partly by a desire to serve the Pope, and partly by the greed of what was not their own, they have not been slow to act on the papal permission.

As a specimen of the lofty style of these fulminations -the mouth speaking great things -we give the Bull of Excommunication issued by Sixtus V. (1585) against the King of Navarre and the Prince of Conde, whom he calls the “two sons of wrath.” It runs thus: -“The authority given to St. Peter and his successors by the immense power of the eternal King excels all the power of earthly princes: it passes uncontrolled sentence upon them all, and if it find any of them resisting the ordinance of God, it takes a more severe vengeance upon them, casting them down from their throne, however powerful they may be, and tumbling them to the lowest parts of the earth, as the ministers of aspiring Lucifer. We deprive them and their posterity of their dominions for ever. By the authority of these presents we absolve and free all persons from their oath of allegiance, and from all duty whatever, relating to dominion, fealty, and obedience, and we charge and forbid them all from presuming to obey them, or any of their admonitions, laws, or commands.”

The Romanists themselves have chosen the very figure of the Apocalypse, “fire from heaven,” to designate the Papal excommunications and anathemas. Thus Gregory VII. spoke of the Emperor Henry IV. when excommunicated as “struck with thunder.” (Afflatum fulmino -Danburg, 587.) To the same effect is the account of the excommunication of the Emperor Frederick by Pope Innocent at the first Council of Lyons. “These words of excommunication, uttered in the midst of the Council, struck the hearers with terror as might the flashing thunderbolts. When with candles lighted and flung down, the Lord Pope and his

assistant prelates flashed their lightning-fire terribly against the Emperor Frederick, now no longer to be called emperor, his procurators and friends burst into a bitter wailing and struck the thigh or breast on that day of wrath, of calamity, and of woe!(& Harduin, vii. 401.)

It was in the days of Gregory VII. that the papal heavens began thus to thunder and lighten. The first burst of the tempest continued for nearly two hundred years, its fury falling mainly on rebellious kings. When the kings were subdued the storm was next directed against heresy and heretics. Since the days of Innocent III. till our own revolution of 1688, there were only brief periods of silence in the pontifical firmament. For five centuries these thunders rolled almost without intermission or pause. Peal followed peal in rapid succession. The crusades of the Albigenses and Waldenses; the Hussite campaigns in Bohemia; the wars of Charles V. in Germany; the wars of the League in France; the butcheries of Alva in the Low Countries; the thirty years' war in the German Fatherland; the St Bartholomew in France, and the equally bloody massacre of Irish Protestants in 1641; -these are only a few of the more notable thunder-bursts which have marked the course of that long tempest of pontifical wrath which began in the days of Hildebrand in the eleventh century, and continued its terrible reverberations till 1688.

In Rome's Great Book of Curses one of the most notable is the "Bullum Coenae Domini." It is truly an utterance from the "mouth speaking great things." Framed since the Reformation, it curses all the various sections of the protestant Church, giving special prominence to Calvinists and Zuinglians. Its scope is wide indeed. The world and its inhabitants, so far as they were known to the framers of this bull, are compendiously cursed in it. Its thunders are heard re-echoing far beyond the limits if Christendom, and its lightnings are seen to strike the pirates of barbarous seas, as well as the Calvinists of Great Britain.

This bull was wont to be promulgated annually by the Pope in person, attended by a magnificent array of cardinals and priests. The ceremony took place in Maunday Thursday, -the Thursday before Easter, and was accompanied by numerous solemnities, fitted to strike the spectators with awe. It was read from the lofty vestibule of the Church of the Lateran, amid the firing of cannon, the ringing of bells, the blaring of trumpets, and the blazing of torches. When the curses of the bull had been thundered forth, the torches were extinguished and flung into the great piazza beneath, to signify the outer darkness into which all heretics shall finally be hurled. Pope Ganganelli in 1770 forbade the public reading of the bull Coenae Domini, but the practice was soon revived, and is still continued at Rome, though not in the same public fashion. But the discontinuance of its open promulgation matters nothing; it is unrepealed; all heretics are, ipso facto, under its ban, and the establishment of the papal Hierarchy gives it to all Romanists the force of law in the united Kingdom.

The papal wrath can at pleasure extend or contract is sphere. Nothing is so lofty as to be beyond its reach, and nothing is so minute as to be beneath it. It can vent itself in a tempest that covers a whole kingdom, and it can concentrate itself on a single individual.

If it shall be said that the “mouth” that spoke these “great things” in the past would not give utterance to them now, nor will ever utter such things in time to come; in other words, that the Roman Church and her Popes have renounced all these lofty claims, and no longer challenge supremacy over kings and princes, we have to remind those who make this affirmation that the late Pope, Pius IX., in a great state document, to which the seal of infallibility has since been twice appended, gives this assertion the most distinct and explicit contradiction. In the twenty-third Article of the Syllabus, Pius IX. condemns the proposition that the Roman Pontiffs and oecumenical councils have at any time “exceeded the limits of their power , or usurped the rights of princes.” This is a justification ex cathedra of the loftiest claims that ever emanated from the Papal Chair, and the most tyrannical usurpations ever made by Popes on the prerogatives of princes and the liberties of nations. With the history of the Popes before him, he solemnly declares that no one of them ever exceeded the bounds of his power: or as Dr G. F. von Schulte, Professor of Canon Law at Prague, summing up the teaching of Canon Law on this point, puts it, “The limits if the papal Almightiness on earth consist solely in their own will.” We may say with Shakespeare –

“Here’s a large mouth indeed That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas.”

These characteristics belong to the whole series of symbolic representations of the apostate power in Scripture, and thus they establish a perfect identity betwixt the “little horn” of Daniel, the “two-horned, lamb-like beast” of the Apocalypse, the “Man of Sin” of Paul, and the Antichrist of John.

We now approach the point where the parallelism culminates. Clear and distinct, like an Alpine peak, rises the CLIMAX in each case! The one stands clothed in the pure spiritual glory of heaven, the other arrays itself in the false splendours of earth. How close, apparently, are these two culminations, and yet how immeasurable the distance betwixt them!

Not all at once do we ascend these lofty summits. We must permit the apostle to lead us up by the several successive stages which conduct to them; in this way only can we obtain a full view of the parallelism. And be in a condition to see how real and grand it is.

The apostle begins at the lowest stage of the vast ascent. “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 them shall that wicked be revealed.”(* 2 Thess. ii. 6,7,8.) The time for the revelation or apocalypse of Antichrist -for Antichrist was to have his apocalypse even as Christ had His -was not yet come. The “mystery of iniquity” was already working -working in the region of principles and influences, and working in the region of seducing spirits; but meanwhile, there existed a great “let,” or obstruction to his open revelation. Paul hints very plainly that the Thessalonian Christians knew what that obstruction was, and therefore he did not name it. He had visited

them sometime before, and talked freely with them about the coming apostacy, and had mentioned the “let” which must first be removed before the apostacy could be free to develop itself. That obstruction was the Roman empire. When present, talking freely with them on the subject, Paul could say so in express terms; but it might be dangerous to name the Roman empire in an epistle to be read openly, and go the round of the churches. That might draw down on the Christians the displeasure of the Roman authorities. The apostle knew the hindrance in Antichrist’s path, having learned it, doubtless, by the study of Daniel, and the revelation of the spirit. It was known, moreover, to the early fathers, who all turned their eyes to Rome as the fated spot where the “lawless one” was first to show himself; but they spoke of him with bated breath, and in circumlocutionary phrase.

While the Roman Empire stood it was impossible that Antichrist should appear. Caesar was Pontifex Maximus; and while he held possession, there could not be two High Priests occupying the same capital, sharing the same throne, and sacrificing at the same altars. The first and lesser Pontifex Maximus must be removed before the second and greater could stand up. This was to happen in no long time. God would remove the “let,” by bringing the Gothic nations into Italy, overturning the empire, and making vacant the throne of Caesar. Then Antichrist would climb up to the empty seat. “God chased the Caesars from Rome,” says De Maistre, “that he might give it to the Popes.”

Let us mark next that it had been decreed of both Christ and Antichrist, that they should occupy thrones -no meaner seat than a royal one must either of them have. Christ was to sit on the throne of David, and Antichrist was to sit on the throne of Caesar. In pursuance thereof a train of providences preceded the advent of each, the final end of which was to make vacant the throne they were respectively to occupy. Three revolutions in the royal line of Judah were to make way for Christ, and four consecutive revolutions in the line of the world-power were to open the way for the coming of Antichrist. Jacob, on his deathbed, had given his posterity a sign of the instant appearance of the Messiah. That sign was a final break-down in the royal line: -“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” (Gen. xlix.10.)When the time drew nigh Ezekiel sounded the alarm more definitively; giving warning that the throne of Judah should fall once, and a second and a third time, and then there would stand up a King whose “dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.” Thus saith the Lord God, “Remove the diadem and take off the crown: I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, till He come whose right it is, and I will give it unto Him.”(& Ezekiel xxi. 26, 27.) The throne of Judah was overturned a first time by the separation of the Ten Tribes from the house of David. It was overturned a second time by the deportation of the nation to Babylon. It was overturned a third and last time in the subjugation of Judea by the Romans, who stript the descendants of David of the shadowy dominion they had wielded down to this time. Then Christ came, of whom the angel who announced His birth spoke thus: -“The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.”(Luke i. 32,33.)

In Antichrist’s counterfeit church and kingdom the parallelism on this point

is striking indeed. The “man of sin” was, when fully developed, to occupy the throne of this world. This magnificent post had been offered by the Tempter to the true Christ: “All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will I give thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.” The offer was promptly declined. The Tempter next turned him to the false Christ, “I will convert thy chair into a throne,” said he, to the bishop of Rome, “and thy pastoral staff into a royal sceptre, if thou wilt be my vassal.” The offer met no second refusal. The bargain was struck, and faithfully fulfilled on both sides. The stipulated worship was rendered, and the wages were fully paid. In witness we cite Innocent III. in the thirteenth century. Do we not hear him boasting that he had been set over the kingdoms to build and to pluck up at his pleasure? And how often do we find the same mighty claim in the mouth of his successors in the following centuries? Nay, even in our own day the echoes of the same proud boast are heard from the papal chair.

It took a thousand years to prepare the way of both, and seat each in his respective throne. The throne of David was emptied again and again, that it might be filled by the King of the eternal empire. The throne of the world-power was in like manner emptied again and again, that it might be filled by the king of whom it had been written, “he goeth into perdition.” The throne of the world-power was overturned a first time in the fall of Babylon; it was overturned a second time in the overthrow of the Medo-Persion Power. It was overturned a third time in the extinction of the Greek kingdom; and it was overturned a fourth and last time, when the Roman Empire fell before the Goths. There was no longer a Caesar at Rome. “He that letteth will let,” the apostle had said, “until he be taken out of the way.” He had now been taken out of the way, and the hour was come for “that Wicked” to be revealed.

Let us here mark, that both mysteries have the same culmination -an enthronization even. The “mystery of godliness,” beginning in the cradle, ends on the throne -the throne of heaven. The “mystery of iniquity,” beginning in the silent and hidden workings of early times, ends on the throne -the throne of earth.

It appears plain to us, though expositors have passed it over, that the two passages (1 Tim. 11. 16 and 2 Thess. ii. 3-12) -the one descriptive of the “mystery of godliness,” and the other descriptive of the “mystery of iniquity” -were intended by the apostle, to be, and are parallels clause by clause. Each clause in the one throws its light upon the corresponding clause in the other, and thus the depth and height of each mystery are evolved. A single glance at these two passages will suffice to show that it is by the same ascending gradations that we mount up to the climax of both mysteries. Let us look at each.

“And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Tim. iii. 16.) It is thus the apostle, in a single verse, with masterly comprehensiveness, states the successive steps -the whole of that magnificent graduation, by which the mystery of godliness reached its mighty climax. “God was manifest in the flesh.” “Mary brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.” There was the beginning of the

mystery. This is the first step in the mighty ascent.

“Justified in the spirit.’ As when the Spirit descended upon Him in a visible form at His baptism; and again when He began His public ministry, with all its attendant miracles and wonders, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,” were the words with which, in the synagogue of Nazareth, He opened his first sermon, “for He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek.”

“Seen of angels.” As when they sang His natal hymn at Bethlehem, and when they ministered to Him in the wilderness, after His temptation, and again in His agony in the garden, when “there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him,” and on the morning of His resurrection, when two of them waited in His sepulchre to tell the women that He was risen.

“Preached unto the Gentiles.” “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” was His last charge to His apostles when about to ascend from the Mount of Olives. No sooner was the spirit given at Pentecost than his apostles and evangelists traveled all through the land of Israel, and passing beyond the bounds of Jewry, they preached the Gospel in the cities of Greece and Rome, and going on still farther toward the west, carried the tidings of the cross to the shores of Britain.

“Believed on in the world.” So rises the gradation, and so does the mystery of godliness advance to its culmination. The gods of paganism fall before the preaching of the “Crucified.” Mighty nations, both east and west, became obedient to the faith; the gospel made good its claim to be of heaven by the blessed fruits it everywhere brought forth; and Jesus was believed on as the true messiah and Saviour of the world.

“Received up into glory.” This is the final step; here the mystery culminates. We can now look along the entire line of its development, from the cradle in the stable to the eternal gates which are seen to lift themselves up that the King of Glory may enter, and sit down on the throne of universal and everlasting dominion, while seraph and seraphim and “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” are heard saying, “Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”(Apoc. V, 13.)

The “mystery of iniquity” passed through a precisely similar gradation, to issue in a climax which is an obvious and striking counterpart of that which we have just described. “The mystery of iniquity doth already work.” We here see it in its cradle. It was “justified” of Satan by the lying signs and wonders which he enabled its propagators to work. It was published unto the Gentiles by preaching friars and itinerant monks, who sought in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness to persuade men that the Pope was God’s vicar, and that the traditions of his Church were the true Gospel. It was believed on in the world by those whose names are not written in the Book of Life. And finally, it was received up into the heavens of ecclesiastical dominion and imperial glory. Its chief was now seen sitting in the temple of God; showing himself that he is God, while the kings and nations of the earth are beheld bowing before him, and ascribing to him dominion and power and

glory. They worshipped the beast saying, “Who is like unto the beast?” “Power was given unto him over all kindreds and tongues and nations; and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”(Revel. xiii. 4-8.)

The Pope on the throne of thrones on earth is the counterfeit of Christ on the throne of thrones in heaven.

Mounted on the world’s highest seat, how was the Antichrist to demean himself? — With an arrogance never witnessed before. As regards kings, he was to hold himself their master, and as regards God, he was to deem himself His equal. “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.”(* 2 Thess. ii. 4.)

These words would appear to foreshadow a double usurpation on the part of Antichrist, the first, over all earthly rulers, and the second, over the great Ruler of heaven. The testimony of history is clear on both points. It shows that the ambition of the Pope has been twofold. He has vaulted over the throne of kings into the seat of God.

Who are they who are “called God,” whom Antichrist was to oppose, and over whom he was to exalt himself? We strongly incline to think that it is magistrates and kings who are meant. Righteous law is the expression of God’s will. Those who administer it are His deputies. On earth they fill the office, and bear the image of the Supreme Magistrate. Thus, in scripture, magistrates are called “gods.” “I have said ye are gods.” “God sitteth in the assembly of the mighty, He judgeth among the gods” (Ps. lxxxii. 1). “There be,” says the apostle (1 Cor. Viii. 5), “that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth.” And we are commanded to be subject to kings and all in authority, for conscience’ sake. In this light the clause foretells that Antichrist would usurp supremacy over all civil authority, and rule on earth; (This is the true exegesis of the passage. In the Greek it is, “all called theos, or that is sebasma,” which we may render thus, “all that is called divine, or that is venerable.) and truly the Papacy has fulfilled the prophecy to the letter. As a pretended divine and infallible Vice-gerency, it claims to hold, in its hands, the administration of all human affairs, temporal and spiritual, and to make all nations, magistrates, and kings accountable at its bar.

Let us here again mark the parallelism. This assumed Vice-gerency over all human affairs is another part of the false Christ’s imitation of the true Christ. Christ possesses this power in reality, therefore Antichrist must needs possess it in appearance. God the Father is the immediate Governor of the universe, but He carries on His government through God the Son. This power He has delegated to Christ as Head of the Church, and as a reward of His sufferings. “He raised Him from the dead,” says the apostle, “and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places; far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His

feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his body.”(# Eph. i. 20-23)

These words expressly teach that the Father made Christ head of the Church, and so gave Him all spiritual power, and head of the world to the Church, and so subordinated to Him all temporal power. The passage, in fact, presents Him as seated on the throne of the universe, on His head the diadem of unlimited and everlasting dominion, in his hand the sceptre of a boundless empire; and at His bidding all the princedoms and powers of heaven, all the thrones, armies, and potentates of earth, in order to the effectual carrying out of the great ends of His mediatorial sovereignty.

The Popes were true to their assumed character as Vice-Christs in this point also. They claimed to be the world’s supreme magistrates. Cardinal Bellarmine affirms that every title which is in Scripture given to Christ appertains also to the Pope. Binding up in one colossal jurisdiction things temporal and spiritual, the Pope stretched his sceptre over all the seats of human judicature, and sat with his feet on the necks of kings, as well as of priests. He claimed it as his prerogative to judge all, but to be judged by none; to make laws, but to be subject to no law; thereby unconsciously vindicating his prophetic appellative”the lawless one.” He has had himself depicted holding in one hand the “keys” of spiritual authority, and in the other the sword of temporal power. He has taught that it was fit that all princes should kiss his feet, and has extorted from not a few this act of obedience. He has inculcated on monarchs that sound orthodoxy requires them to hold their kingdoms as fiefs of the papal chair; and to keep alive in them this pious frame of mind, he has imposed on them and on their subjects the tax of Peter’s Pence. If still he discerned in them the risings of pride, this meek vicar of Christ has plucked the sceptre from their hand, kicked their crown with his pontifical foot, and transferred their dominion to some more devout and jumble-minded neighbour. All this he has done “as set of God over the kingdoms and nations to plant and to pluck up-to build and to pull down -to make and to unmake kings.” “Is not the king of England my bondslave? (Pope Boniface VIII., to Philip, King of France) were words from the “great mouth.”

And the Popes have shown themselves on occasion as mighty in deeds as in words. Gregory VII. dethroned Henry IV. of Germany. Innocent III. Otho, and our King John. Paul III., Henry VIII. And Pius V. and Gregory XIII., passed sentence of deposition on Queen Elizabeth. Pius V., as “he alone who had been constituted prince over all nations and all kingdoms, to pull down, destroy, dissipate, disperse, plant, and build …pronounced the said Elizabeth, a heretic… and deprived her of the pretended right to the kingdom, as well as of every dominion, dignity and privilege what soever,” pronouncing the same anathema on all who dare obey her. If the annals of the Papacy at this hour are not illustrated by these solemn acts of pontifical justice, it is because the power, and not the right is lacking. The Roman Church has made it the solemn duty of all her members to destroy all Protestants when they are able to do so without danger to themselves. Bannes, a Dominican, determines “that Catholics in England and Saxony are excused from rising up against their Protestant princes with their subjects, because they commonly are not

powerful enough, and the attempt in such circumstances would expose them to great danger." (In. ii. 2; Thom. 9-12, art. ii.) Belarmine, one of their greatest authorities, is equally frank and explicit. He says, "If it were possible to root out the heretics, without doubt, they are to be destroyed root and branch; but if it cannot be done, because they are stronger that we, and there be danger that if they should oppose us that we should be worsted, then we are to be quiet."(De Laicis, lib.iii. cap. 22.) The two latest Popes, Pius IX. and Leo. XIII. in their public manifestos, claim the same formidable power; but they prudently postpone the exercise of it till the arrival of a happier day to the Papacy.

We have traced the parallel to its grand culmination, and shown how close is the imitation in every stage of its course. The apostle adds a few touches to complete the portrait of the Antichrist, and in closing bestows a glance at the awful termination of his career. Let us rapidly survey what remains.

The apostle styles him as the "man if sin" and "son of perdition." Christ is the man of holiness; the only holy man the world ever saw. "That holy thing," said the angel when he announced His birth. "Thy holy Child Jesus," said an apostle of Him, while another wrote of Him, "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He was typified in the Lamb of the Passover as "without blemish."

The Pope or Vice-Christ is the man of sin. He has invented sin, he has taught sin, he has enacted sin," established iniquity by a law," he has traded in sin, he sells indulgences and pardons; he has grown rich through the sins of Christendom. Sin is his being, and sin is his work. Popery is as purely an incarnation of sin as the Gospel is of holiness.

Everything that Popery touches it converts into sin. It possesses an accursed alchemy by which it transmutes what is good into evil. It has taken all the commandments of the decalogue and converted them into sin. It has taken all the doctrines of the Gospel and converted them into sin; it had taken all the sacraments of the Church and converted them into instruments of sin; it has taken all the offices and officers of the church and made them agents of sin; it has taken all that is subtle in intellect, all that is brilliant in genius, and all that is noble in eloquence, and used them in the service of sin. The policy of Popery is not to deny truth; it ever acts as a Vice-Christ, as a pretended friend; its policy is to pervert truth, to metamorphose it, and make it fight against itself. There is not a doctrine in the Bible which Popery does not in appearance admit; there is not a doctrine in the Bible which Popery does not in reality deny, and the saving effects of which it does not make void. It takes what is wholesome, and by its infernal skill changes it into what is poisonous. The spiritual apparatus which God has set up for His own glory and man's salvation, Popery has laid hold of and works for just the opposite ends even -God's dishonour and man's ruin. It is a second and greater Jeroboam who has made Israel to sin. Verily, it is the "man of sin."

Paul further styles him "the son of perdition," a phrase of terrible significance. It is used in Scripture only once before, and in a connection

that imparts to the phrase an awfully tragic meaning. It is applied to Judas after the devil had entered into him, and so worked upon him, that he rested not till he betrayed his Master. This first “son of perdition” went forth from the bosom of the infant church, where he had just partaken of the passover cup: he rose up from the very presence of the God-man, to enact his awful apostacy.

The second and greater “son of perdition,” in like manner, arose in the bosom of the primitive church. Satan having entered into him, his ambition began to burn, and he went forth to the princes of the world, and said unto them, “What will ye give me, and I will betray Christianity unto you?” Manifestly ye are not able to overthrow it. It has taken root and is filling the earth, despite your armies and your edicts. The fires of ten persecutions have blazed around it; but all in vain. The bush has burned, yet it is not consumed. You are labouring at a work beyond your power. If Christianity shall ever know extinction, its overthrow must come from within: it must come from myself and no other. Give me my hire; give me the seat of Caesar; give me the “kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,” and I will go forth and show myself to man as the Vice-Christ, and the world will believe on me, and follow me. Where your force has failed, my craft will triumph. The policy was astute as deep: need we say who was its prompter?

The apostle makes this point clear. The coming of the “man if sin,” he had said, was to be after “the working of Satan.” The head of the apostacy was to be energised, prompted, sustained, and led on by Satan, “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil.” Popery is the son of perdition: the spawn, the offspring of Apollyon the destroyer, and it must needs do its father’s work. As it is God’s work to create, so it is Satan’s work to destroy. The fair fabric of nature he would if he could destroy; the moral constitution of society he has so far destroyed. His name is Apollyon the destroyer, and the work of Popery is the same. The principles of morality and evangelical virtue in man it destroys; the principles of renewing power in the Gospel it perverts and destroys. Wherever it has found a seat in Europe there is the blackness of perdition -ignorant men, mouldering cities, and enslaved and demoralised nations. “Apollyon the destroyer has passed this way,” we exclaim, “here are his footprints; all along his track is the blackness of physical, moral, and spiritual death. We think of the pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed him.”

If a son, then an heir. And what is the inheritance of which he is the heir? It is “perdition.” The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them first, perdition in the end. It was written of him before he arose “He goeth into perdition.” Better to have had the bitter first and the sweet after; but no; the day of his glory over and past, there comes the voice, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime had thy good things and Lazarus” (the church) “his evil things; now thou are tormented.” This inheritance is conveyed to the papacy in the same charter and made sure to it under the same seal as the “glory” that goes before it. The King of Heaven has made this decree and sealed it with His own signet, and the decree may no man change. As sure as the Papacy has had its glory so surely shall its doom come. Paul, before closing his prophecy, pauses, and in solemn and awful words foretells the

night of horrors in which its career is to end. “That wicked – whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

There is here a dual destruction suspended above Antichrist -a slow wasting first, for, it may be, centuries, and a sudden and utter extinction in the end. This duality in the doom of Antichrist has been noted in prophecy ever since its beginning. It is emphasised by Daniel. Speaking of the ‘little horn” which had a mouth speaking great things, eyes like the eyes of a man, a look more stout than his fellows, and which made war with the saints, and was to have dominion over them, “until a time, times, and the dividing of time,” that is 1260 years, the prophet says. “The judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end” (Daniel vii. 26.) another proof, by the way, of identity betwixt the “little horn” of Daniel, and the Antichrist of John.

In the predicted doom of the Papacy there are thus two well-marked stages. There is, first, a gradual consumption; and there is, second, a sudden and terrible destruction.

The “consumption,” a slow and gradual process, is to be effected by the “spirit of His mouth,’ by which we understand the preaching of the Gospel. This consumption has been going on ever since the Bible was translated, and the Gospel began to be preached at the Reformation. Men have begun to see the errors of popery; its political props have been weakened, and in some instances struck from under it, and its hold generally on the nations of Christendom has been loosened; and thus the way has been prepared for the final stroke that will consummate its ruin. Great systems like the papacy, with their roots far down and spread wide around, cannot be plucked up while in their vigor without dislocating human society. They must be left to grow ripe and become rotten, and then the final stroke may be dealt them with safety to the church and the world.

When that hour shall have come then will the second part of the doom of the Papacy overtake it. The Lord shall “destroy” it “with the brightness of His coning.” The form of the judgment is left vague, but enough is said to warrant us to conclude that it will be swift and final -it will come with lightning flash, and its holy vengeance will be so manifest that, to use the figure in the prophecy, it will irradiate both heaven and earth with a moral splendour. Whether Christ shall then come as He came at the period of the flood, and as He came at the burning of Sodom, and again at the destruction of Jerusalem, when, Himself remaining on the throne of heaven, He girded the ministers of His wrath, and sent them down to earth to execute his vengeance on the ungodly; or whether, leaving His seat in glory He shall in very person descend and confront his Vicar, whether He shall return to close the Apocalypse in the divine magnificence in which He appeared to John in Patmos, when He came to open it, it is not necessary that we should here decide. Enough, that this “day of wrath” will be unspeakably great, and will rank as one of the greatest days of vengeance that have been on the earth since the foundation of the world. Paul despatches it in a single sentence; John expands it into a whole chapter. And in what other chapter of the bible or of human history is there such another spectacle of judgment -such another

picture of blended horrors, of awestruck consternation, of loud and bitter wailings, and cries of woe as in the eighteenth chapter of the Apocalypse? “The kings of the earth shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning; standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, alas! Alas! That great city, for in one hour is she made desolate.” But this dark scene has one relieving feature. It is a scene that will not need to be repeated, for it will close earth’s evil days, and begin the hallelujahs of the nations. “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” (Rev. xviii. 9-19, 21.)

Let the reader remember that the portraiture he has been studying is not ours, but Paul’s. And, when he lifts his eyes from the picture, let him cast them around and try if he can discover the original of this likeness. The features are so vividly depicted, so sharply cut, that surely there can be no difficulty in detecting him, whose image they present. Paul did not paint at random. His is no vague sketch which may fit loosely any or most of the systems of error which have arisen in the course of the ages. When we read his prophecy, we have the overwhelming impression that Paul has in his eye some one grand, sharply-featured, long-lived, daringly wicked, and fearfully blasphemous confederacy, which, under the mask of friendliness, was to wage undying war against the Gospel. We are blind, indeed, if we cannot find the original of Paul’s portraiture. Here is one who has erected his throne in the Christian temple; who has usurped all the titles and functions of Christ; who has professed to mediate between God and man; to hold the keys of heaven and hell; to do great wonders, and make fire come down from heaven; who has changed laws, spoken “great words, ‘ forbidden to marry, commanded to abstain from meats, has clothed his priests in purple and scarlet and fine linen, decked with gold and precious stones; one who has made war with the saints, and been drunk with the blood of martyrs; who has put his foot on the neck of kings; nay, has clothed himself with the robe of the Eternal King; infallibility even; in fine, one who has said: I am Vice-Christ; I am vice-God. We go up to this man, and we say to him, “Thou art the Antichrist.” Let who will cringe and bow before thee; let who will patch anew thy vizor which begins to wax thread-bare and to permit the horrid features that lurk beneath it to shine through; let who will palliate thy crimes, and deny that ever thou didst persecute, and though simulating the meekness and innocence of the lamb, art a ravening wolf. Let who will befriend thee in the arrogant and blasphemous claims thou art still putting forth, we say of thee, “Thou art he of whom Paul in old time, writing by the Holy Ghost, spoke. Hear what he called thee! He named thee, ‘The Man of Sin,’ and ‘Son of Perdition.'”

Ah! You re-adjust your mask; and double the folds of your mantle; and looking down on the kings of earth once more at your feet, you say, “Am not I God?” We know thee who thou art. Thou art the fallen apostle! The minister of Lucifer! Thou camest from the abyss, and to the abyss shalt thou return!

We do not hesitate to say, that we have nearly as full and convincing evidence that the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist, as we have that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. In conclusion, let us note that Christianity stands

alone, in having its Antichrist or counterfeit. Mohammedanism has no such counterfeit. Buddhism has no such counterfeit. There is not power or truth enough in these systems to call into existence a great opposing counterfeit system. Without the sun, there can be no shadows. The sun of Christianity has been accompanied all down the ages by this shadow. So far Antichrist does homage to the divinity of the Gospel. Unless Christ had gone before, Antichrist could not have come after.

And let the reader seriously ponder that this is the divine testimony regarding popery. As portrayed by a divinely-guided hand whose are its lineaments -its spirit and principles? They are those of Satan, the arch-enemy of God and His Church. This monstrous shape is the “wicked one.” Let us think what a formidable antagonist we have in this system. We wrestle not against flesh and blood -against the power and cunning of man; we have to encounter the power of hell -the cunning of the devil. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Eph. vi. 12-17.)