

nuns, monks, and priests – a most remarkable feature of the system, – its commands to abstain from certain meats, but, as Mede has proved in a learned treatise on this passage, its restoration of the demon or hero-worship of the Pagans, in the form of an impious devotion offered to the Virgin Mary and the real or supposed saints.

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

III. The Apostle John clearly predicts the rise and overthrow of the Papal system.

Let us especially observe **Rev. 13:1-8**. Here we have John beholding in vision again the rising of the very power described by Daniel. It was to rise “out of the sea,” or from the spiritual world, and yet it was to have not only “ten horns,” or to prevail over the various sections of the old Roman empire, it was to have “seven heads,” of which expression we have an inspired commentary; for, in **Rev. 17:9**, it is said, “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;” in other words, the centre and headquarters of this new and mysterious power was to be the city of Rome, notoriously built upon seven hills. The “blasphemy,” “persecution,” and remarkable temporary success previously described by Paul and Daniel, are again reiterated; and it is added, that, whereas the old Pagan empires were likened to single beasts, whose peculiarities they severally possessed, this new and portentous “beast” was to combine in itself all these peculiarities at once – having the boldness of the “lion,” the strength and cruelty of the “bear,” the swiftness and cunning of the “leopard,” it being emphatically added, “the dragon,” or devil, “gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The overthrow of this tremendous power is afterwards clearly described in the **18th chapter**, where it is said, that, amongst other things, she trafficked in the “souls of men,” and that “in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”

Now, we can easily imagine that Popery must be most anxious to evade the force and application of this mass of consistent and conclusive evidence – although, as yet, so far as we know, she has not made any plausible attempt to turn it aside; but it is very difficult to understand why Protestants should be blind to the vast importance of this scriptural identification of their great enemy. Can these descriptions possibly be applied to any thing else recorded in history? Do they not literally and strikingly apply to the Papal Anti-Christ? Is it not comforting to know, that nothing has happened in all this which the Spirit of God did not clearly predict? And may we not, therefore, triumphantly anticipate the time – now very near – when this monstrous incubus being heaved off from the face of Christendom, the true spiritual Church of Christ shall stand forth before angels and men in all the glory of her millennial strength? The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING:

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXV.vi.

James Begg, A Handbook of Popery.

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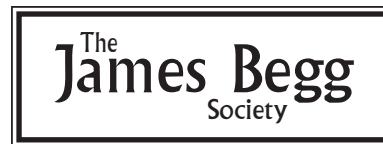
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Popery in Scripture

by **Dr. James Begg**

POPERY IS PREDICTED

ATHOROUGH knowledge of the true nature of Popery will be admitted by the great mass of Protestants to be vastly important, especially in the present day. That system is again making a bold effort to regain its former dominion over Europe, and it already holds some of the most powerful continental nations in chains. It is making a desperate, and to some extent successful, attempt to regain its former supremacy in Britain; and as its spirit is, if possible, more savage and reckless than during the middle ages, woe be to us if it fully accomplishes its Object! The hope of defeating so cunning, powerful, and unscrupulous an enemy, however, must depend mainly, under God, upon the diffusion of sound information amongst Protestants in regard to the true nature and results of the Popish System. Popery is most hated where it is best known: it is abhorred in Italy; and one reason for its success in Britain, is the comparative ignorance, and therefore deplorable apathy, in regard to Rome, of multitudes of modern Protestants.

This ignorance is no doubt partly traceable to the long exemption which our country has enjoyed from the tyranny of the Man of sin, and partly to the absence of any regular instruction of the people on this important subject. Since the Reformation, there has been an infatuated tendency, on the part of the Protestant nations, to sink back into apathy, and forget all the lessons which their fathers so dearly learnt. It is vain to disguise this fact; whilst no sooner had the Reformation been achieved, than Rome again girded up her loins to renew the struggle, and she has done so with great success. On the continent of Europe, she has regained a vast portion of her lost territory; and if she could only secure Britain, she would gloat over a nearly perfect victory, and trample out the last embers of scriptural truth and national liberty over the entire European continent. Nor need we conceal from ourselves the circumstance, that she is impelled to this desperate struggle, not only by the very nature of her claims, and by the Spirit of darkness by which she is animated, but by the strides of modern science, by which men and information are transmitted almost with the speed of thought from land to land. Rome must either hurry the world back into darkness, or be exposed to the continual danger of having the lands of her dominion penetrated by light and emancipated from her sway. She, of course, chooses the former alternative, – and hence her vigorous assaults on Protestant countries, and especially on Great Britain and America. They, on the other hand, ought precisely to reverse this aim. The paramount duty of their Protestant people is not only to seek by every lawful means to diffuse the light of truth amongst all the inhabitants of their own country, and especially to set free the home-bred slaves of the Roman Antichrist, but to carry the light of truth and the blessings of liberty into all the dark regions where Popery reigns, and to pray for the rapid approach of that glorious day when the cry shall go up

under the whole heaven, “Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen – the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.” In this view, it is most important to set before the minds of intelligent Protestants clear and scriptural ideas in regard to the true nature of the Popish system, and to warn them of the mistakes into which they are apt to fall. And here we believe it is essential to fix in our minds the truth, that the outline of the actual system of Popery is clearly predicted and sketched in the Word of God, and that nothing has happened, or can happen, in regard to that system, for which we, with the Book of God in our hands, were not bound to be prepared. This fact is, indeed, one of the most remarkable incidental proofs of the inspiration of Scripture; for no human imagination could have dreamt of such a system as we now behold, and of its success, before it came into existence. It is of no importance here to say, that there are “many Antichrists” spoken of in Scripture. That is true, but what we are about to prove is, that the Papal system, in itself so peculiar, is very minutely described in Scripture, that the Divine description does apply to it most accurately, and does not and cannot apply to any thing else. And even as a painter fixes in his mind and sketches the broad outline of his picture upon the canvas before he proceeds to fill up the details, so we think it all-important in this controversy to contemplate the Divinely-inspired sketch of this “Masterpiece of Satan,” before we proceed to prove that it is unscriptural in all its parts. We are convinced that for want of this precaution, many have recently stumbled at the very threshold of this subject. Taking up a mere separate dogma of Rome, and perhaps coming in contact with a dextrous controversialist, they have been carried away by the plausibilities of one phase of a system which, with all its apparent absurdity, is founded on the deepest knowledge of fallen human nature – or adopting the unscriptural theory of a physical succession of priests, they have unwittingly conceded the catholicity of Rome as a church, and landed themselves unawares in her polluted embrace. We are confident that to such causes may be traced many a recent conversion; and that it is of primary importance to settle, not only (as we shall hereafter do) that the Bible is the final and only standard of appeal, but that the Bible warns us clearly and unequivocally that the system now called Popery should arise in the world, and instead of being part of the Church of Christ, should, whilst having some Christians in its bosom, be the most formidable and bloody enemy with which the Church of Christ should ever have to war. Taking this as our starting point, and having this thoroughly fixed in our minds, we shall be better prepared to consider the Romish system in detail. But now for the proof:

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

I. The system of Popery was clearly foretold by the prophet Daniel. Daniel has two predictions in regard to the kingdoms that were to succeed the Babylonian empire. The first is found, **Dan. 2:31, etc.**, being Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in regard to a great image, in which he intimates:-

*That the golden head of the image meant the Babylonian empire.

*The breast and arms of silver, the Medo-Persian.

*The belly and thighs of brass, the Grecian or Macedonian.

*The legs of iron, the Roman empire.

*The feet partly iron and partly of clay, the same empire strong at first,

but weak afterwards, in consequence either of essential defects or of the incursions of barbarians.

*The ten toes, the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was at length divided.

*And the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands,” the spiritual kingdom of Messiah which was then to arise – smite the image – break it in pieces – become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth.

The same great outline of the world’s future history was again revealed to Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar (see **Dan. 7:2, etc.**), but under different imagery, and with a most important addition. After representing the imperial power of Babylon under the twofold image of a lion with eagle’s wings, a compound of the king of beasts and the king of birds – after representing the empire of the Medes and Persians under the emblem of a bear, distinguished alike for strength and cruelty – after likening the rapid conquests of Alexander and the division of his kingdom into four sections to a leopard with four heads and four wings, and the Roman empire to a nameless beast, dreadful and terrible, which “devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it,” he goes on to say, “It had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.” This last part of the vision seems specially to have arrested the attention of the prophet; and in answer to his earnest inquiry, some additional information of vast importance to our present investigation is given (**Dan. 7:19-27**).

Now, let us calmly contemplate this remarkable portion of the Word of God. All the previous parts of the prediction are literally fulfilled. Empire after empire passes away, not only giving place at length to the iron power of Rome, but to the division of Rome itself into ten kingdoms. Bishop Newton gives their names as follows:- 1. Senate of Rome which revolted from the Greek Emperors. 2. Greeks in Ravenna. 3. Lombards. 4. Huns. 5. Alemanni in Germany. 6. Franks. 7. Burgundians. 8. Goths in Spain. 9. Britons. 10. Saxons in Britain. Now, it was at this stage, and in the midst of these, that the “little horn” was to arise. The time and the place are precisely fixed. And we know that it was then and there that the Papal Antichrist arose, and that by it “there were three of the first horns plucked up by the root,” viz., the Exarchate of Ravenna ceded to the Pope 755, the kingdom of the Lombards in 774, and the state of Rome itself. The result exactly answers the description, and nothing else does. Besides, here is truly a “little horn,” insignificant in appearance in comparison of the splendid monarchies of the ancient world, and “diverse from the first,” being a combination of spiritual with temporal power. “In this horn were the eyes of a man, and it had a mouth speaking great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows,” – indicative at once of the worldly policy, pride, and determination of this mysterious power. And who that has read history can mistake the emphatic language, “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change times and laws?” Do we not see in this, as in a mirror, the very image of the Popish system, so that the words might have served for history as well as for prediction? Well may Rome wish to shut from the eyes of her victims the inspired Book of God.

PAUL’S WRITINGS

II. The Apostle Paul clearly predicts the approach, and describes the nature, of the Popish system. This he does especially in two passages. The first is as follows:- “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” – (**2 Thess. 2:3-11.**) Now, we have here not only a similar description to that of Daniel, but similar means of identification in regard to time and place. The place is fixed: the Man of Sin was to spring up in the Roman empire, for it was the Roman power that “let” or hindered its development. In the time of this apostle the “mystery” had begun to “work,” – the “little horn” of Daniel had begun to force its way up amongst the Roman kingdoms. The time is fixed: when the Roman secular power is subverted or “taken out of the way,” then “that wicked” was to be “revealed.” The nature of the power is clearly described: it was to be partly temporal, taking to some extent the place of the Roman government, and partly spiritual, “sitting in the temple of God.” It was like Daniel’s “little horn,” to be a blasphemous and wicked power “opposing and exalting itself above all that is called God.” The manner of its manifestation is clearly described: it was to come “after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.” The end of this power, also, is again clearly foretold. In short, the prediction by Paul and that by Daniel, exactly correspond with each other, and with Popery, but are applicable to nothing else. The same apostle gives another description of the approaching “mystery of iniquity” in the following passage:- “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth; for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” – (**1 Tim. 4:1-4.**) Here a number of additional particulars are stated, all clearly applicable to the Popish Church. The “latter times” are evidently those of the gospel; and it is vain for the adherents of Rome to allege that the word “some” cannot apply to them, inasmuch as they are very numerous, for the same word is often used in Scripture to describe nearly a whole people, – as where Paul says, “some, when they heard, did provoke” – (**Heb. 3:16**), although he is speaking of nearly the whole congregation of Israel. The apostle’s description embraces not only the lying spirit of Popery, which has always been one of its leading features, its prohibition of marriage in the case of