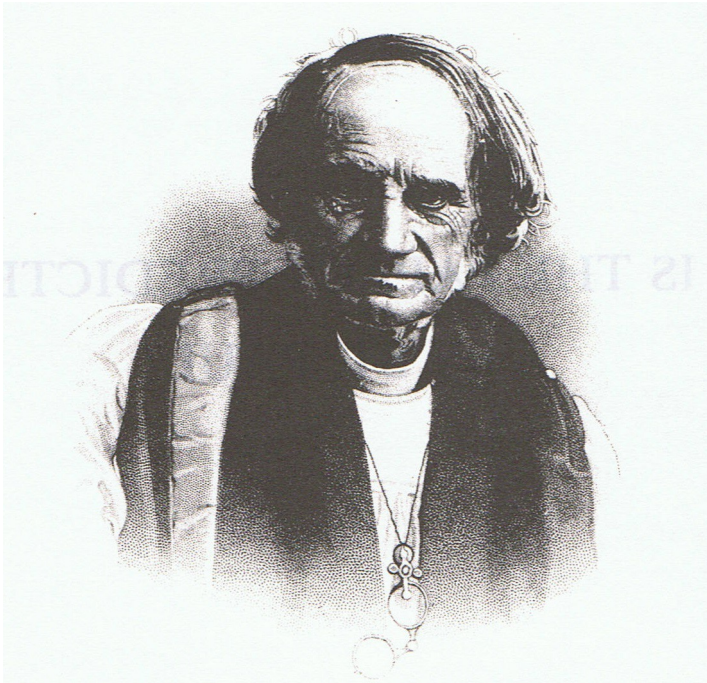


**IS THE PAPACY
PREDICTED
BY ST. PAUL?
AN INQUIRY**

BISHOP CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH

THE HARRISON TRUST



Yours affectionately
Lincoln

IS THE PAPACY PREDICTED BY ST. PAUL?

(2 Thess. ii. 1 - 13.)

An Enquiry.

BY

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BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

WITH A FEW WORDS IN REPLY TO DR. FARRAR.

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INTRODUCTION

The Church of England is preparing to accept and reinstate the papacy after four hundred and fifty years. The General Synod at its February 1985 meeting voted overwhelmingly to accept the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission's reports on Eucharist, Ministry, and Authority. The Statement on Authority proposes that a universal headship in a reunited church is necessary and that it should properly be held by the Bishop of Rome.

The General Synod, by voting that the statements on Authority (a) provide 'sufficient convergence to explore further the structures of authority' and (b) offer 'a sufficient basis for taking the next concrete step towards' unity, has set the Church of England on the path to becoming, unless that decision is reversed, a papal church. *The Times* declared it to be a decision of historic importance: 'The Church of England, through its representative body, declared its willingness to take into its system the office of universal primate, the Bishop of Rome. That was a historic moment.'

There are also other signs of movement towards acceptance of the papacy. The visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Italy in April 1985 showed that the future supreme governor of the Church of England is keen on reconciliation with the papacy. Surrounded with great secrecy, arrangements were made between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope for a papal mass to be celebrated for the Prince and Princess. It is reported on good authority that the Prince specially requested it, and saw it as a great ecumenical gesture signifying a reconciliation between the Crown and the papacy. Only by

the hand of Providence was this averted.

It is evident that many of the leaders of the Church of England are now bending their energies to make the pope once more head of the church. Before that day comes and the Church of England is irrevocably committed to the acceptance of the papacy, we would like its clergy and people to have the opportunity to read what one of its ablest bishops wrote about the subject, and not just that bishop, but, as he himself makes clear, what is the consensus of some of the best and most godly men of the Church of England.

But we must be prepared, above all, to hear what Scripture teaches on the subject, and that is really the burden of what Bishop Wordsworth has to say. He advances not his own views but those of Scripture. He shows how but one interpretation is possible, an interpretation which sets forth clearly the true nature of the papacy and gives an awful warning to the church to avoid entanglement with it, and to hold fast the catholic [meaning universal, not Roman Catholic] faith. It is our conviction that no one who reads this booklet in a spirit of willing submission to the authority of Scripture can fail to see that the only true course for our church to follow is to reject the proposals now being made to bring back the papacy.

August 1985

The Harrison Trust

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE publication of this Inquiry, in its present form, has been occasioned by some remarks in a recent popular work, **Life of St. Paul** *Dr. Farrar*, mentioned in p, 25, which seemed to require notice, I have now to thank the learned Author of that work for his courteous assurance that some of the expressions in it commented on by me will be modified.

I have also to state that in the present Edition (p. 5 and p. 35, *Postscript*) some remarks of learned friends, who, while agreeing in my general conclusions, have demurred to some particular statements in it, have been considered.

Easter, 1880.

IS THE PAPACY PREDICTED BY ST, PAUL IN 2 THESSALONIANS ii. 1 - 13?

The Apostle's words (2 Thess. ii. 1 - 13), literally rendered, may be represented as follows:-

"Now we beseech you, brethren, on behalf of the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him (see 1 Thess. iv. 17), in order that ye be not soon drifted off from your mind, nor be disturbed either by means of a spirit, or of word or of letter as from us, as if the Day of the Lord were immediate.

Let no one deceive you by any means. For [that Day shall not come] except the falling away shall have first come, and the Man of Sin shall have been revealed, the Son of perdition, he who opposeth and exalteth himself exceedingly against every one that is called God, or an object of reverence; so that he goeth and taketh his seat in the temple (lit. the shrine) of God, showing himself forth that he is God.

Do ye not remember, that when I was yet with you, I was wont to tell you of these things?

And now ye know that which restraineth, in order that he may be revealed in his own season (and not before).

For the Mystery of the Lawlessness (of which I am speaking) is now working inwardly, only until he that now restraineth shall have been removed out of the way; and then the Lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the manifestation of His Coming; him, of

whom the Coming is according to the inner-working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie, and in all deceit of iniquity to them that are perishing, because they accepted not the love of truth in order to their being saved. And therefore God sendeth to them an inner working of error in order that they should believe the lie; that all may be judged who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in iniquity."

On the language of this Translation a few short notes may be inserted here. The Exposition will follow after.

v. 3. Observe ἀποστασία with the definite article signifying "**the** falling-away;" "**that** notable falling-away "

v. 4. "who exalteth himself exceedingly **against**." It is to be observed here, that the Apostle does not say that the Man of Sin will exalt himself ὑπὲρ, **above** every one that is called God, but ἐπὶ, **against**.

The word ὑπεραιρόμενος, "exceedingly exalting himself," or "exalted exceedingly," is used by the Septuagint concerning Hezekiah in 2 Chron. xxxii. 23, where it means **much magnified**; and it is used by St. Paul in another place when speaking of himself (2 Cor. xii. 7), ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, "that I may not be **exalted above measure** by my revelations."

This is a common use of ὑπὲρ in composition in St. Paul's writings as ὑπερλίαν 2 Cor. xi. 5, xii. 11; ὑπερβάλλω 2 Cor. ix. 14; ὑπερβολή i. 8, xii. 7, Gal. i. 13; ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ 1 Thess. iii. 10, v. 13; ὑπεροχῇ 1 Cor. ii. 1; ὑπερφρονεῖν Rom. xii. 3.

v. 4. "every **one** that is **called** God or object of

worship," σέβασμα. Observe the original here. The only other passage where it occurs in the New Testament is Acts xvii. 23, where the **altar** to the Unknown God is mentioned among the σεβάσματα of Athens.

v. 4. "**goeth** and taketh his seat in the temple of God." The preposition εἰς connected with καθίσαι, and followed by an **accusative**, shows that the Apostle predicts the **entrance** of the lawless Power **into** God's house (i.e. the **Church**), and his **session** there.

That the "**temple of God**" does **not** here mean (as some imagine) the "temple at **Jerusalem**" is clear from the fact (hereafter proved) that the Lawless One was to appear at the "removal of the **Roman Empire**." But when the Roman Empire was removed, there was **no temple** at Jerusalem for him to appear in; nor has there been any to this time. It therefore means the **Christian Church**, which is now the only temple of God; and this is the opinion of *S. Augustine*, *S. Chrysostom*, and most of the Fathers.

v. 5. When I was yet with you (at Thessalonica) **I was telling you** (ἔλεγον, imperfect). or **used to tell you**, these things.

v. 6. "that which **restraineth**;" τὸ κατέχον, **neuter** gender, called also ὁ κατέχων, "**he** that restraineth," in the next verse. The word κατέχειν, literally to "hold down," is explained in *Hesychius* by κρατεῖν, κωλύειν, συνέχειν.

This verb is **not** followed here, in either verse, by an **accusative case**. This is observable. St. Paul therefore does **not** say that this restraining power would check the

Lawless One by any **direct** action upon him, but would **occupy a place**, so that he should **not** be manifested **before** his season, but be manifested **in** that season.

"**In order** that he may be revealed;" i.e. God permits the **present** restraint, **in order** that he who is now restrained (κατέχεται) may **not** be revealed **before** his due season, but in it.

v. 7. **Mystery of Lawlessness.** Observe both these words.

Mystery (μυστήριον, from μύω, μύστης, μυστικός), something **secret**, and professing to be **sacred** (cp. Rev. xvii. 5, 7), fitly therefore coupled with ἐνεργεῖται, "**works inwardly**."

Lawlessness (ἀνομία), what sets **law** (νόμον) at defiance. Cp. ὁ ἄνομος, "**the lawless one**," v. 8.

The mystery of **the** Lawlessness, i.e., which I am now about to describe. Observe the **Article** repeated with each substantive.

The sense of this otherwise difficult verse, v. 7, is to be cleared up, by observing that there should be no comma after ἀνομίας, and that ἤδη, "**now**," is opposed to καὶ τότε, "**and then**;" and that the phrase "**the Mystery of the Lawlessness**" (which he is describing), is to be illustrated by the words, "**the Lawless One**" in the next verse, and that μόνον is to be connected with ἐνεργεῖται, "**worketh inwardly**," which is contrasted with ἀποκαλυφθήσεται, "**will hereafter be revealed outwardly**." On the transposition of ἕως cp. that of ἵνα in Gal. ii. 10, μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν.

The Apostle therefore means that the **Mystery** now **works inwardly**, and will continue to work **so**, till the restraint which prevents its **manifestation** shall have been removed; and then it will no longer **only work inwardly**, but the **Lawless One** himself will be **displayed openly** to the world.

v. 8. ὁ ἄνομος, "the **Lawless One**" (cp. v. 7), something more than the **Mystery** (or **arcanum**) of **Lawlessness** in v. 7.

v. 8. ἀναλώσει τῷ πνεύματι, **will destroy with the breath**. See Isa. xi. 4, *Sept.*

- τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ **with the manifestation**. Cp. *Clem. of Rom.* ii. 12, ἐκδεχόμεθα καθ' ὥραν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ... ἐπειδὴ οὐκ οἶδαμεν τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ Θεοῦ ..., where our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly called **God**. See also 1 Tim. vi. 14.

v. 9. οὗ ἡ παρουσία, **whose Coming or Advent**: may I refer to my note on Rev. xvii. 8? and observe the same word παρουσία applied to Christ here, v. 8.

- ἐν σημείοις καὶ τέρασι ψεύδους, in **signs and wonders of a Lie**, cp. v. 11.

v. 10. τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, to them who are in the way of **destruction**, as opposed to οἱ σωζόμενοι, those who are in the way of **salvation**. Acts ii. 47. See also 2 Cor. ii 15; iv. 3. Hence he adds, "because they **accepted** not (οὐκ ἐδέξαντο)," but **rejected** the love of the truth, for their **own salvation**; and says, that because they were not willing to believe **the truth**, but rejoice in unrighteousness, God punishes them by sending them an

inner working of error, that they may believe **the lie**, i.e. the lie of the **Lawless One** here described in 2 Thess. ii. 2 - 13.

v. 11. ἐνέργειαν πλάνης is not anything **external** to them, but **an inner working of error**, which they bring upon themselves by not accepting the love of the truth. Compare the remarkable words in Matt. vi 22, 23. Luke xi. 34, 35, and that admonition repeated fourteen times in the New Testament, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." *Bp. Butler*, Sermon on 1 Pet. ii, 16, note. Cp. also 2 Cor. iv. 4, and 2 Pet. ii. 15.

Exposition of this Prophecy

Three questions arise here:

- i. What is the **restraining Power** here mentioned?
- ii. Has that **restraining Power** been **removed**?
- iii. Who is the "**Man of Sin**" (v. 3), or the "**Lawless One**" (v. 8), of whom the Apostle foretells that he would be **revealed** on the removal of that restraining Power?

The answer to the two former of these three questions will suggest a reply to the third.

- i. What then was the restraining Power which **hindered** his manifestation?

In reply to this question, be it observed, that

- i.1 St. Paul reminds the Thessalonians, that he had often spoken to them on this matter (v. 5) when he was among them, which was a short time before the Epistle

was written; and that he had then told them **what** this **restraining Power** was; and he recalls the words which he had then used to their recollection: **Do ye not remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?** (v. 5)

Therefore the **restraining Power** was some Power which St. Paul had mentioned to them by **word of mouth** at that time, and it was a Power which he knew they would remember by name, when they reflected on what he had then **spoken** to them.

i.2 He contents himself with **referring** them to what he had then **said**; and does not proceed to say more on the subject of this **restraining Power** in this his **Epistle** to them. Therefore,

i.3 There must then have been something in the character of this **restraining Power** which made it requisite for St. Paul to practise **reserve** concerning it in **writing**, although he had described it clearly to them in **speaking**.

Otherwise, why did he content himself with referring them to what he had **spoken** to them on the subject? Why did he not write as plainly concerning it in his **Epistle**, as he had spoken by word of **mouth** when he was with them?

i.4 Therefore the **restraining Power** here referred to **cannot** (as some think) have been the power of **God**, or any Christian power, such as that of the **Gospel**. If so, there could not have been any reason why St. Paul should not have **written** concerning such a power as **plainly** as he had **spoken**.

This has already been remarked by *S. Chrysostom* here:

"If he had meant the **Holy Spirit** when he speaks of the Power that **restrained**, he would have spoken clearly, and said so."

What then was the restraining power?

i.5 Let us remember, that the passage before us occurs in one of St. Paul's Epistles.

i.6 These Epistles (as he himself enjoins) were to be **read publicly**, and they were so read and circulated throughout the world (see my note on 1 Thess. v. 27).

This is an important consideration; for,

i.7 Hence it is certain, that when **this Epistle** containing this remarkable prophecy came to be read in Thessalonica, they who heard it publicly read, and who remembered what the Apostle had **said** to them concerning the **restraining Power**. would (as he commanded them to do, v. 5) **recall to mind** his **words** on this subject; and **others** also would be sure to inquire of those who knew,- what St. Paul had said on this matter?

Thus, by the **public reading** of this Epistle in the Church of Thessalonica, and in the other Churches of Macedonia and of Europe and Asia, to which this and the other Epistles of St. Paul were communicated, a continuous tradition would be preserved on this subject.

i.8 Hence therefore the question now arises, **Was** there any **primitive tradition** as to **the** Power which St. Paul here describes as the **restraining Power** (τὸ κατέχον) which was to continue to exist till the manifestation of the Lawless One, and be succeeded by him? (v. 7.)

i.9 There are two early Christian writers, who have commented on this prophecy, who were distinguished by extensive learning and ability, and who lived in the next century to St. Paul, viz. *Tertullian* and *S. Irenæus*.

The former, in his exposition of this passage, puts this question,-

What is that of which the Apostle speaks? What is this **restraining Power**? And he replies, "Quis, nisi **Romanus** status?" What is it but the **Roman** state? (*Tertullian*, De Resurr. Carnis, 24.)

Accordingly, *Tertullian* says in his Apology for Christianity (c. 32) that the ancient Christians had special need to **pray** for the continuance of the **Roman Empire** ("pro omni statu Imperii rebusque Romanis"), "because some terrible violence would ensue, on its removal."

Similarly *S. Irenæus* affirms, that St. Paul, in describing the revelation of the Lawless One, is describing what would take place on the **dismemberment** of the Empire which was then in being, viz. the **Roman** Empire, which he recognizes as the Fourth Empire spoken of by the prophet Daniel, vii. 23. (Compare *Irenæus*, v. 25 with v. 26.)

This evidence (which might be much enlarged by quotations from *S. Cyril Hierosolym.* Catech. 15; *S. Chrysostom* here; *Theodoret*, in Dan. vii. 7; *S. Augustin.* De. Civ. Dei, xx. 19; *S. Jerome*, Qu. xi. ad Algasiam, vol. iv. p. 209, in Hierem. xxv. 26. "Eum 'qui nunc tenet' Romanum Imperium ostendit," *Lactant.* vii. 15; and *Primasius* here) may be summed up in the words of *S. Jerome* (in Dan. vii. vol. iii. p. 1101), "Let us therefore

say,- what **all Ecclesiastical Writers have delivered to us,-** that, when the **Roman Empire** is to be destroyed, Ten Kings will divide the Roman World among themselves, and then will be **revealed** the **Man of Sin**, the **Son of Perdition**, who will venture to take his seat in the Temple of God, making himself as God."

Hence then

i.10 It appears that the **restraining Power**, which was in existence when St. Paul wrote, and would continue to exist till the season had arrived for the manifestation of the Lawless One, and which, on its removal, would be followed by that manifestation (v. 7), was the **Heathen Power of Imperial Rome**.

i.11 This conclusion is confirmed by other considerations.

It enables us to account for the fact, that St. Paul, who had specified this **restraining Power** by **word of mouth** when he was at Thessalonica, did not venture to describe that Power explicitly in **writing** in this Epistle, but contented himself with **referring** the Thessalonians to what he **said** to them on that subject.

That reference, he knew, would revive their recollection of what it was requisite for them to know; and therefore what he had **said** would be preserved to them and to the world.

But, let us remember, this Epistle was to be read publicly at Thessalonica and throughout Christendom. Copies of it would be circulated in all parts of the **Roman Empire**.

If, instead of **writing** as he has done, "Do you not **remember** that I **said** these things to you?" and "ye know **what** restraineth;" and "**when** he that restraineth **shall** have been **removed** out of the way, then the Lawless One will be revealed," he had written openly, "the **Roman Empire** is that which restrains;" and **if** he had proceeded to say, "when the **Roman Empire** shall have been removed," then he would have exasperated the passions of the authorities of the Roman Empire against himself, and against the Christians, and against the Gospel of Christ.

The Romans imagined that the Roman Empire would **never be removed**. They thought it was imperishable. They engraved on their coins the impress, "**Romæ AEternæ**." The language which their national poet, Virgil, puts into the mouth of Jupiter, represents their national belief: "**Imperium sine fine dedi**" (*Virg.* AE n. i. 278). How then would they have tolerated a doctrine which professed to reveal what would follow **after** the removal of that National Polity which they fondly believed to be eternal?

St. Paul, as he afterwards proved by his martyrdom at Rome, was ready to shed his blood for the truth. But he had wisdom and charity as well as courage. He would not recklessly expose himself and others to persecution. He would not rashly obstruct the progress of Christianity. He would not tempt any to be guilty of the sin of persecuting it. He remembered what he had **said** to the Thessalonians on this important and awful subject. He knew that they would recollect his words, and would communicate them to others after them, and so all the purposes of his prophecy would be answered.

i.12 This observation is also confirmed by ancient writers, whose testimony shows that they not only recognized the **Roman Empire** as the **restraining Power** here adverted to by St. Paul, but also discerned the **cause** why he practised this wise and charitable reserve in writing about it in this passage.

Thus *S. Jerome* says (qu. xi. ad Algasiam), "If St. Paul had written openly and boldly 'that the Man of Sin would not come' until the **Roman Empire** was destroyed, a just cause of persecution would then appear to have been afforded against the Church in her infancy."

S. Chrysostom also here says, "If St. Paul had said that the **Roman Empire** will soon be dissolved, the heathen would have destroyed him as a rebel and all the faithful with him, as persons who took up arms against the State. "But (adds Chrysostom in his Exposition) St. Paul **means** the Roman Empire. And when that shall have been taken away, then the Man of Sin will come. For as the power of Babylon was dissolved by the Persian Dynasty, and the Persian was supplanted by the Greek, and the Greek by the Roman, so the Roman will be dissolved by Antichrist, and Antichrist by Christ."

It is well said also by another ancient Father, "The Apostle writes obscurely, lest some of the Romans should read this Epistle, and excite a persecution against him and the other Christians on the part of those **Romans** who imagined that they would **reign for ever**." *Remigius*, Bibl. Patr. Max. viii. p. 1018.

Hence, we may observe in passing, it is clear that the **Ancient Fathers** did **not** suppose that the **Gnostic heresies**, or any other form of **Heresy**, or of **Infidelity**,

had fulfilled St. Paul's prophecy concerning the **Man of Sin**, as some have imagined in recent times.

i.13 Let us remember also that this Epistle, being published to the world, and designed to be generally read, would come into the hands of the **Jews**, St. Paul's bitter enemies, who were ever on the watch to excite the **Romans** against the Apostle and the Gospel (see above, on 1 Thess. ii. 14 - 17). They would not have failed to avail themselves of any declaration on the part of the Apostle, that the Roman Empire would be destroyed, as an occasion for exciting the rage of the Roman Empire against St. Paul and the Gospel.

i.14 Here another important confirmation suggests itself of the conclusion above stated, viz. that the **Roman Empire** was the **restraining power** alluded to here by St. Paul.

St. Paul here recalls to the recollection of his Thessalonian readers what he had **said** to them on this subject when he was at Thessalonica. What he had **said** on such a solemn subject as this would doubtless make a deep impression there. It could hardly fail to be **repeated** from mouth to mouth; and would in all likelihood be rehearsed to some who were unfriendly to him.

Now, if we turn to the narrative of St. Paul's visit and preaching at **Thessalonica** (to which he here refers), our attention is drawn to an incident mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. If we consider the character of St. Luke's narrative, and recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in his writing, we shall feel assured that this incident is very significant.

This incident is as follows:

The **Jews** (of **Thessalonica**) being moved with envy (because the Gospel was preached to the **Gentiles** by St. Paul with success), and having taken to themselves some lewd persons of those who frequented the market, and made a tumult, set the city in an uproar, and having assaulted the house of Jason, sought to bring them forth (i.e. **Paul** and **Silas**) to the people... and cried, These all do things **contrary** to the decrees of **Cæsar**, saying that there is another **King, Jesus**. (Acts xvii. 5 - 7.)

This incident fits in very harmoniously with what St. Paul says here concerning his own Teaching at Thessalonica, as now expounded.

He had said to the Thessalonians that **Jesus** would **not** come again and that His kingdom would **not** be established **before** the revelation of the Lawless One, who would appear in the world when the **power** which **restrained** his manifestation had been removed. That restraining power was the power of **Rome**.

What, therefore, was more likely than that these words of his, spoken at Thessalonica, should have been caught up by some, and made the occasion of an imputation against him on the part of the **Jews**, stirring up the People and the Magistrates against him on the plea that he opposed the authority of **Cæsar**, and taught that there was **another King**, who would supplant the Roman Empire, namely, **Jesus**?

This public accusation of St. Paul would help to keep alive his teaching on this subject in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians.

i.15 On the whole it may be concluded (with our most learned writers, such as *Bishop Andrewes*, c. Bellarmin, c. 9, p. 223) that the **restraining Power** of which St. Paul speaks in this Prophecy, was the IMPERIAL POWER of HEATHEN ROME.

We may now proceed to the next point;

ii. Has this **restraining Power** been now **removed** and taken out of the way?

To this question there can be but one reply, viz. **in the affirmative;**

All territories which were possessed by the Emperors of Rome, in St. Paul's age, have long since been parted among other Rulers; there is now no "Roman Empire" marked in any Map of the World, there is no Army under the command of any Roman Cæsar, there is no Coinage which bears his name.

We may therefore pass on to the next Question,

iii. Who is the "**Man of sin**," or "**the Lawless One**," whom the Apostle foretells as to be **revealed** on the **removal** of the **restraining Power**? Mark μόνον, v. 7, τότε, v. 8.

iii.1 Since, on the **removal** of the **restraining Power**, the Man of Sin was to be revealed (see vv. 6, 7, 8), and since that restraining Power **has** long since been removed, it follows that the Man of Sin **has been** long ago revealed to the world.

iii.2 Since, also, the Man of Sin is described here by St. Paul as **continuing** in the world **from the time of the removal** of the restraining Power even to the **Second Advent** of Christ (v. 8), therefore the Power here personified in the "Man of Sin" must be one that has continued in the world **for many centuries**, and continues to **the present time**.

iii.3 Also, since it has this long continuance assigned to it in the prophecy,- a continuance very far exceeding the life of any **one individual**, therefore the "Man of Sin" **cannot be a single person**.

iii.4 The restraining Power (τὸ κατέχον, in the neuter gender, v. 6) is also called by the Apostle "**he** who restraineth" (ὁ κατέχων, in the masculine gender, v. 7), because the **restraining Power** was swayed by a series of **single persons**, viz. the **Roman Emperors**, following one another in succession.

So, in like manner, the "Man of Sin " has a **corporate** existence continued by means of a long succession of Persons bearing the name and exercising the power belonging to his place. If this were not so, he could not remain, as the Apostle predicts he will, to the Second Advent of Christ. I do not mean that a single person,- the infidel Antichrist predicted by St. John,- will not arise: but that he is not described here.

iii.5 Here we may reply to an objection. Many of the Ancient **Fathers** of the Church **expected** that the Man of Sin would be a **single person**; and therefore it is alleged that he **is** so.

Doubtless they so thought. And we should probably

have done the same if we had lived in their age. **They** wrote while the Roman Empire was yet standing. And the Fathers were not Prophets, and could not tell how long the Roman Empire might stand. It might stand (for what they knew) till almost the time of Christ's Second Advent, which many of them supposed to be near at hand.

They therefore might well suppose that the revelation of the Man of Sin, who they knew was to be revealed on the removal of the **Roman Empire**, might soon be followed by the **Second Advent** of Christ. Therefore they might well imagine that he would be only a **single person**.

But **we** have seen the removal of the Roman Empire. **We** know that it has been removed for many centuries. And we know that Christ is not yet come.

We do not pretend to be wiser than the ancient Fathers. But **time** is the great Interpreter of Prophecy. And it has made clear to **us** what could not be clear to **them**; namely, that the Man of Sin, who, as the Holy Spirit foretold by St. Paul, would be **revealed** after the removal of the Roman Empire, and **continue** to the Second Advent, cannot from the nature of the case be a **single person**. And we are persuaded that the ancient Fathers, who knew and taught that the restraining Power was the **Power of Heathen Rome**, would, if they were alive now, be of our mind.

iii.6 The **time** at which the Man of Sin is to be revealed is marked by St. Paul. He was to be revealed to the world **when the restraining power** had been **removed**.

St. Paul also marks the **place** at which he is to be revealed.

He says that when the restraining Power has been removed **out of the way** (ἐκ μέσου, v. 7) the Man of Sin will be revealed. The power that hindered is called τὸ κατέχον, ὁ κατέχων, **holding, keeping down**, by his occupation of a particular place.

This verb is not followed in either verse by an accusative; and therefore does not denote a direct action on the Man of Sin by which he is kept down, but it indicates that the existence of the restraining Power is an impediment to the revelation of the Man of Sin; as the possession of a seat by any one person is an hindrance to its occupation by any other.

And since the **removal** of the restraining power is specified as a pre-requisite for the **revelation** of the Man of Sin, it is intimated that the **place** occupied by the restraining power, will, on the removal of that power, be occupied by the Man of Sin.

iii.7 We are therefore led to believe that the Man of Sin was revealed **when** the restraining power had been "removed out of the way," and that it came up **in the place from which** the restraining power was removed.

iii.8 Therefore the following questions now arise here:

(1) Did any great, domineering power **appear** in the world after the dissolution of the **Roman Empire**?

(2) Did any such power come up **in its place**?

(3) Has it continued from that time to this?

(4) Has it been continued by a succession of persons?

We may answer in the words of an eminent Roman

Catholic historian and statesman, the *Duc de Broglie*, who says in his *Histoire de l'Eglise* (vi. 424. 456), The **Popes** mounted the throne **voided** by the **Cæsars**, "l'évêque de Rome monta au trône d'où tombaient les empereurs;" "et prend peu à peu la place que laisse vacante la désertion du successeur d'Auguste."

May I also here refer to my notes on Revelation xiii. 3, xvii. 8?

iii.9 But is not this prophecy (it is said) of too dark a character to be applied to a **Christian Church**?

St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost, To the eye of the Holy Spirit evils may appear far more evil than they appear to us; especially may corruptions of doctrine and worship in a Christian Church have a far more heinous and deadly aspect in His eyes than in ours. He sees all their enormities at one view in their proper light, and in all their bearings and ultimate results - even for Eternity.

He not only saw at one glance what the Papacy **is**, and **has been** for many centuries, but what it **may yet become** before it is **destroyed** by the **Second Advent** of Christ.

If, therefore, the conclusions above stated are true, then the application of this prophecy to the Papacy cannot be set aside by any subjective notions on **our part** as to the moral or religious guilt of the Church of Rome.

On the contrary, the strength of the denunciatory language of the Holy Spirit on this subject must be regarded as a guide to regulate **our** judgment upon the Papacy, and as designed by the Holy Spirit to convey a warning proportionate in solemnity and awfulness to the strength of the language employed by Him to describe it.

But further:

iv. As to the correspondence between this Prophecy and the Papacy, be it observed,-

iv.1 That the first word used to describe what is here pre-announced, is ἡ ἀποστασία (v. 3), **the falling away** ('discessio' or **declension** from the primitive standard of Christian **faith**). Cp. 1 Tim. iv. 1, where the cognate verb is used with the word **faith**.

This word indicates a previous profession **of the Truth**. For none can **fall away** from ground on which he did not once **stand**. It is therefore characteristic of a **corrupt Church**.

iv.2 The word ἀφίσταμαι is therefore frequently applied to the **ancient Church** of Judah and Israel sliding back from the Truth (see *Sept.* in Deut. xxxii. 15. Jer. ii. 5, 19; iii. 14. Isa. xxx. 1. Dan. ix. 9). Compare the words addressed to a **Church** in Rev. ii. 5, "**Remember** whence thou art **fallen**; and repent and do the first works."

The **declension** of the Papacy from the **primitive Faith** may well be called **the falling away**, because no one system of ἀποστασία can be compared with it in long continuity of time, and in wide extent of place.

iv.3 The person who is its principal agent is called the '**Son of perdition**' (v. 3).

These words are used as a name in one other place of the New Testament, and are applied (not to an Infidel Power, but) to a **Christian Apostle**, Judas (John xvii. 12).

They may therefore be fitly applied to a **Christian Bishop**, a successor of the Apostles, if he betrays Christ.

And if the Bishop of Rome is unfaithful to the trust he has received from Christ, they may well be applied to him.

iv.4 The **system**, described in this prophecy, is called a **Mystery**.

It is **not** therefore an **Infidel** system. **That** is open, and is **no Mystery**.

It is also something which purports to be holy. Compare the word (Mystery) as used by St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16. Eph. v. 32.

It is therefore fitly applied to the religious system of a corrupt Church.

iv.5 This Mystery is **not** a Mystery of Faith and Godliness (1 Tim. iii. 9, 16), but of **Lawlessness**.

Bp. Butler (Serm. v.) calls Popery, "as it is professed at Rome, a manifest open usurpation of all human and divine authority." I have shewn it so to be by clear evidence, in my notes on Rev. xiii. and xvii.

iv.6 But here it may be **objected**, How could this power be said to be at work in **St. Paul's age**?

To this it may be replied, that St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost can see what **man** cannot see. And he says expressly, that what he is describing was **then a Mystery**, and was **not** as yet **revealed**, but was only working **inwardly**, and would be revealed in its due season, which was not then come, and which did not arrive till some centuries afterwards.

No wonder then if **we** at this time (in looking back on the Apostolic age) should not be able to discern what was then not openly visible.

Besides, when we consider that the whole system of the Papacy, as such, is grounded on the corruptions of human nature, viz. on pride and lust of power, and on the operations of the Evil One opposing himself to God (as St. Paul declares, v. 9), and doing his work by subtlety and spiritual wickedness, who can decline to accept the assertion of the Holy Spirit Himself, that what was afterwards fully revealed was then secretly at work?

iv.7 The person in whom this system is embodied is described as ἀντικείμενος (v. 4), i.e. literally one setting himself in **opposition**, and particularly as a rival **foundation**, in the **place of** or **against** another **foundation**.

Now, be it remembered that St. Paul says, "Other foundation can no one lay, than that which already **lieth** (κεῖται, remark the word), which is **Jesus Christ**" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

May not he, therefore, the Bishop of Rome, who calls **himself the Rock of the Church**, be rightly called ὁ ἀντι-κείμενος? Cp. my note on Matt. xvi. 18.

iv.8 The same person is said "to exalt himself exceedingly against (ἐπὶ) every one who is **called** God" (v. 4).

It has been said, indeed, that this description in v. 4 is not fulfilled in the Papacy, and represents a degree of pride and blasphemy far beyond what can be imputed to it.

This objection has arisen in great measure from non-attention to the words of the original. They do **not** import that the "Man of sin" exalts himself **above** every one that

is called God, but that he exalts himself exceedingly **against** every one that is so called.

iv.9 It is further said that "he exalteth himself exceedingly against every thing that is an object of reverence (σέβασμα), so that he goes into The temple of God **and takes his seat there, showing himself that he is God**" (v. 4).

The temple of God here (ναὸς Θεοῦ) is the **Church**. See *Jerome, Chrys., Theodoret, Theophyl.*, cited by *Bp. Andrewes*, c. Bellarm. p. 226.

The action which is specified here in evidence of his exaltation against every σέβασμα, is that of his session in the ναὸς or holy place of the Church of God.

It may be also noted that in the only other place in the New Testament where the word σέβασμα occurs, it is used to introduce the mention of an **altar** (Acts xvii. 23).

Is this description applicable to the Roman Pontiff?

For an answer to this question, let us refer - not to any private sources - but to the official "Book of Sacred Ceremonies" of the Church of Rome.

This Book, sometimes called "Cereemoniale Romanum," is written in Latin, and was compiled by Marcellus, a Roman Catholic Archbishop, and is dedicated to a Pope Leo X., and was printed at Rome in 1516. Let us turn to that portion of this Volume which describes the first public appearance of the Pope at Rome, on his Election to the Pontificate.

We there read the following order of proceeding: "The Pontiff elect is conducted to the sacrarium, and divested of

his ordinary attire, and is clad in the Papal robes."

But to proceed. Turn again to the "Ceremoniale Romanum." The Pontiff elect, arrayed as has been described, is conducted to the Cathedral of Rome, the Basilica, or **church**, of St. Peter. He is led to the **altar**; he first prostrates himself before it, and prays. Thus he declares the sanctity of the altar. He kneels at it, and prays before it, as the seat of God.

What next ensues? Look at the Ceremoniale!

"The Pope rises, and, wearing his mitre, is lifted up by the Cardinals, and is placed by them **upon the altar** - to **sit there**. One of the Bishops kneels, and begins the 'Te Deum.' In the mean time the Cardinals **kiss the feet** and hands and face of the Pope."

Such is the first appearance of the Pope in the face of the Church.

This ceremony has been observed for many centuries; and it is commonly called by Roman writers **the "Adoration."** It is represented on a Coin, struck in the Papal mint with the legend, "Quem creant, **adorant**," - "Whom they **create** (Pope), they **adore**."

The following language was addressed by a Roman Cardinal, Cardinal Colonna, on his knees to Pope Innocent X. Sept. 15, 1644, and may serve as a specimen of the feelings with which **the Adoration** is performed:-

"Most Holy and Blessed Father, Head of the Church, **Ruler of the World**, to whom the keys of the Kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the **Angels in heaven revere**, and whom the gates of hell fear, and whom **all the**

World adores, we specially venerate, worship, and **adore thee**, and commit ourselves, and all that belongs to us, to thy paternal and **more than divine** disposal." (See *Banck*, *Roma Triumphans*, p. 384 Franeker. 3rd edit. 1656.)

Next observe the **place** in which this adoration is paid to the Pope. The **temple** of God. The principal temple at Rome, St. Peter's Church. Observe the attitude of the Pope when he receives it. He **sits**. Observe the **place** on which he sits. The **altar** of God.

Such is the inauguration of the Pope. He is placed by the Cardinals on God's altar. There he sits as on a Throne. The altar is his footstool; and the Cardinals kneel before him, and kiss the feet which tread upon the altar of the Most High.

The Apostle St. Paul predicted that the fall of the Roman Empire will be succeeded by the rise of a power, **exalting itself exceedingly against all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God** - or, is conveyed to the **sanctuary** of God, and there placed to sit - **showing himself that he is God**. Has not this been fulfilled?

Nor is this all. After the adoration of the Pope sitting on the altar in the church, another ceremony takes place.

He is conveyed to the balcony over the portico of St. Peter's church, and is there crowned with the tiara, or triple crown, in the following terms: "Receive thou the tiara, adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art the father of Kings and Princes, the **Ruler of the World**, the Vicar on earth of Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever. **Amen**."

iv.10 As to the **signs and lying wonders** (or rather as it is literally, **wonders of a lie**, wonders in **support of a lie**,) in the prophecy of St. Paul, v. 9, is this applicable to Rome?

There can be no doubt that Rome affirms that miracles are wrought in her communion. Indeed, Cardinal Bellarmine (de Ecclesiâ, cap. xiv.) makes the "glory of miracles" to be a "note of the Church." Rome never canonizes anyone whom she does not believe and assert to have wrought miracles. At the present day she affirms that miracles, wonderful cures, and other marvels, are wrought at her consecrated places, the resorts of her pilgrims, such as Lourdes and La Salette.

It would be a bold thing to affirm that there is no foundation at all for these assertions.

On the contrary, it is quite certain, from the plain testimonies of Holy Writ, that wonders will be wrought, especially in the latter days. But, as our Lord warns us, they will **not** be wrought to **confirm the truth** (see Luke xvi. 31) where the Gospel is preached and the Church is settled, but to **try the faith of Christians**, and to prove them, whether they will cleave to the truth, plainly set forth in the Holy Scriptures, or whether they will reject that truth, and will accept a lie in its place; in fact, whether they will hold fast the scriptural and catholic faith "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) or whether they will accept anti-scriptural and anti-catholic dogmas, such as are now promulgated by the Church of Rome, and are imposed by her as terms of communion with herself, and as necessary to everlasting salvation.

I have said more on this subject in my notes on Matt.

xxiv. 11, 24, and on the remarkable declaration in Deuteronomy xiii. 1, 2.

For my own part, I do not venture to deny that some miracles are wrought in the Church of Rome. I believe that God allows this to be done for wise purposes which He has explained to us, as He allowed miracles to be wrought by the magicians of Egypt (Exod. vii. 11; viii. 7, 8), namely, to try the faith of His servants and punish those who "love a lie," and whose "delusions He chooses" as instruments of their chastisement (see also Isaiah lxvi. 4); and I believe that they will be more and more visible in the last days, to try the faith of the Church, and, if it were possible, to "deceive the very elect" (Matth. xxiv. 24); but He will set a limit to them, as He did to the miracles of the sorcerers of Egypt, so that they shall proceed no further (2 Tim. iii. 9).

I am, therefore, quite ready to admit the claim of Rome to miracles, which (if she teaches false doctrine, as she does) are lying wonders, **or wonders of a lie**, and are another proof that the Roman Papacy is here predicted by St. Paul.

iv.11 In support of the statements made here and in my notes on the Apocalypse (Rev. xiii. xvii.), and of the conclusion now deduced from them, it may be well to remember that this conclusion is one which is sanctioned by the names of some of the holiest, wisest, most charitable, and judicious persons that have expounded the Word of Inspiration, particularly *Bp. Jewel*, *Richard Hooker*, *Bp. Andrewes*, and *Bp. Sanderson*, and the framers of the **Authorized English Version** of the Holy Bible; see their Dedication prefixed to the English Bible,

where they speak of the "Man of Sin;" and *Bp. Jewel's Works*, Portion ii. pp. 891 - 923, ed. Camb. 1847; *Hooker*, Sermon on Jude 17, pp. 841, 843; *Bp. Andrewes*, c. Bellarmin. c. ix. and x. p. 220; *Bp. Sanderson*, i. p. 338, iii. pp. 13, 146, 161, 283; and both Houses of our Convocation, in 1606 (see *Cardwell*, Synodalia i. 379), which were as follows:- " If any man shall affirm that the intolerable pride of the Bishop of Rome, for the time still being, through the advancement of himself by many sleights, stratagems, and false miracles, over the Catholic Church, the **Temple of God, as if he were God Himself**, doth not argue him plainly to be the **Man of Sin**, mentioned by the Apostle, he doth greatly err."

iv.12 It has been alleged by a learned writer in a work lately published (*Dr. Farrar*, Life of St. Paul, i. 616, 617) that "no man of competent education" can accept that interpretation, and that if those wise and holy men (Jewell, Hooker, Andrewes, Sanderson, and others, the members of the Convocation in 1606, and the Translators of the Bible in 1611) who accepted it, were alive now, they would change their minds in this matter, and would modify their opinion "in accordance with the advance now made in the interpretation of Holy Scripture;" which advance, however, it is remarkable, does not appear to have afforded any satisfactory explanation of the passage to Dr. Farrar, who says that as to "its precise detail he is entirely ignorant of what the Apostle meant;" and he also affirms (vol. ii. p. 586) that "St. Paul thought that ere long the Roman Empire, so far, at any rate, as it was represented by the reigning Emperor, would be swept away; that thereupon the existing tendencies of iniquity and apostacy would be concentrated in the person of one terrible

opponent; and that the destruction of this opponent would be caused by the personal Advent of the Lord."

But, if this were so, then St. Paul's prophecy has failed.

This theory, therefore, seems to be irreconcilable with a belief in the inspiration of St. Paul, writing an Epistle for the teaching of the Church; and indeed it appears to tax St. Paul with a grave error when professing to declare the truth.

With due deference to Dr. Farrar, I venture to think that those wise, holy, and learned men,- Jewel, Hooker, Andrewes, Sanderson and others would rather have been confirmed in the interpretation which they then gave of St. Paul's words in the present prophecy, because since their time the Papacy has gone on from bad to worse, and has more clearly identified itself with the power described by the Apostle.

To cite two recent proofs of this.

Sitting in the Temple of God - St. Peter's Church, at Rome - the Roman Pontiff promulgated, on the 8th December, 1854, the novel dogma - the un-catholic and anti-catholic, the unscriptural and anti-scriptural heresy - that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without sin; and thus he impeached the unique sinlessness of her Divine Son, and he presumed to affirm that no man can be saved, except he believes this dogma promulgated by himself. And now the Pope has just been celebrating (on Dec. 8, 1879) the first jubilee of the promulgation of this new dogma; although in his Encyclic of August 4, 1879, he ordered all men to take their theology from S. Thomas Aquinas, who (in his *Summa Theol. Pars. iii. c. 27*)

rejected that dogma.

Sitting in the Temple of God, on the 18th July, 1870, the Roman Pontiff promulgated another novel dogma, and another anti-scriptural, and anti-catholic heresy, namely, that he himself is Infallible in matters both of faith and morals, and thus he claimed for himself the incommunicable attribute of Almighty God, and by doing so he contradicted what the Most High has revealed of Himself, that He alone cannot err, and thus also in the Temple of God, he "exalted himself exceedingly against what is called God, or is worshipped."

Thus the Roman Pontiff incurred the anathema twice pronounced (Gal. i. 8, 9) by St. Paul, who thus speaks: "If any man, or even an Angel from heaven, **preach anything** (this is the literal meaning of the Apostle's words) **beside** what we have preached to you, and ye have received, let him be accursed."

iv.13 It is surprising to see the objection of the same learned writer, Dr. Farrar, that because "many of the Popes have been good and noble and holy men" (p. 617), therefore the Papacy could not have been described in such terms as are used by St. Paul.

The question is not, what some of the Popes may have been personally as individuals, but what the principles and tendencies of the Papacy are as a system. Holy men, if they do unholy things, are, **so far**, evil. Apostolic men, if they do what is contrary to Christ's will, incur His malediction. Even the chief of the Apostles, St. Peter, who had just been blessed by Christ for confessing Him, was soon afterwards thus addressed by Christ, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," when he dissuaded Him from suffering

(Matt. xvi. 16 - 23), Another of the Apostles, who preached and baptized in Christ's name, was called by Him "a devil" and "the son of perdition" (John vi. 70, xvii. 12). Jerusalem, the Holy City, which had many holy men in it, is called Sodom by Isaiah (Isaiah i. 10). There were good men,- in some sense, - among the Jews of Smyrna and Thyatira; but yet, not owning Christ, they are called "a Synagogue of Satan" by Him (Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9).

Doubtless there have been many good and holy men in Papal Rome; but, if the Roman Papacy, which has received manifold Apostolic gifts from Christ, is untrue to Christ, and sets itself up against Him and His Holy Word, and puts itself in His place, and claims divine attributes for itself, then, as Peter himself was called Satan, and as another of the twelve became "a son of perdition," and as Jerusalem by its sins became Sodom, so the Roman Pontiff, in his official and corporate character, being the representative and organ of the Papal system, in its unscriptural and un-catholic, in its anti-scriptural and anti-catholic acts and dogmas, and being identified with those acts and dogmas, is in the eye of the Holy Spirit the Lawless one, described by St. Paul; and Rome is the more guilty, in proportion to the spiritual gifts it has received from God.

Our own greatest divines, such as Richard Hooker, who used such expressions as the following concerning the teaching of the Church of Rome, "this is the mystery of the Man of Sin" (Hooker, Sermon ii. 6), and who applied to her the words of St. John (Rev. xviii. 4), "Come out of Babylon, My people," (Ibid. c. 10,) did not hesitate to say, that, inasmuch as she retained some divine gifts and

graces, she was still a Church, nor did they deny that there had been some holy men, even holy Priests, Cardinals, and Popes in her (see *ibid.* c. 12, c. 17, c. 27, and especially c. 35), who might be saved by faith in the merits of Christ. [See Dean Jackson's learned discourse ('On the Creed Book,' xii. chap. xviii.), quoted in my note on Rev. xiii. 3, p. 228, and Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* iii. chap. i. 8 - 13.]

As those learned men have anticipated Dr. Farrar's objection, I need not say more on that point.

iv.14 But I am thankful to find that Dr. Farrar concurs in the opinion that the power which letted or restrained the rise of the Lawless One was the Heathen Empire of Rome. And if this be the case, the "Lawless One" represents a Power which appeared when that Empire was dissolved, and it arose in its place. What that Power is, we have seen.

iv.15 It is however alleged by Dr. Farrar to be incredible that St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, should have delivered a prophecy concerning the Papacy which did not attain any considerable influence in the Church till some centuries after the date of his Epistle to them.

If we imagined that St. Paul's Epistles were designed merely for those to whom they were in the first instance addressed, and were not written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for the instruction, edification, and warning of the Church Universal in every age and clime, we might concur in this allegation - but not otherwise. The Epistle to the Thessalonians is a part of Canonical Scripture, and it affords a salutary warning, especially in the second chapter, to us and to all Christians.

Dr. Farrar is quite right in stating that some celebrated men have given different interpretations of the prophecy of St. Paul. And it would be presumptuous to disparage their character for ability and erudition. After respectful consideration, which they justly demand, I am of opinion that the expositions of some of the most eminent among them - such as Grotius and Hammond - have been satisfactorily refuted by a learned and pious theologian, Dr. Henry More in his *Synopsis Prophetica* (ii. 19, 20, 21), and by Bp. Newton, *On the Prophecies*, (chap. xxii) and others who agree in the interpretation I have adopted.

All, however, that I ask for is that the question should not be dismissed with words of contemptuous vituperation; but be carefully examined with the calmness and candour that it deserves. As the learned author of the "Life of St. Paul," Dr. Farrar, has said that "no sane man of competent education in the present age, can accept the above Exposition, which must "henceforth (he says) be consigned to the limbo of exploded expositions," perhaps it may be allowable to quote the words of one who wrote in the present century, and who was not supposed to be a despicable person as to sanity or competency, but was highly esteemed by his ablest contemporaries in the University of Oxford, for the clearness and vigour of his understanding as an acute logician, as well as for his intellectual attainments as a learned theologian, and whose Discourses on Prophecy justly deserve the celebrity they have attained - the late Rev. John Davison, Fellow of Oriel, and Canon of Worcester.

In p. 324 of the sixth edition of those Discourses, printed at Oxford in 1856, are the following words:-

The Hierarchy of Rome has in its day fulfilled every iota of St. Paul's prophetic description. The claims of infallibility which the Roman See has arrogated to itself; the demand of an implicit faith in its doctrines, those doctrines many of them the most contradictory to Christianity; the tyranny of its tribunals over the consciences of men; the blasphemous titles of address and impious homage which its Pontiff has heretofore extorted or accepted; the dominion over other Churches which it has assumed; assumed without justice, and exercised without reason or mercy; perfectly agree with the pride of that rival enemy of God seated 'in God's temple' figured out by the Apostle. For these inordinate pretensions are all of them, in the strictest sense, invasions of the honour and supreme rights of God, due to Him alone, or to the authority of His inspired word. Romish Infallibility disputing precedence with His authentic Truth; Traditions disfiguring His attributes and His worship; a servility and prostration of the conscience to man, dethroning God from His dominion over the believer's understanding; these are the usurpations of the Roman Hierarchy, concentrated in its Head, which fall nothing short of the character of 'that man of sin who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,' either God, or Jesus Christ His Son; 'so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, making a show of himself that he is God;' a character which might have defied credibility, had it not been as truly verified, as accurately foretold.

Again, the multiplied delusions of the Romish system of debased Christianity, and its machinery of pious frauds, pretended prophecies, and miracles, have corresponded but too correctly with the second member of St. Paul's prophetic delineation. For such an usurpation of tyranny, and such a change of the Christian faith, could not be supported and conducted, without the instruments of a suitable policy. These instruments were taken from the only forge which could supply them. 'They were to be after the working of Satan (who is the father of **falsehood**) with all power, and signs, and **lying wonders**, and all **deceivableness** of unrighteousness.' Nor is it easy to see what other words could more faithfully describe the practices and arts which have made the chief resources of the Papal power. Its legends, its relics, its meritorious pilgrimages, its indulgences, its dispensations, its liturgy in an unknown tongue, its images, its spurious miracles, its mediator-saints, its purgatory, and others its plausible, or its revolting, superstitions, were set up as much against the genius of the Gospel, which teaches the worship of God, in **spirit** and in **truth**, in the faith of "**one Mediator**," as against the moral honesty and godly sincerity which are the glory of the Christian ethics. And these delusions have been the work of a See and Priesthood, which, having made a kind of religion too corrupt to bear the light of Scripture, and too incredible to be examined by Reason, have, with sufficient consistency, prohibited, or discouraged, the use of the one and the other, and

obtruded the phantom of their Infallibility, in the very height of its errors and abuses, as the substitute of compensation for both.

The **external** historic limitation, which St. Paul has joined with the subject of his prophecy, is not to be omitted. '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.' An obstruction there was, hindering and retarding the revelation of the iniquity. What that obstruction was, cannot be elicited from the words of St. Paul, who has studiously left it under a dark and involved allusion understood by those to whom he writes. The explanation of it given by the most learned of the Fathers, makes it to be the Civil Roman State; upon the ruins of which rose the usurpation of Papal power. The explanation is congruous to the text, and true in the history. And the judgment of these learned Fathers in this point is of the greater weight, as it was **prior** to the event, and must have been founded either upon the probable sense of the text, or upon a received tradition of that knowledge of its sense, which the Thessalonians are said to have had.

Such are the words of Mr. Davison. Let me commend them to Dr. Farrar's consideration.

In support of the opinion that idolatrous worship is now claimed by the Papacy, according to the prediction of St. Paul, I will not refer any further to Protestant writers, but will content myself with quoting the words of a celebrated

Roman Catholic Archbishop, of a distinguished Roman Catholic Layman, and of a learned Roman Catholic Priest.

The late Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Sibour, who died nobly at Paris on Jan. 3rd, 1857, wrote thus to Count Montalembert on Sep. 10th, 1853: "The new Ultramontane School" (the only School which finds favour with the Papacy) "is leading us to a **double idolatry; idolatry** of the temporal power of the Papacy, and **idolatry** of the Spiritual. The Ultramontane Bishops have driven everything to extremes, and have outraged all liberties both of the State and Church."

M. de Montalembert in a letter written from his deathbed, at Paris, February 28th, 1870, said that these favoured votaries of the Papacy trample under foot all our liberties to sacrifice truth, justice, reason, and history, to the **idol they have set up in the Vatican**" - "pour venir ensuite immoler la verité et la justice, la raison et l'histoire, a l'**idole** qu'ils se sont erigée au Vatican."

A Roman Catholic Priest, N. l'Abbé Laurens, who was suspended from the exercise of his sacred ministry by the Archbishop of Albi, on the 25th day of July in the year 1879, for denying the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, thus writes to his Archbishop: "There is no longer to be a Church among us, such as God has constituted; no, there is to be nothing but the Pope, he is to be the Church; he is a vice-God; nay, he is something more than God on earth; for God is become to us an abstract idea, and we see the Pope; it is he who speaks to us, and we must think, speak, and act as he bids us. Never has the world seen such an **idolatry** as this; and now we must accept it." (Le Cas d'un Curé Gallican, par M. l'Abbé Laurens. Paris, 1879.)

Such is our interpretation of St. Paul's prophecy.

It is indeed a sorrowful thing to contemplate the defections of a Church once so glorious as that of Rome. We mourn over them. But the consideration of those defections, if rightly viewed, may minister to our growth. in faith and love.

It may strengthen our faith, because this prophecy (as we have now seen) has been already, in part, fulfilled; and its fulfilment is one of the proofs of the truth of Christianity. No one whose eyes were not illumined by light from heaven could have foreseen what St. Paul has predicted in this chapter. And in the accomplishment of his prediction we see evidence that the Apostle was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and that the doctrines preached by him are not the word of man, but of God.

Therefore let us be sure that the remaining portion of this prophecy will one day be fulfilled also. Sooner or later **the Lord will consume that wicked one with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy him with the brightness of His Coming.**

And, in this respect, the consideration of this prediction may quicken our love.

It may stimulate us to assist our fellow Christians in foreign lands to free themselves from the errors, corruptions and usurpations of Rome, and to embrace and hold fast the true catholic Faith.

We have also to deplore that some of our friends and brethren are in danger of falling away to Rome: and it is our duty to try to save them. To them let the warning be addressed which is dictated by the words of St. Paul, It is

much needed; and it may by God's help arrest the steps of some who are now going onward in a dangerous road to destruction.

Some among us speak of Romanism as a safe religion for English men or women who fall away to it. Some deem it no sin to favour and encourage it,- instead of upholding and promoting pure Religion; some would represent it as a matter of indifference whether men belong to the Church of England or to the Church of Rome. Some are practising on the credulity of the unwary, and are entangling the affections of young men and young women, and are entrapping them by specious arguments and fascinating allurements, drawing them away from the Church of England to the Romish Communion.

In this solemn question we have now appealed, not to uninspired men, but to St. Paul; we have inquired of the Holy Ghost; we have heard the verdict of God.

Thence we may conclude as follows:-

If the **Mystery of iniquity** is the same thing as the **Mystery of godliness**; if the Man of Sin is a man of God; if the Son of Perdition is an heir of Salvation; if **deceivableness of unrighteousness** is the same thing as godly sincerity; if **strong delusion** is the same thing as sound persuasion; if to **believe the Lie** is the same thing as to hold the Truth; if to be in peril of condemnation is the same thing as to be saved; if to be consumed with the **spirit of Christ's mouth** is the same thing as to hear from Christ's lips the joyful words, **Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you**; then Romanism is a safe religion; then it is not sinful to encourage it; then it is a matter of little moment whether

you belong to the Church of England or fall away to the Church of Rome - but not otherwise.

POSTSCRIPT TO SECOND EDITION

I HAVE to acknowledge some communications from learned correspondents, who, while concurring in the general conclusions of the foregoing Essay, have demurred to some special statements in it;

1. On the ground that the features of St. Paul's Prophecy appear to be somewhat too dark to be recognized in the present aspect of the Papacy.

2. That the Apostle appears to point to the revelation of a godless power concentrated in some **personal** Enemy of God and of the Church.

On these points let me observe-

(1) That there is clearly a **terminus a quo**, from which the Prophecy of St. Paul **began** to be in course of fulfilment. That terminus was the **removal** of the **Roman Empire**, which has long ago ceased to exist.

(2) That there is also a **terminus ad quem**, to which the fulfilment of the Prophecy tends, and at which it will be completely accomplished, That terminus is the Second Advent of Christ. (verse 8)

Between these two **termini** the Prophecy moves.

(3) As has been long since well remarked by Lord Bacon, many prophecies of Holy Scripture have a course of **successive fulfilment**; what he calls a "germinant accomplishment" in the series of many centuries.

So it is with this Prophecy of St. Paul.

Consequently, although I firmly believe this Prophecy to have long since **begun** to be fulfilled, and to be now in **course of fulfilment**, in the Roman Papacy, I do not suppose that it has been **exhausted** by the Papacy, as it now is. If I might venture to express an opinion as to the future, which I do with all reverence, I am inclined to believe that the Roman Papacy will develop itself into something worse. The impulse and encouragement which, by its monstrous dogmas, usurpations, and superstitions (revolting to the intellect of Europe), it has given, and is giving, to **Infidelity**, leads to the expectation that it will probably give rise to the appearance of some personal Enemy of God, who will exhibit in all their terrible fullness the features portrayed by St. Paul; and who will be destroyed by the Second Coming of Christ.

BACK COVER, THIRD EDITION, 1985

This new edition of Bishop Wordsworth's powerful essay is timely, as many of the leaders of the Church of England are bending their energies to make the pope once more head of the church. Before that day comes and the Church of England is irrevocably committed to the acceptance of the papacy, its clergy and people have the opportunity to read what one of its ablest bishops wrote about the subject, and not just that bishop, but, as he himself makes clear, what is the consensus of some of the best and most godly men of the Church of England.

Wordsworth advances not his own views but those of Scripture. He shows how but one interpretation is possible, an interpretation which sets forth clearly the true nature of the papacy and gives an awful warning to the church to avoid entanglement with it, and to hold fast the catholic faith.

Wordsworth concludes: "If the **Mystery of iniquity** is the same thing as the **Mystery of godliness**; if the Man of Sin is a man of God; if the Son of Perdition is an heir of Salvation; if **deceivableness of unrighteousness** is the same thing as godly sincerity; if **strong delusion** is the same thing as sound persuasion; ... then Romanism is a safe religion; then it is not sinful to encourage it; then it is a matter of little moment whether you belong to the Church of England or fall away to the Church of Rome - **but not otherwise.**"

No one who reads this booklet in a spirit of willing submission to the authority of Scripture can fail to see that the only true course for the Church of England to follow is

to reject the proposals now being made to bring back the papacy.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807 - 1885) was the youngest son of Christopher Wordsworth, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and nephew of William Wordsworth, the poet. He was a brilliant scholar, being Senior Classic at Cambridge in 1830; 'his list of college and university prizes and honours was almost unique' (*D.N.B.*). He was elected a Fellow of Trinity College in 1830. Wordsworth was Headmaster of Harrow School from 1836 to 1844; he became Bishop of Lincoln in 1869, and held that office till his death.

Wordsworth was a conservative High Churchman, with a great knowledge of the early Church Fathers; among his many writings, the best known are perhaps his commentary on the whole Bible (1856 - 1870), his edition of the Greek New Testament, and his hymns.

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