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Pittsburgh.



# LECTURES

ON THE



# REVELATION.

BY

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PITTSBURGH, PA.

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## PREFACE.

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**THE** following lectures were delivered on Sabbath mornings in the First United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. They were begun October 5th, 1873, and finished March 19th, 1876. Many who listened to them have repeatedly requested their publication, and in compliance with this request, they now appear in print.

They do not profess to contain anything new or startling. The author made use of all the authorities within his reach, and endeavored to express in as few and plain words as possible, the result of his studies. Among the commentaries, to which he feels especially indebted, are the following: *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, by Rev. E. B. Elliott, A. M.; *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, by Rev. Albert Barnes; *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, by William Kelly; *the Apocalypse, Translated and Expounded*, by James Glasgow, D. D.; *Lectures on the Revelation of St. John*, by C. J. Vaughan, D. D.; *Apocalyptical Sketches*, by John Cumming, D. D.; *Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, by J. A. Seiss, D. D.; *the Revelation of John, with Notes*, by Rev. Henry Cowles, D. D.; *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, by Rev. C. M. Butler, D. D.

It is well known that the expositors of the Revelation differ widely in their views, but they may be arranged in three divisions. 1. **Historical or Continuous Expositors**, in whose opinion the Revelation is a progressive history of the fortunes of the church from the first century to the end of time. 2. **Præterist Expositors**, who are of the opinion that the Revelation has been almost or altogether fulfilled in the time which has passed since it was written, and that it refers principally to the triumph of Christianity over Judaism and Paganism. 3. **Futurist Expositors**, who believe that the whole book, excepting perhaps the first three chapters, refers principally, if not exclusively, to events which are yet to come. In these lectures, the historical interpretation has been adopted, not because no objections can be urged against it, but because these objections are less numerous and weighty than those which are urged against the other theories.

The author's experience in the preparation of these lectures is described in the following language of Rev. Albert Barnes, quoted from the preface to his *Notes on the Revelation*: "Up to the time of commencing the exposition of this book, I had no theory in my own mind as to its meaning. I may add, that I had a prevailing belief that it could not be explained, and that all attempts to explain it must be visionary and futile. \* \* \* I read it, as I suppose most others do, from a sense of duty, yet admiring the beauty of its imagery,

the sublimity of its descriptions and its high poetic character ; and though to me wholly unintelligible in the main, finding so many detached passages that were intelligible and practical in their nature as to make it on the whole attractive and profitable, but with no definitely formed idea as to its meaning as a whole, and with a vague general feeling that all the interpretations which had been proposed were wild, fanciful and visionary. \* \* \* I found myself soon insensibly inquiring whether, in the events which succeeded the time when the book was written, there were not historical facts of which the emblems employed would be natural and proper symbols on the supposition that it was the Divine intention in disclosing these visions to refer to them, and whether, therefore, there might not be a natural and proper application of the symbols to these events. \* \* \* In this way I examined \* \* \* the whole book ; proceeding step by step in ascertaining the meaning of each word and symbol as it occurred, but with no theoretic anticipation as to what was to follow. To my own surprise I found, chiefly in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a series of events recorded such as seemed to me to correspond to a great extent with the series of symbols found in the Apocalypse. \* \* \* So remarkable have these coincidences appeared to me in the course of this exposition, that it has almost seemed as if he had designed to write a commentary on some portion of this book, and I have found it difficult to doubt that that distinguished historian was raised up by an overruling Providence to make a record of those events which would ever afterwards be regarded as an impartial and unprejudiced statement of the evidences of the fulfillment of prophecy."

The author now sends this volume forth, in the hope that it may be to many members of his congregation a memorial of the pleasant years of his pastorate, and with the prayer that it may do something towards the better understanding of this portion of the inspired word.

PITTSBURGH, PA., October 1st, 1878.

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These, then, are the elements given for the solution of this enigma. The name must be the name of a man or class of men. It must be a Greek name. The value of the letters of the name, added together, must be 666. What is the name? Many answers have been given to this question, but the one which most satisfactorily fulfills all the conditions is the Greek word "lateinos," that is, "the Latin one." *L*, represents 30; *α*, 1; *ι*, 300; *ε*, 5; *ι*, 10; *ν*, 50; *ο*, 70; *ς*, 200; and these sums, added together, make 666. And this is an appropriate name for the ecclesiastical power symbolized by the second beast. Its prayers are Latin; its canons are Latin; its breviary is Latin; its decrees are Latin; its bulls are Latin; its Scriptures are Latin; it worships in Latin; it prays in Latin; it curses in Latin; all is Latin. And while we may not speak with undue confidence, it does seem that the name of the beast or man, represented by the number 666, is "the Latin one,"

As there is in every point such a resemblance between the second beast and the Papal clergy, we are brought to the conclusion that the second beast was designed by the Spirit of revelation to be a symbol of the Papal clergy.

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## LECTURE XXXVIII.

---

### THE DURATION OF THE PAPAL POWER.

Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.—*REV.* 13 : 5.

WHAT is the meaning of the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, the forty-two months, the three years and a half, which are several times brought to our notice in the visions we have been considering? The passages in which this period of time is referred to, are as follows: 11 : 2, 3; 12 : 6, 14; 13 : 5. A like period is referred to in Daniel 7 : 25; 12 : 7. These questions now present themselves: To what do these predictions refer? Do they refer to the same thing, or to different things? If they refer to the same thing, what period of time is here described? When does this period begin, and when does it end? These are the questions to which your attention is invited in the present lecture.

I. TO WHAT DO THESE PREDICTIONS REFER? Do they refer to the same thing, or to different things? In order to answer these questions, we must take up one by one the several passages which have just been cited, and reach a clear understanding of their meaning. And first we turn to Revelation 13 : 5. "Power was given unto him to continue forty and



two months." The reference here is to the beast having seven heads and ten horns which the apostle saw rising out of the sea. Taking it for granted that this beast is the divinely appointed symbol of the Papal church, and that this chapter describes the origin and history of the Papal church, then this verse tells us that the Papal church is to continue forty-two months. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be forty-two months. Let us now turn to Revelation 12:6. "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The woman is the divinely appointed symbol of the true church. According to the revelations of this chapter, the great enemy of the true church is the Papal church, symbolized as before by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. In the conflict between them, the true church was compelled to flee into the wilderness. That is, the true church was compelled to withdraw itself from prominent place in the world and to retire from notice; while the false church ruled openly in the earth. According to the verse under consideration, this retirement of the true church and this triumph of its enemy was to continue for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Therefore this passage, like the former one, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or forty-two months. Let us now turn to Revelation 12:14. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." This passage manifestly refers to the same events as the one last considered, viz., to the retirement of the true church and the triumph of the false church. According to the passage under consideration, this retirement and this triumph were to continue for a time, times, and a half. This means a year, two years, and a half a year. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Let us now turn to Revelation 11:2. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." In this vision, as in many of the visions of the Apocalypse, the holy city is a symbol of the true church. And, according to the passage before us, the true church is to be trodden under foot of the spiritual Gentiles for forty-two months. These spiritual Gentiles, the enemies of the true church, are the Papal church. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of forty-two months, or three and a half years, or one thousand two

hundred and sixty days, and during this period it would tread the true church under its feet. Let us now look at Rev. 11:3. "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." In this vision the two witnesses are a symbol of the true church. By this symbol, two things are shadowed forth. In the first place, it is shadowed forth that the true church is to be a witness, that is, to bear testimony for God. In the second place, it is shadowed forth that the members of the true church would be few in number. As, under the law of Moses, there must be at least two witnesses to establish any fact, so in the times here referred to there would be barely enough true Christians to keep alive on the earth a testimony for God. And according to the passage before us these few members of the true church were to prophesy in sackcloth, that is, to bear their testimony in sorrow. The reason of their sorrow is the persecutions of "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit." Therefore this passage, like the ones already referred to, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, or forty-two months, and during that period the church would bear testimony for God in sackcloth and sorrow. Let us now turn to Dan. 7:25. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." According to this vision, the Papal church, which is symbolized by the fourth beast, is to rule in triumph over the earth for "a time, and times, and the dividing of time." The word translated "time" describes any definite period of time. It may be a day, or a week, or a year. What definite period is described must be determined from the context and from parallel passages. And the parallel passages in the Apocalypse and in other places in the word of God convince us that the word in this connection means a year. According to this vision, then, the Papal church is to rule in triumph over the earth for a year, two years, and half a year; that is, for three years and a half. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that power to its fall, would be a period of three years and a half, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and during that period the Papal church would devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces. Let us now turn to Dan. 12:7. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." According to this vision, from the beginning to the end

of the wonders would be a time, times, and a half; that is, three and a half years. And the wonders here referred to are the triumphs of Antichrist. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and during that period the holy people would be scattered, and at its end the wonders of Antichrist would be finished.

These are all the passages in the inspired word in which this period of forty-two months is referred to. From our review of these passages, two things are evident. In the first place, all these passages refer to the same thing. They are synonymous in meaning. What one describes, the other describes. They all describe the duration of the Papal power. In the second place, these passages all teach us that the Papal power is to continue on the earth for three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

II. This brings us to the second point of inquiry, viz.: WHAT PERIOD OF TIME IS DESCRIBED BY THE THREE YEARS AND A HALF, OR THE FORTY-TWO MONTHS, OR THE ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY DAYS? If we can answer this question, we will know just how long the Papal power is to continue. Are the years, the months and the days here spoken of to be understood literally, or figuratively, or prophetically? It seems evident that they cannot be understood literally. The passages in which they occur are all symbolical. The beast with seven heads and ten horns, the woman clothed with the sun, the holy city, the two witnesses, and in fact everything described in these visions are symbols; and it would be absurd to suppose that the months alone were to be taken literally. And if they are not to be understood literally, how are they to be understood? On one occasion the prophet Ezekiel was commanded, as a sign to the house of Israel, to lie on his right side forty days. And there can be no question that this time was symbolical, for it is expressly said to him, Ez. 4 : 6, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." These words have always been regarded by those who have made prophecy a study, as expressing a general principle of prophetic interpretation. In other words, in prophetic visions and utterances, each day is regarded as the symbol of a literal year. The truth of this principle may be proven by many illustrations from the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Many predictions, having reference to the great kingdoms which have existed on the earth, have been fulfilled; and in these fulfilled predictions, it is seen that each day in vision stands for a literal year. It is not necessary to mention instances. All who have given the subject of prophecy any attention must know that it is a principle which is almost universally received by Biblical students,

that a day in prophesy is a symbol for a literal year. This principle is usually called the year-day theory. While some do not accept this theory, yet the weight of names and of argument is largely in its favor.

Taking, then, the truth of this theory for granted, the passages we have been considering teach us what is to be the duration of the Papal power. It is not to be three and a half literal years. It is to be three and a half prophetic years, that is, forty-two prophetic months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days. And if every prophetic day is a symbol of a literal year, then one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days would symbolize one thousand two hundred and sixty literal years. This is the period of time shadowed forth in the passages under consideration. From the rise of the Papal power to its fall is one thousand two hundred and sixty years. During this period the true church is to be opposed and persecuted by Antichrist, to live in the wilderness, and to bear testimony for God in sackcloth and sorrow; and during the same period the Papal church is to live, and triumph, and reign on the earth.

III. We have now a more difficult question to answer: WHEN DOES THIS PERIOD BEGIN, AND WHEN DOES IT END? If we can only determine when it begins, we will have no difficulty in determining when it ends, for the duration of the period is one thousand two hundred and sixty years. We have only to add one thousand two hundred and sixty to the year when the Papal church began, and we will have the year when that church will be destroyed. The question, then, before us is a very simple one in theory. It is only this: when did the Papal church begin? But practically this question is not an easy one to answer. The Papal system, as it has existed in the world for hundreds of years in the past, was of slow growth. It did not at once spring into existence, clothed with its full powers. As it is hard to say just when the evening twilight becomes darkness, so it is hard to say when the true church, founded by the Saviour and his apostles, was lost in the false church, symbolized by the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns.

There are several epochs in the history of the church which may be regarded as the beginning of the Papal system. Some expositors have regarded one of these epochs as the beginning; others have regarded another; therefore, some have fixed upon one year as the termination of the Papal power, and others have fixed upon another year. This is the way in which different years, as for example, 1793, 1848, 1866, and other years yet in the future, have been settled upon by various authors as the years in which the Roman Catholic church would be overthrown. The question before us is, when did the Papal system begin? **While we may not be able to answer this question beyond the possibility of a doubt, we have as much right to attempt an answer as any one, and our answer is just as likely to be correct as that of others.**

Before we attempt to answer this question, we must determine what the Papal system is. It is not mere ecclesiastical power; it is not the exercise of authority by pope, bishop, ministry or council, over the spiritual affairs of the church; it is not mere political power; it is not the exercise of authority by king, emperor, prince or congress, over the temporal affairs of the nations of the world. It is a union of the two—of ecclesiastical and temporal power; it is the exercise of authority, both in spiritual and temporal affairs. It is well known that the Papal church has claimed and exercised such authority during recent centuries. The pope, the head of that church, has claimed to be supreme in spiritual matters, and has ruled the church according to his pleasure. He has also claimed to be supreme in temporal matters; he has been a king among the kings of the earth, and he has deposed and exalted kings at his pleasure. The presbyters and bishops of the primitive church claimed authority in spiritual matters; but when did they begin to claim authority in temporal matters as well? If we can discover when the bishops of Rome began to exercise authority in both temporal and spiritual matters, we will at the same time discover when the Papal system began; for this union of ecclesiastical and temporal power is the very essence of Papacy as it is described in the visions of the inspired word. When did the exercise of this twofold authority begin? Some have answered this question by saying in the year 533. In that year the emperor Justinian openly and formally acknowledged the bishop of Rome to be the head of the church. There can be no doubt that by this decree of Justinian the Roman church was greatly strengthened; but it is evident that this acknowledgment that the bishop of Rome was the head of the church was no grant of temporal authority. There was not at this time that peculiar union of temporal and spiritual power which properly constitutes the Papacy. Others have fixed upon the year 606 as the time of the origin of the Papal system. In that year the emperor Phocas confirmed the grant of Justinian, and conferred upon Boniface III, who was then bishop of Rome, the title of universal bishop; but in this there was no grant of temporal authority—there was not that union of temporal and ecclesiastical power which properly constitutes the Papacy. Up to this time the bishop of Rome was ruler only over the spiritual affairs of the church. Others have fixed upon a later date as the time of the origin of the Papal power. In the conflict between claimants for the throne, Stephen, who was then pope or bishop of Rome, sided with Pepin, and when Pepin became emperor he gave the pope, as a reward for his services, that territory which was known as the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis. To this territory additions were made in subsequent centuries, until at last it grew into what are called the Papal States, or the States of the Church. This gift of the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis to pope Stephen was made about the year 752. The writer of the article, "Papal States," in the

*American Cyclopaedia*, says: "From this time the popes in all their proceedings assumed the style of temporal sovereigns." If this is correct, then we have discovered the beginning of the Papal system. From the time that the popes began to assume in all their proceedings the style of temporal sovereigns, there was that union of ecclesiastical and temporal authority which constitutes the Papacy. And this time, according to the facts of history which have been mentioned, was about the year 752. Other dates have been fixed upon as the time of the origin of the Papal system, but the ones mentioned are the principal ones. The year 533, when the pope was formally acknowledged as the head of the church; the year 606, when he was formally declared to be universal bishop, and the year 752, when the pope began to exercise temporal in connection with his spiritual authority. For the reasons which have been given, the last date seems to be the correct one; for then appears for the first time that union between temporal and spiritual authority which constitutes the great peculiarity of the Papal system.

If this is correct, we are prepared to answer the question, When will the Papal system come to an end? If it began in the year 752, and if it is to continue for one thousand two hundred and sixty years, then it is to be destroyed in the year 2012. We would not speak too confidently on this point—not because we have any doubts that these visions refer to the Papal church, or because we have any doubts that the forty-two months symbolize one thousand two hundred and sixty literal years, but because there is a question as to the exact time when the Papal system began. **But if it began, as seems altogether most probable, about the year 752, when the popes "assumed in all their proceedings the style of temporal sovereigns," then it will be destroyed about the year 2012.**

If these things are so, the Papal system is approaching its downfall. In less than one hundred and fifty years the time predicted in the Scriptures for the overthrow of the great anti-Christian church will come. Then the beast with seven heads and ten horns will be destroyed; the church will come forth from its retirement clothed in its robes of spotless purity; God's witnesses will lay aside their sackcloth and prophesy with joy; the holy city will no longer be trampled under foot by the spiritual Gentiles; the sinful wonders which have so long shaken the faith of the people of God will cease; the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of prophecy will come to an end. In the meantime there is work for us, and for all the followers of the Lord Jesus to do. God works out his plans through the instrumentality of his earthly church. We must stand up for the truth. We must resist every error and every enemy. The work is hard, the conflict is sore, but the victory is sure. God has spoken, and not one jot or tittle of his word will pass away till all be fulfilled. The one thousand two hundred and sixty years are approaching their termination, and we may lift up our heads, for the day of our redemption draweth nigh.

