

If God is God Give Glory to Him but If the Trinity is God Give Glory to Them!

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

The question is often asked, does not Christ speak of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem? And if so, how can it mean popery? I answer, the passage to which Christ, in the 24th of Matthew, refers, is not the 11th of Daniel, but the 9th. Vet. 26: "After three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and unto the end of the war desolations [in the plural] are determined." The people here spoken of, were unquestionably the Roman army, who did destroy Jerusalem, as both Daniel and Christ predicted. This was one of the abominations which was to desolate the sanctuary, and tread underfoot the host. But Daniel 9:27, says: "For the overspreading of abominations [the plural again] he shall make it desolate till the consummation. There was to be, according to Daniel, more than one abomination which should desolate the church. Paganism put the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the den of lions, the Jews under their heathen persecutors before Christ, and Christians under the Roman emperors, to all manner of tortures and indignities. Popery has since done the same.

"And they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." The barbarians, having been the instruments of overthrowing one system, were to be the agents of placing another. The first papal war ever waged, where the Catholic church was arrayed in arms against the state, and all others that opposed its dogmas, was terminated in favor of the Catholic church and the pope, by the interposition of Vitalian, a Gothic chieftain, as the champion of the Catholic faith; and the story is thus related by Gibbon:

"[A. D. 508-518.] In the fever of the times, the sense, or rather the sound of a syllable, was sufficient to disturb the peace of an empire. **The Trisagion, (thrice holy,) 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!' is supposed, by the Greeks, to be the identical hymn which the angels and cherubim eternally repeat before the throne of God;** and which, about the middle of the fifth century, was miraculously revealed to the church of Constantinople. The devotion of Antioch soon added, 'who was crucified for us!' and this grateful address, either **to Christ alone, or to the whole Trinity, may be justified by the rules of theology, and has been gradually adopted by the Catholics of the East and West.** But it had been imagined by a Monophysite bishop: the gift of an enemy was at first rejected as a dire and dangerous blasphemy, and the rash innovation had nearly cost the emperor Anastasius his throne and his life. The people of Constantinople were devoid of any rational principles of freedom; but they held as a lawful cause of rebellion the color of a livery in the races, or the

color of a mystery in the schools. The Trisagion, with and without this obnoxious addition, was chanted in the cathedral by two adverse choirs, and when their lungs were exhausted, they had recourse to the more solid arguments of sticks and stones: the aggressors were punished by the emperor, and defended by the patriarch; and the crown and mitre were staked on the event of this momentous quarrel. The streets were instantly crowded with innumerable swarms of men, women, and children; the legions of monks, in regular array, marched and shouted, and fought at their head. 'Christians! this is the day of martyrdom; let us not desert our spiritual father; anathema to the Manichræan tyrant! he is unworthy to reign.' Such was the Catholic cry; and the galleys of Anastasius lay upon their oars before the palace, till the patriarch had pardoned his penitent, and hushed the waves of the troubled multitude.

The triumph of Macedonius was checked by a speedy exile; but the zeal of the flock was again exasperated by the same question, 'Whether one of the Trinity had been crucified?' On this momentous occasion, the blue and green factions of Constantinople suspended their discord, and the civil and military powers were annihilated in their presence. The keys of the city and the standards of the guards were deposited in the forum of Constantine, the principal station and camp of the faithful. Day and night they were incessantly busied either in singing hymns to the honor of their God, or in pillaging and murdering the servants of their prince. The head of his favorite monk, the friend, as they styled him, of the enemy of the Holy Trinity, was borne aloft on a spear; and the fire-brands which had been darted against heretical structures, diffused the undistinguishing flames over the most orthodox buildings. The statues of the emperor were broken, and his person was concealed in a suburb, till, at the end of three days, he dared to implore the mercy of his subjects. Without his diadem, and in the posture of a suppliant, Anastasius appeared on the throne of the circus.

The Catholics, before his face, rehearsed the genuine Trisagion; they exulted in the offer, which he proclaimed by the voice of a herald, of abdicating the purple; they listened to the admonition that, since all could not reign, they should previously agree in the choice of a sovereign; and they accepted the blood of two unpopular ministers, whom their master, without hesitation, condemned to the lions. These furious but transient seditions were encouraged by the success of Vitalian, who, with an army of Huns and Bulgarians, for the most part idolaters, declared himself the champion of the Catholic faith. In this pious rebellion, he depopulated Thrace, besieged Constantinople, exterminated sixty-five thousands of his fellow-Christians, till he obtained the recall of the bishops, the satisfaction of the pope, and the establishment of the Council of Chalcedon, an orthodox treaty, reluctantly signed by the dying Anastasius, and more faithfully performed by the uncle of Justinian. And such was the event of the first of the religious wars, which have been waged in the name, and by the disciples of the God of peace."

In this war the Catholic church for the first time waged a successful war against both the civil authority of the empire and the church of the east, which had for the most part embraced the Monophysite doctrine. The extermination of 65,000 heretics was the result. Thus they, the Goths, Huns and Bulgarians, for the most part IDOLATORS, place the abomination which maketh desolate; they forgot their pagan character, and espoused the papal cause. This war, let it be kept in remembrance, according to Gibbon, originated in 508.

Verses 32, 33: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days." Having thus introduced us to the first papal war and the victory of the Catholic church over the heretics, we are presented with a brief view of the whole course of papal persecutions.

"Such as do wickedly against the covenant,"—have more regard for human traditions, and the decisions of popes and councils, than they have for God's word, — "shall he," the pope, "corrupt by flatteries." They shall be beguiled by the show and glitter of pompous ceremonies, and high-sounding titles, and drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel, and purity of Christian faith and practice. They shall do homage to the creature rather than the Creator. "But the people that do know their God,"—the true, humble followers of the Savior, who love and keep to the word of God, — "shall be strong and do exploits." They shall keep pure religion alive in the earth, during the darkest times. Such were the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and the Huguenots, who, under the dominion of the man of sin, fell "by the sword, by flame, by captivity, and spoil, many days." The number of days is named in Daniel 12:11.

Verse 34: "Now, when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries." "Shall be holpen with a little help." During the period of papal supremacy, when the man of sin is in his full strength, a partial deliverance of the church from his hand will be effected, by the reformation under Martin Luther; when the German states will espouse the protestant cause, and grant toleration and support to the reformers, protecting them from the violence of the Roman church in its efforts to exclude the dawning light as it breaks in upon the world. But when this help comes, and the protestant cause becomes popular— "Many shall cleave to them with flatteries." A multitude will come into the reformed churches from unworthy motives. Such was the case of Henry VIII., of England, who seceded from the church of Rome, because the pope refused his sanction to the divorce of queen Catherine, and Henry's marriage with Ann Boylen. After this refusal of the pope, Henry appealed to the universities of Europe on the question; the result of this appeal was favorable to his views and wishes, and he divorced his wife and married another, and immediately

renounced popery, and was himself declared by the parliament and people of England, to be the supreme head on earth of the church of England. Verse 35: "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed."

"Shall fall, to try them," etc. Although the power of the pope over the heretics was in a measure broken, yet it did not entirely cease. Some still fell, despite the protection of protestant princes and kings. Such was the state of the English church especially. The religious state of that kingdom was fluctuating; at one time being under protestant, and at another under papal jurisdiction. The bloody queen Mary, was a mortal enemy of the protestant cause; and during her reign, multitudes of Christians were victims of her unrelenting persecutions. "To the time of the end." The power of the church of Rome, although greatly restricted and held in check by the protestant governments, was not to be taken away until "the time of the end" should come. Then it must fall. "Because it is yet for a time appointed." The time of the end is not when the partial deliverance or "little help" comes; but after the reformation, and before "the time of the end," another government of a purely atheistically character was to arise.

Prophetic Expositions vol. 2 Josiah Litch