

The Development of the Man of Sin

The Antichrist Who? When? Where? “This is the deceiver.”—2 John 7.

When was he to appear?

Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. vii.) connected this dread Power with the last of the four great Empires—that is, with the Roman.

St. Paul, living under the Roman Empire, spoke of the principle of the apostasy which was to be headed by the Man of Sin, as already sown and working in his day (2 Thess. ii.); but a certain hindrance or restraint had first to be removed out of the way ere room could be made for the development of the Man of Sin. Observe—that restraint was not to be utterly destroyed, but only moved aside, taken out of the way.

This hindrance was well understood by the Christians of those days to be the Roman Imperial Power ruling at Rome, as the early Fathers testify, and the Apostle himself says to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. ii. 6), “Now ye know that which restraineth”; but it was not actually named by St. Paul in his public Epistles, for the obvious reason that to have done so would have brought fierce persecution on the Christians. It was therefore needful for him to practise reserve as to it in writing, although he had described it clearly to them in speaking. He had made it known in conversation, and from so important a seaport as Thessalonica, situated on a great Roman road, the information would soon spread to the other churches, and be with them a matter of common knowledge, as the early Christian writings testify. Nine of the Fathers may be quoted as witnesses to this effect.

It is to be noted also that the “one that restraineth” is spoken of by St. Paul as if a single individual, yet this “one” really represents a succession of about sixty-four Roman Emperors, from St. Paul’s day to a.d. 476. In like manner the “Man of Sin” represents the whole succession of Popes, not one individual only. His continuance far exceeds the lifetime of any one individual. He has a corporate existence.

(The Prophetic Outlook To-Day: Where Are We Now in Prophecy? - Essays on Second Advent Subjects by E. P. Cachemaille, London: Morgan & Scott Ltd., MCMXVIII, ebook, 57 of 154)