

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Antichrist Is Coming, April 15, 2008

Selected by Thomas W. Juodaitis

*Editor's note: Pope Benedict XVI is scheduled to come to the United States on April 15, 2008. The following is a compilation of quotes from various theologians and historians throughout history on the papacy. Instead of searching for Antichrist as a future political figure, as the Dispensationalists do, following the theories of the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591); instead of thinking that Antichrist already came and went in the first century, as the Preterists do, following the theories of the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), most Reformed theologians believed the papacy is Antichrist. Unfortunately, many Protestants have forgotten or never even learned what the Reformers and their progeny believed and taught concerning Antichrist. Instead, nominal Protestants have been flocking to "Mystery Babylon." (Their theologies, like Rome's, consist of little but "Mystery.") These quotations ought to enlighten the minds of those who have never learned what Christian theologians historically have understood about Antichrist, and they ought to shame the seminary teachers and graduates who should know better.*

*We want to thank Dr. Ronald Cooke for his excellent work Antichrist Exposed: The Reformed and Puritan View of the Antichrist, published by Truth International Ministries. All quotations have been updated with modern spellings. Dr. Cooke's large book is available in two volumes for \$12 from Truth International Ministries, 4927 East Lee Highway, Max Meadows, Virginia 24360.*

*To avoid the impression that we are ignorant "Catholic-bashers," we begin with quotations from Roman Catholic scholars.*

### Roman Catholic Scholars on the Papacy

**Acton:** "The story [of the papacy] is much more abominable than we all believed.... [The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre] is the greatest crime of modern times. It was committed on the principles professed by Rome. It was approved, sanctioned, and praised by the Papacy. The Holy See went out of its way to signify to the world, by permanent and solemn acts, how

entirely it admired a king who slaughtered his subjects treacherously because they were Protestants. To proclaim forever that because a man is a Protestant it is a pious deed to cut his throat in the night" (quoted by John Robbins, "Acton on the Papacy," *The Trinity Review* Number 89, July 1992:3).

**Acton:** "I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favourable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way, against holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it.... For many years my view of Catholic controversy has been governed by the following chain of reasoning: 1. A crime does not become a good deed by being committed for the good of a church. 2. The theorist who approves the act is no better than the culprit who commits it. 3. The divine or historian who defends the theorist incurs the same blame.... To commit murder is the mark of a moment, exceptional. To defend it is constant, and shows a more perverted conscience" (quoted by John Robbins, "Acton on the Papacy," *The Trinity Review* Number 89, July 1992:2).

**Acton:** "A man is not honest who accepts all the Papal decisions in questions of morality, for they have often been distinctly immoral; or who approves the conduct of the Popes in engrossing power, for it was stained with perfidy and falsehood; or who is ready to alter his convictions at their command, for his conscience is guided by no principle" (quoted by John Robbins, "Acton on the Papacy," *The Trinity Review* Number 89, July 1992:3).

**Acton:** "The papacy contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They [the popes] were not only wholesale assassins but

they made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation.... [The Papacy] is the fiend skulking behind the Crucifix" (quoted by John Robbins, "Acton on the Papacy," *The Trinity Review* Number 89, July 1992:4).

**Acton:** "The Inquisition was peculiarly the weapon and the work of the Popes. It stands out from all those things in which they cooperated, followed, or assented as the distinctive feature of papal Rome. It was set up, renewed, and perfected by a long series of acts emanating from the supreme authority in the Church. No other institution, no doctrine, no ceremony is so distinctly the individual creation of the Papacy, except dispensing power. It is the principal thing with which the Papacy is identified, and by which it must be judged. The principle of the Inquisition is the Pope's sovereign power over life and death. Whosoever disobeys him should be tried and tortured and burnt. If that cannot be done, formalities may be dispensed with, and the culprit may be killed like an outlaw. That is to say, the principle of the Inquisition is murderous, and a man's opinion of the Papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion of religious assassination" (Lord Acton, *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, 185-186).

"I am convinced that it is theologically necessary that Antichrist must be a pope.... Antichrist, the Man of Sin, Son of Perdition to deserve these titles must hold a unique office, one in which the greatest possible doctrinal, disciplinary, and moral corruption can be accomplished.... With due respect for possible non-Catholic claimants I scoff at the notion that anyone other than a pope could be the Antichrist" (W. F. Strojje, *Last Days of the Catholic Church*, 1978, 31).

"Papal control over the laity is not an end in itself but rather a means to attain certain goals, some of which are political and economic rather than purely and uniquely religious. Since it is unlikely the Vatican will abandon in the near future its preoccupation with economic and political power...it seems inevitable that manipulative means of control will continue to be a part of the standard operating policies of the Roman Catholic Church" (J. P. Vaillancourt, *Papal Power*, 1980, 175).

## **The American Founders and the Papacy**

Sam Adams felt that "much more is to be dreaded from the growth of popery in America than from the Stamp Act." And an author of *The Federalist* and future Chief Justice of the United States, John Jay, did his best to deny Catholics the right of citizenship. Harvard College had the Dudleian Lectures, the fourth in each series to be devoted to "detecting, convicting, and exposing the idolatry, errors, and superstitions of the Romish Church." The Continental Congress which met at Philadelphia on September 17, 1775, took as its own by *unanimous* vote, the "Suffolk County Resolves," framed a week earlier in Boston, which denounced the May 20 Quebec Act, "the late act of Parliament for establishing the Roman Catholic religion in

that extensive country now called Canada." This act was "dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all Americans" (Sidney Ahlstrom, *Religious History of the American People*, 1972).

## **Tertullian on Antichrist**

"And you know what detains [see 2 *Thessalonians* 2:6-12], that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery does already work; only he who now hinders must hinder until he be taken out of the way. What obstacle is there but the Roman State, the falling away of which by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon its ruins" (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume III, 1979, 553).

## **The Rise of Antichrist**

"Now Antichrist is not a single person, but an order or succession of persons, occupying the same station; for Paul in his description of Antichrist asserts that the mystery of iniquity began to work in his own time, and would be completed at the end of the world.... Antichrist may be regarded in his successive stages as *conceived*, from the very times of the apostles, Satan even preparing the way; also in the persecutions of Nero, and during the prevalence of several heresies; as *being born*, and "revealed" under Boniface III, as *growing up to maturity* from that period to the reign of Benedict IX and Gregory VII, and from thence as *flourishing* in vigor to the period of the Reformation" (Benedict Pictet, *Christian Theology*, 1834, 440, 442-443).

"I see the great Apostasy, I see the desolation of Christendom, I see the smoking ruins, I see the reign of monsters; I see those vice-gods, that Gregory VII, that Innocent III, that Boniface VIII, that Alexander VI, that Gregory XIII, that Pius IX; I see their long succession, I hear their insufferable blasphemies, I see their abominable lives; I see them worshiped by blinded generations, bestowing hollow benedictions; bartering lying indulgences, creating a paganized Christianity; I see their liveried slaves, their shaven priests, their celibate confessors; I see the infamous confessional, the ruined women, the murdered innocents; I hear the lying absolutions, the dying groans; I hear the cries of the victims; I hear the anathemas, the curses, the thunders of the interdicts; I see the racks, the dungeons, the stakes; I see that inhuman Inquisition, those fires of Smithfield, those butcheries of St. Bartholomew, that Spanish Armada, those unspeakable dragonnades, that endless train of wars, that dreadful multitude of massacres. I see it all, and in the name of that ruin it has brought upon the Church and in the world, in the name of the truth it has denied, the temple it has defiled, the God it has blasphemed, the souls it has destroyed; in the name of the millions it has deluded; the millions it has slaughtered, the millions it has damned; with holy confessors, with noble

reformers, with innumerable martyrs, with the saints of the ages, I denounce it as the masterpiece of Satan, as the body and soul and essence of Antichrist" (H. Grattan Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, Lecture VI, 1881).

### **Papist Sexual Depravity**

"With Sergius was inaugurated what is known in history as the *Pornocracy*. Marozia, a licentious noblewoman, as mistress of Sergius, directed the papal government for seven years. [Sergius'] successor John X was appointed by his mistress Theodora. He led in person a successful military expedition against the Saracens, but returned to be driven into exile by Marozia. Through the influence of another licentious woman he succeeded in reinstating himself, but through the influence of Marozia he was soon afterward strangled in a dungeon. The next three popes were creatures of Marozia, the third (John XI) her bastard son by Pope Sergius. From 936-956 a sort of Roman Republic, with Alberic at its head, prevailed.... A son of Alberic (12 or 18 years old), profligate beyond his years, succeeded his father in the civil government and moreover assumed the papal office. He was charged by his contemporaries with the violation of almost every principle of morality and religion: sacrilege, adultery, violation of widows, living with his father's mistress, invocation of Jupiter and Venus, and turning the papal palace into a brothel" (Albert Newman, *Church History*, Volume 1, 1931, 499-500).

"[T]o lay eyes on the woman who was the mother of a pope, whom she had conceived by another pope, and who was the aunt of a third pope, the grandmother of a fourth pope, and with the help of her own mother, the creator of nine popes in eight years, of whom two had been strangled, one suffocated with a cushion, and four deposed and disposed of in circumstances that have never come to light" (Malachi Martin, S. J., *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church*, 1983, 99).

### **Papacy: Murder and Mayhem**

"Pope Lucius, the Bishop of Rome, had declared war on his own parishioners. In early 1145, in the "most-Christian" city ruled by the Vicar of the Prince of Peace, the faithful slaughtered the faithful in a bloody urban battle. Lucius' attack was eventually checked, but not before great loss of life. During the melee he was struck by several stone missiles shot from the roof of the senate building. His broken and bleeding body was carried out of Rome to the monastery of San Gregorio, where he soon died. *The enemy* in this case seems to have been the pope himself, who is *driven out* of Rome by its people.... To disagree openly with the Roman Catholic Church at this time [12th-13th centuries] could result in a quick trial and burning at the stake with no such thing as an appeal. When a certain bishop Moranis did not please Pope Gregory IX, he appointed a Dominican inquisitor to investigate the bishop

and the whole diocese. Robert le Bougre took his task seriously. He went to the diocese and ended up putting the whole town on trial with the bishop. On May 29, 1239, he sent the bishop and 180 men, women, and children to the stake in a mass burning" (John Hogue, *The Last Pope*, 41, 68).

Words of Waldensian martyr Louis Pascale: "If I am put to death, it is not for any crime, but having confessed with truth and boldness, the doctrines of my Divine Master and Savior, Jesus Christ. As to those who hold the Pope to be God on Earth, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ, they are strangely mistaken, seeing that in everything, and everywhere, he shows himself to be the mortal enemy of His doctrine and true service, and of pure religion, and by his actions that he is manifestly the real Antichrist" (Jane Louisa Willyams, *The Waldensian Church*, 1879, 84).

From a letter by Pope Martin V to the king of Poland: "Know that the interests of the Holy See, and those of your crown, make it a duty to exterminate the Hussites. Remember that these impious persons dare proclaim principles of equality; they maintain that all Christians are brethren and that God has not given to privileged men the right of ruling nations; they hold that Christ came on Earth to abolish slavery; they call the people to liberty, that is to the annihilation of kings and priests. While there is still time, then, turn your force against Bohemia; burn, massacre, make deserts everywhere, for nothing could be more agreeable to God, or more useful to the cause of kings, than the extermination of the Hussites" (quoted by John Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania* [1999] 2006, 134).

"Was the brutality and bloodshed merely a series of haphazard and random events, which merely reflect the times, or was there a systematic plan by the Historical Antichrist to crush the faithful testimony of God's elect, many of whom paid with their very lives to maintain such a testimony? According to Rome, God's supreme concern being for the dominion of the church, He has bestowed upon Peter and his successors, the Bishops of Rome, all the power belonging to Christ if He were personally reigning on Earth. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ. As perfect unity and harmony in the administration of the world are the ideal to be attained, and there can be no center of unity other than the divinely appointed Vicar of Christ, all secular rulers and all ecclesiastical rulers must submit themselves absolutely to his authority. To tolerate civil or ecclesiastical insubordination, where power to suppress it exists, would be in the highest degree blameworthy.

As the divine will is identical with the maintenance and advancement of this ecclesiastical authority, any available means may be employed to this end, even though the divine will, expressed in Scripture and in conscience, must be violated. Does heresy arise and spread? It must be rooted out, although in the process multitudes of the faithful themselves may be destroyed. Does a civil ruler resist the encroachment of the papal power? His throne may be declared vacant and offered to any Catholic prince who will

seize it, the allegiance of the subjects forbidden, an interdict placed upon the administration of the sacraments of the Church until submission shall have been made, a deadly crusade preached against the kingdom. Everything was on principle subordinated to this one central aim of securing absolute temporal as well as absolute spiritual dominion. The Crusades in the East were fostered and forced, when need appeared, in the interest of this world dominion.... The securing of vast territorial possessions in Europe through the skillful use of advantages offered by the Crusades was in the highest degree promotive of the papal aim of universal dominion.

"Here we have a theocracy of the most complete type. The Pope as the head of the theocracy occupies the place of God on Earth, and he is free, as even God is not, to make use of the most immoral means for the enforcement of his authority. The scheme is a magnificent one. It provides for the uniform administration of the world from a single center, according to a single ideal. Its advocates no doubt believed that such a government putting an end, as it would to civil and religious strife, would result in universal peace, universal goodwill, and universal righteousness. Yet it is easy to see that to realize or to perpetuate such a system, civil and religious freedoms must be remorselessly suppressed. The only freedom possible would be that enjoyed by those who were thoroughly in sympathy with the ideal of the theocracy and who found their highest delight in submission to its authority" (Albert Newman, *Church History*, Volume 1, 508-509).

"It has been calculated that the Popes of Rome have directly or indirectly slain on account of their faith fifty millions of martyrs; fifty millions of men and women who refused...Romish idolatries, who held the Bible to be the Word of God, and who loved not their lives unto death" (McKinley Ash, *Antichrist, Past, Present, and Future*, 1967, 122).

### **Roman Church Bars Discussion of Antichrist**

"Indeed we learn much as to how far the *Apocalypse* had, even in these times, come to be used against the Church of Rome, from the fears of the papists themselves, which prompted the Fifth Lateran Council authoritatively to prohibit all writing or preaching on the subject of Antichrist, and all speculating regarding the time of the expected evils" (Albert Barnes, *Commentary*, Volume XI, 1979, xiv).

"The Decree, *Supreme Majestatis Praesidio* of the Fifth Lateran Council, adopted on December 19, 1516, condemned all attempts to fix the time of Antichrist's coming and the end of the world. The irony in this was that within a decade many in Europe would be convinced that there was indeed no need at all to speculate about when Antichrist would come – he was already present in the papacy.... Many still think that the notion of a pope as Antichrist was the creation of Martin Luther and was spread by the Reformation. But the connection between the papacy and Antichrist was of long standing, being rooted in the Son of Perdition of 2 *Thessalonians* 2, who takes up his blasphemous position in the temple.... If Anti-

Christ is to be the most deceptive of humans, the one who will put on the best counterfeit of holiness to perform the worst evil, what position would he most likely occupy than that of the spiritual leader of Christendom? From before the year 1000 such fears had been growing, but it was only in this [the pre-Reformation] period that they had reached full flowering" (Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist*, 1999, 187, 172).

"[The Vaudois' teaching] treats of Antichrist as the whole anti-Christian principle concealing itself under the guise of Christianity.... The system of iniquity thus completed with its ministers, great and small.... This is the congregation taken together that comprises what is called Antichrist or Babylon.... It originated in the times of the Apostles, but by gaining power and worldly influence it reached its climax in the corruption of the Papal Church" (McClintock and Strong, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Theological Literature*, Volume 1, 1981, 257).

The Cathari or Albigensian view of the Roman Church: "The fruit of the Roman Church is evil. Since the fruit of the Roman Church is evil, its faith is evil.... Ten parts or more of the Roman Church are evil; therefore, it ought to be called the church of the devil rather than of God.... The Church should suffer persecution in the world, not practice it on others. But the Roman Church persecutes others while itself remaining free from persecution" (Walter Wakefield and Austin Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 1969, 324-326).

### **John Wyclif on Antichrist**

"Because a good shepherd should keep his sheep from the wolves, and defend them from the scabs and from rending; therefore, Christ bade Peter thrice that he should keep his sheep. Christ taught not his shepherd to raise a crusade and kill his sheep, with his lambs, and spoil their goods; but this is Antichrist's teaching, that the fiend has now brought in, and by this is it known that these are not Peter's vicars" (W. L. Watkinson, *John Wyclif*, 121-122).

"Also worldly prelates and clerks drawing out the money of the land waste the church's goods to sustain pride, gluttony, lechery, and other vanities. For they have been procurators or treasurers of poor men in taking offerings, and they might as well take it out of their purses openly and devour it, as just to get it by extortion, wrong customs, and Antichrist's censures" (*Select English Works of John Wyclif*, Volume 3, 1871, 250).

"Now in our days out of the nest of Antichrist is come a hard commandment and says to men in sentence that whoso confirms Antichrist's ordinance and hinders Christ's ordinance he will go straight to Heaven without pain in purgatory. And whoever holds to Christ's side he is deeply cursed and pursued by Antichrist's [clergy]" (246).

The pope should leave his "fiendish pride and Antichrist's tyranny and open treason and blasphemy against God and His Vicar the King" (315).

“Depending on the way of life of Christ and the way of life of the pope, it will appear to the knowledgeable faithful that the pope is the evident Antichrist, not just the individual person who sets up more laws that are against Christ’s law, but the multitude of popes from the time of the church’s endowment – and of cardinals, bishops, and their other accomplices. The person of Antichrist is a monstrous composite one” (Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist*, 182).

## **The Reformation and Antichrist**

“The Reformers left no unified testimony on other unfulfilled prophecy, with one exception. The exception was the unanimous belief that the Papal system is both the “man of sin” and the Babylonian whore of which the Scripture forewarns. In the conviction of sixteenth-century Protestants, Rome was the great Antichrist and so firmly did this belief become established that it was not until the nineteenth century that it was seriously questioned by evangelicals” (Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, 1971, 41).

“At the same time, the just conclusion seems to be that Antichrist is not to be contained to any single person, or power, but is essentially a great principle or system of falsehood, having various manifestations, forms of working, and degrees, as especially exemplified in Antiochus Epiphanes, Jewish bigotry, and pagan intolerance; while it is undeniable that later Romanism exhibits some of the most prominent characteristics of Antichrist in a manner so striking and peculiar as to assure us that the system is not only one among many species of Antichrist, but that it stands in the forefront, and is pointed at by the finger of prophecy as no other form of Antichrist is!” (McClintock and Strong, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Theological Literature*, Volume 1, 259).

## **Luther on Antichrist**

“I for one will clear my skirts and salve my conscience by bringing this charge against the pope and all the papists: Unless they will abolish their laws and traditions, and restore to Christ’s churches their liberty and have it taught among them, they are guilty of all the souls that perish under this miserable captivity, and the papacy is of a truth the kingdom of Babylon, yea, of very Antichrist! For who is the ‘man of sin’ and the ‘son of perdition’ but he that with his doctrines and his laws increases sins and the perdition of souls in the Church, while he sits in the Church as if he were God? All this the papal tyranny has fulfilled, these many centuries; it has extinguished faith, obscured the sacraments, and oppressed the Gospel; but its own laws, which are not only impious and sacrilegious, but even barbarous and foolish, it has enjoined and multiplied world without end” (*The Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 2, 1982, 235-236).

They “take from Christ the heavenly form of ruler and give it to the pope, leaving the form of a servant to perish utterly. He might also be the Counter-Christ whom the

Scriptures call Antichrist, for all his nature, works, and doings are against Christ, for the destruction of Christ’s Nature and Work. Such extravagant, over-presumptuous, and more than wicked doings of the popes have been devised by the Devil, in order that under their cover he may in time bring in Antichrist and raise the Pope above God as many are already doing and have done” (*The Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 2, 109).

“If you do not contend with your whole heart against the impious government of the Pope, you cannot be saved. Whoever takes delight in the religion and worship of popery, will be eternally lost in the world to come. If you reject it, you must expect to incur every kind of danger, and even to lose your lives. But it is better to be exposed to such perils in this world than to keep silence! So long as I live I will denounce to my brethren the sore plague of Babylon, for fear that many who are with us should fall back like the rest into the bottomless pit” (quoted by J. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, 1843, 208).

“When something over and above God’s Word is put forth, it is surely a seductive, un-Christian error, a lie and a cheat.... This is the reason Paul calls Antichrist the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition because...he shall retain the name and appearance of Christ and call himself *Sanctissimus* and *Vicarius Dei* and *Caput Ecclesiae* [“Most Holy,” “Vicar of God,” “Head of the Church”] and persecute all who will not obey him. It is easily recognized that the Pope more than fits this description” (*The Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 3, 368).

## **Calvin on Antichrist**

“Shall we recognize the Apostolic See where we see nothing but horrible apostasy? Shall he be the vicar of Christ who, by his furious efforts in persecuting the Gospel plainly declares himself to be Antichrist? Shall he be the successor of Peter, who goes about with fire and sword demolishing everything that Peter built? Shall he be the head of the Church who, after dissevering the Church from Christ, her only true Head, tears and lacerates her members? Rome, indeed, was once the mother of all the churches, but since she began to be the seat of Antichrist she ceased to be what she was” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV: Chapter VII: Paragraph 24).

“[T]o some we seem slanderers and railers when we call the Roman Pontiff ‘Antichrist.’ Those who think so do not realize they are accusing Paul of intemperate language, after whom we speak. Lest anyone object that we wickedly twist Paul’s words against the Roman Pontiff, I shall briefly show that these cannot be understood otherwise than of the papacy. Paul writes that Antichrist will sit in God’s temple...in another place, also, the Spirit, describing his image in the person of Antiochus, shows that his kingdom will consist in boasting and blaspheming God. Hence we infer that his is a tyranny more over souls than over bodies” (*Institutes*, IV: VII: 25).

“To recognize Antichrist we must see him in diametrical opposition to Christ.... The name Antichrist does not designate a single individual, but a single kingdom, which extends throughout many generations” (*Commentary on 2 Thessalonians*, 400, 403-404).

“[The Letter of Pope Paul III to the Emperor Charles V proves the Pope] to be Antichrist, the head of all the wicked” (*Tracts*, Volume 1, 263).

“Antichrist...has now for ages exercised dominion in God’s sanctuary” (*Commentary on Joel*, 138).

“The Papists have imagined an Antichrist who is to harass the Church for three and a half years. All the marks by which the Spirit of God has pointed out Antichrist appear clearly in the Pope; but their triennial Antichrist has such a hold on the foolish Papists that seeing they do not see. Therefore, let us remember that Antichrist has not only been indicated by God’s Spirit, but that the marks by which he may be discerned have also been ascribed to him.... Properly speaking, Antichrist was not yet in existence, but the mystery of his ungodliness was working secretly. But John uses this name that he might the more stir up the care and anxiety of the godly to repel deceits. But if the Spirit of God even then commanded believers to be on their guard when they saw only distant signs of the coming enemy, much less is it now a time for sleeping, when he holds the church oppressed under his cruel tyranny and openly triumphs over Christ” (*Commentaries on the New Testament*, Volume 5, 256-257).

### **Bucer and Bullinger on the Papacy**

**Bucer:** “The most difficult time of the church, through which it still passes on in so many nations, was when it was oppressed for so many centuries in the service of Antichrist, as can be seen in so many nations of Europe today. For the antichrists, the pseudobishops, and the clergy, following their head, the Supreme Antichrist, first horribly corrupted the teaching of the Gospel.... Truly, therefore, the churches of Europe never were in worse condition than after the Roman Antichrist established over so many Christian peoples the tyranny in which he maintains himself today with the support of so many monarchs and nations” (quoted by Wilhelm Pauck, editor, *Melanchthon and Bucer*, 1969, 209-211).

**Bullinger:** “Now if He [Christ] be present with His church, she has no need of a vicar; for the vicar supplies the place of him that is absent. Wheresoever, therefore, Christ’s vicar is acknowledged, there is no Christ, and therefore there reigns Antichrist” (*The Decades of Heinrich Bullinger*, Volume 4, 85).

### **John Knox on the Papacy**

“We must define the Church by the right notes given to us in God’s Scriptures. We must discern the immaculate Spouse of Jesus Christ from the Mother of Confusion, Spiritual Babylon, lest that imprudently we embrace a harlot instead of a chaste spouse – yea to speak plain words, lest we submit ourselves to Satan, thinking that we

submit ourselves to Jesus Christ. As for your Roman Kirk, as it is now corrupted, and the authority thereof, wherein stands the hope of your victory, I no more doubt but that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof, called the Pope, to be that Man of Sin of whom the Apostle speaks, than I doubt that Jesus Christ suffered by the procurement of the visible church of Jerusalem.

Yea, I offer myself, by words or writ, to prove the Roman Church this day farther degenerate from the purity which was in the days of Apostles than was the church of the Jews from the ordinance given by Moses when they consented to the innocent death of Jesus Christ” (*The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, 1982, 73-74).

### **English Reformers on the Papacy**

**Tyndale:** “[They] have withdrawn from the lay-men counting them viler than dogs; and have set up that great idol, the Whore of Babylon, Antichrist of Rome, whom they call the pope; and have conspired against all commonwealths, and have made them several kingdoms, wherein it is lawful [and] unpunished to work all abomination” (*The Works of William Tyndale*, Volume 1, 1848, 191).

**Ridley:** “Sir, considering the state of chivalry and warfare, wherein I doubt not but we be set to fight under Christ’s banner and His cross against our...enemy the devil...methinks I perceive two things to be his most perilous and most dangerous engines which he has to impugn Christ’s verity, His Gospel, His faith; and the same two also to be his most massy posts and most mighty pillars, whereby he maintains and upholds his Satanical synagogue. These two, sir,...in my judgment are...his false doctrine...of the Lord’s Supper; and...the wicked and abominable usurpation of the primacy of the See of Rome.... These two poison[ous] rotten posts he has painted with such pretense and color of religion, of the unity of Christ’s church, of the catholic faith, and such like, that the wily serpent is able to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect of God” (*The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, 1841, 366).

**Bradford:** “O merciful Lord, suffer not the enemy of your Son Christ, the Romish Antichrist, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from you our poor brethren, for whom your Son once died, that by his cruelty, after so clear light, they should be made captives to dumb idols and devilish inventions of popish ceremonies.... Suffer him not to seduce the simple sort with his fond opinion that his false gods, blind mumbling, feigned religion, or foolish superstition, does give him such conquests, such victories, such triumph, and so high handed over us” (*The Writings of John Bradford*, Volume 1, 224).

**Hooper:** “This is true: The See of Rome is not only a tyranny and pestilence of body and soul, but the nest of all abomination. This beast is preached unto the people to be a man that cannot err, his authority to be above God and his laws, and to be the prince of all princes of the world that uphold his abomination.... And is this first-begotten of Antichrist, the Bishop of Rome, without sin, that changes

not only the person in a sentence, but the whole sentence, yea, the whole law of God, and of man? So that he reigns in the conscience above the law of God, and will save him that God has damned, and damn him that God has saved; yet this person and Man of Sin cannot err!" (*The Early Writings of John Hooper*, 1843, 22-23).

**Cranmer:** "The Romish Antichrist, to deface this great benefit of Christ, has taught that his sacrifice upon the cross is not sufficient hereunto [unless he adds] another sacrifice devised by him, made by a priest...to supply Christ's imperfection; and that Christian people cannot apply to themselves the benefits of Christ's passion...."

"O wicked abomination in the temple of God! O pride intolerable of Antichrist, and most manifest token of the Son of Perdition, extolling himself above God, and with Lucifer exalting his seat and power above the throne of God! For the one who presumes to supply that which Christ lacks must needs make himself above Christ, and so very Antichrist" (*Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer*, 1844, 5, 6).

**Bale:** "Briefly to conclude the whole of this matter, the gorgeous appareled woman, or glittering church of Antichrist, which you saw here of late in mystery, is also in resemblance the great city Babylon, the mother of all spiritual abominations and idolatries done upon the Earth. For like as from Sion has the law come forth, and the Word of God from Jerusalem, so has issued forth from this Babylonish Rome such a false religion into emperors, princes, and people, as with filthy superstitions has poisoned all the world. For kingdom she had over the kings or noble governors of the Earth, and false power, a usurped authority, and a seat of very pestilence. Alas for pity, that so worthy potentates should be in subjection to so stinking a whore, to so vile a harlot, being so the servants of sin and captive slaves to all wickedness; from which the Lord once deliver them! Amen" (John Bale, *The Image of the Two Churches*, 1849, 511).

## Turretin on the Papacy

"Baronius [a Roman Catholic scholar] laments, beginning approximately with the year A. D. 900, in which the harlots Theodora and Marozia actually ruled the impotent church, thrusting monsters into the Pontifical Seat (*Chronicles*, book 5), 'For nearly 150 years, about fifty Pontiffs, from John VIII until Leo IX, were found gravely wanting in sharing the virtuous nature of their ancestors, themselves Apostles of apostasy rather than Apostles of the apostolic succession'" (Francis Turretin, *Seventh Disputation*, [1661] 1990, 90).

"When the seat of Antichrist is said to be the Church, this must not be understood in a general composite sense, as if by the term *Church* we are to understand to mean that it is at one and the same time the Church of Christ and of Antichrist, which is inconsistent. Rather, we are to understand it in a specific particular sense, whereby we are to look to a seat which had once been the Church of Christ, but which has now been made the seat of Antichrist. It is stated in this manner by Isaiah (1:21), The *faithful city* is

now called a harlot because what had once been faithful became a prostitute through apostasy.

"The specific place is Babylon, the great seven-hilled city, which in John's day held power over the kings of the Earth, and which, by her cup of fornications, was destined to inebriate all people, intoxicating them with the blood of the saints. By using the preceding argument this is proved to be a fitting description for Rome alone – not Pagan Rome (which could not slide back into heathenism), but for Christian Rome, which fell into Apostasy" (*Seventh Disputation*, 16-17).

"He must be an enemy of Christ, who attacks his doctrine, but not as a public and open enemy, naked and undisguised...but rather, he is to be disguised and hidden [acting by stealth and subterfuge]. He accomplishes this while professing to be *for Christ*, but in truth, shows himself to be *against Christ, Anti-Christon*. Under the pretext of a vicar, he usurps the authority of the Lord, casting Him from his rightful throne. Hence this apostasy is called, *Musterion tes Anomias – the Mystery of Iniquity* – and on the forehead of the Babylonian harlot is inscribed the name MYSTERY (*Revelation 17:5*), because the impiety of the Antichrist must be mystical, that is, *clad with the name of piety* as the language well maintains. For this reason the Antichrist must creep into the Church through underground passages, and in this way, by the specious pretense of religion and godliness, establish his dominion. On this account the Antichrist, under the subtle pretext of piety, certainly views the gold cup of the Babylonian whore, (by which she makes men drunk), as the opportunity to prescribe superstitions to the drunken – superstitions which he renders attractive under the name of mysteries. Therefore is he proclaimed as coming "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," or seducing iniquity (2 *Thessalonians* 2:10). In the same manner the Antichrist is presented as *Deceiver, Imposter, and Seducer* (2 *John* 7), who certainly could deceive the most keen sighted, who must seduce the inhabitants of the Earth (*Revelation* 13:14), who *speaks lies in hypocrisy* (1 *Timothy* 4:2), and who by cunning pretense of piety in conjunction with a profession of (orthodox) Christianity, is able to more adroitly seduce men, leading them away from Christ. For, if the Antichrist were able to attack Christ in open war, who, then, would not be able to discern the enemy of Christ? Therefore, tell me please, what mystery would there be, and what wisdom would be needed to recognize such an Antichrist?" (*Seventh Disputation*, 49-50).

"Glossa of Canon Law *Extr. John* 22 expressly calls the Pope our Lord God. Pope Nicholas, as cited by Gratian (*Dist. 69, chapter 7*) says, 'It is manifestly and satisfactorily shown that the Pope can neither be bound by the secular power nor loosed by it, since it is self-evident that God cannot be judged by men.'... Stapleton (in *Preface to Gregory*, chapter 16, *Principal Doctrines*), names the Pope 'the best, the greatest, and most supreme Spirit on Earth.' ... P. Blond, (1.3 *To a Restored Rome*) said, 'All leaders of the world honor and worship Pope as the highest God.' ...

Whence according to Canon Law, throughout we find these impious words, 'Because the opinion of the Pope and the opinion of God is one opinion, there is but one tribunal between God and the Pope. And because no one has authority from God apart from that bestowed in the Pope, there is but one court of God and of the Pope, for the Pope judges as if he were God. Therefore, his opinion may be opposed by no one' (*Seventh Disputation*, 57).

### John Bunyan on the Papacy

"Antichrist is the adversary of Christ – an adversary *really*, a friend *pretendedly*; so then Antichrist is one that is *against* Christ, one that is *for* Christ, and one that is *contrary* to Him – and this is that mystery of iniquity. Against Him in *deed*, for Him in *word*, and contrary to Him in *practice*" (*Complete Works of John Bunyan*, Volume 4, 1968, 140-141).

"[The false Church] blasphemes the Holy Ghost in accusing and condemning the Holy Scriptures of insufficiency, for that she says, though as a rule, yet but imperfect one; one deficient, one that is not able to make the man of God perfect in all things, without traditions, inventions, and blasphemous helps of anti-Christian wisdom" (*Complete Works of John Bunyan*, Volume 4, 151).

"Antichrist must be destroyed because *he has set himself against the Son of God*; against the Father, and against the Son.... That he has set himself against the Son of God is also evident; for he has endeavored to take from Him His headship *over*, and His offices *for* and *in* the Church, which is His body.... And has attempted to be head in His stead, so to be king, priest, and prophet.... He has attempted to wrest his scepter and kingdom from Him, and that he has endeavored to thrust himself into His throne, which is the heart and conscience of His people. The *heart* and *conscience* is that which Christ claims for His own proper and peculiar seat: 'My son, give me your heart.' 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' In this therefore the Church is not from another man, so will He be for her; but this throne Antichrist has lusted for, attempted to take, and made war with Christ and His Church" (*Complete Works of John Bunyan*, Volume 4, 169).

### Puritans on the Antichrist

**Whitaker:** "If it is true that Antichrist must present himself above everything that is called God or spirit; and if it is true that the Antichrist must introduce apostasy into the Church; and if it is true that the Antichrist must sit in the temple of God; and if it is true that the Antichrist must show himself to be God; and if it is true that the Antichrist must seize tyrannical power from the overthrown Roman Italian Empire by assuming the role of monarch; and if it is true that the Antichrist must have precursors who began soon after the ascent of Christ; and if it is true that the Antichrist must continue until the end of the world; and if it is true that the Antichrist must work the works of Satan; and if it is true that the Antichrist must boast of working signs and lying wonders; and if it is true that the Antichrist must feign him-

self like unto a lamb; and if it is true that the Antichrist must restore the image of the prior beast; and if it is true that the Antichrist must in every way be the Latin ruler, *Lateinos*, who occupies Rome, *Mystery*, *Musterion*, Babylon; and if it is true that the Antichrist must rule from a seven-mountain city, which is known for its purple color; and if it is true that that city must also be known as a woman and a harlot; and if it is true that the Antichrist must have all these identifying marks as described so clearly and precisely in the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit; then, unless we ascribe a deficiency to the Holy Spirit's description of Antichrist, we must acknowledge and believe to the unavoidable conclusion drawn from overwhelming evidence: The Roman Pontiff is the Antichrist and there can be no other. Truly it can be said, without contradiction, that he came before and will follow after" (William Whitaker, *The Roman Pontiff is that Antichrist whose presence Scripture Prophetied*, 2001, 25-27).

**Ussher:** "Antichrist is the one who under a color of being for Christ, and under title of His Viceregent, exalts himself above, and against Christ; opposing himself unto Him in all his offices, and ordinances, both in Church and Commonwealth. This Antichrist rules over the City of seven hills which did bear rule over the nations, and put our Lord to death. He is that Man of Sin, a harlot Mother of spiritual fornications...a child of perdition, and a destroyer; establishing himself by lying miracles, and false wonders. All which marks together do agree with none but the Pope of Rome" (James Ussher, *A Body of Divinity*, 1653, 438).

**Owen:** "Was it a few Jesuits only who approved the murder of two kings in France, one after another, and the massacre of 100,000 Protestants? Who designed and blessed all the preparations for the murder of Elizabeth, with the unjust invasion of this nation in 1588? Was it not the Church itself in its head the Pope and the horns the Cardinals at Rome?" (*The Works of John Owen*, Volume 14, 610).

"They ceased not until they had utterly destroyed all the order, rule, and government of the church of Christ, yea, the very nature of it, and introduced into its rooms a carnal, worldly church-state and rule, suited unto the interests of covetous, ambitious, and tyrannical prelates. The most of them, indeed, knew not for whom they wrought in providing materials for that of Babel...for after they were hewed and carved, shaped, formed, and gilded, the Pope appeared in the head of it, as it were, with these words in his mouth: 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?' (*The Works of John Owen*, Volume 15, 238).

**Durham:** "We think that conceit or dream of the papists all so literally of an Antichrist who shall come of the Tribe of Dan, and that shall reign just three and a half years, sitting in Jerusalem, and building that Temple.... This dream invented by them to keep their pope from being apprehended as the true Antichrist, this I say is not worth the insisting on to refute, as being contrary to the frame of

the prophecy past, and also of that which follows concerning the Beast (*Revelation* 13), for certainly this trail being so long, as the great part of *Revelation* is spent on it, and so many things to be done under it, it cannot be performed in so short a time" (James Durham, *The Revelation*, 693).

### **Justification and the Papacy**

"These are the great centuries of justification by faith in Christ alone, succeeding a period in which salvation had been obtained through the ceremonies and sacraments of the church, succeeded by a period in which works, morality, were to be re-emphasized as against the justifying faith alone. Historically the belief in Antichrist was strongest among those Protestants who most strongly emphasized justification by faith and were most hostile to the ecclesiastical establishment and its ceremonies" (Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England*, 1990, 159).

### **Reformed Presbyterians on the Papacy**

"To any one acquainted with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, nothing can be more manifest than the correspondence of the facts of history respecting the rise of the papacy, and the statement of the Apostle Paul here [2 *Thessalonians* 2]. The simple facts are these: (1) There were early corruptions in the church at Rome, as there were elsewhere, but particularly there, as Rome was the seat of philosophy and power. (2) There were great efforts made by the Bishop of Rome to increase his authority, and there was a steady approximation to what he subsequently claimed – that of being universal bishop. (3) There was a constant tendency to yield to him deference and respect in all matters. (4) This was kept in check as long as Rome was the seat of Imperial power. Had that power remained there, it would have been impossible for the Roman bishop ever to have obtained the civil and ecclesiastical eminence which he ultimately did. Rome could not have had two heads, both claiming and exercising supreme power; and there could never have been a 'revelation of the man of sin.' (5) Constantine removed the seat of the empire to Constantinople; and this removal or 'taking away' of the only restraint on the ambitious projects of the Roman bishops gave all opportunity which could be desired for the growth of papal power. In all history there cannot, probably, be found a series of events corresponding more accurately with the prophetic statement than this; and there is every evidence, therefore, that these are the events to which the Spirit of inspiration referred" (Albert Barnes, *Commentaries*, Volume 13, 1979, 87-88).

"The twelfth century, according to Mr. Gibbon, [was] the meridian of papal greatness. [The Paulicians, the Waldenses, the Vaudois, and other bodies of true Christians] proclaimed [the papacy] as we have seen, to be the Antichrist of Scripture, the Harlot of the Apocalypse. Then was war waged against them, with all the power of apostate Rome, to silence and destroy them. This war was commenced in the edicts of the councils, which stigmatized the pure doctrines of the Bible, and branded [those who

held them] as heretics.... The confessors of truth were denied these natural and civil rights...their lands given to those able to seize them.... At length a crusade was proclaimed against them. The Pope wrote to all princes exhorting them to earn their pardon and win Heaven by bearing the cross against the heretics.

"The peaceful valleys of the Vaudois were invaded and speedily devastated with fire and sword; their towns were burnt; while not one individual, in many cases, escaped to carry the tidings to the next valley. To all the cruelties of these wars, and to all the open persecutions which were waged, are added the horrors of the Inquisition.... Calculations, more or less accurate, have been made of the numbers Popery has slain.... From the year 1540 to the year 1570...no fewer than nine hundred thousand Protestants were put to death by the papists in different countries in Europe. During the short pontificate of Paul IV, which lasted only four years (1555-1559), the Inquisition alone, on the testimony of Bergerius, destroyed one hundred and fifty thousand.... Those who perished in Germany during the wars of Charles V, and in Flanders, under the infamous Duke of Alva, are reckoned in the hundreds of thousands. In France, several million were destroyed in the innumerable massacres that took place in that kingdom. It has been computed that since the rise of the papacy, not fewer than fifty millions of persons have been put to death on account of religion..." (Albert Barnes, *Commentaries*, Volume 11, 289-290).

"The common opinion, however, among Protestants is that the prophecies concerning Antichrist have special reference to the papacy. This conviction is founded principally on the remarkable prediction contained in Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians.

"His coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. This is not the way in which worldly potentates gain their power; they rely on force. But this is the way, as though traced by the pen of history rather than by the pencil of prophecy, in which the papacy has attained and maintained its fearful ascendancy in the world. Its power has been achieved mainly by fraud, by the deceivableness of unrighteousness.... It is the false claim of the papacy to have supreme authority over the faith of men, to decide for them what they must believe on the pain of eternal perdition, that is the most *fearful power ever assumed by sinful men*.

"Antichrist is to be a persecuting power. Is not this true of the papacy? It has been drunk with the blood of the saints. It not only persecutes, but it justifies persecution, and avows to this day its purpose to enforce its dominion by the rack and the stake wherever it has the power.... The Thirty Years' War in Germany; the persistent attempts to exterminate the Piedmontese; the massacres by the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands; the horrors of the Inquisition in Spain; the dragonnades and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, over which *Te deums* were sung in Rome, show that the people of God can hardly have more to suffer under any future Antichrist than they have already suffered, and perhaps have yet to suffer under the

papacy" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, [1871-1873] 1989, 813).

"John Henry Newman in an essay written before his formal adhesion to the church of Rome uses such language as the following.... Not even Daniel's prophecies are more exact to the letter than those which invest the Church with the powers which Protestants consider Babylonish. Nay, holy Daniel himself is in no small measure employed on this very subject. He it is who announces a fifth kingdom, like a stone cut out without hands, which 'broke in pieces and consumed' all former kingdoms, but was itself to stand 'forever,' and to become a 'great mountain,' and to 'fill the whole Earth.' He it is also who prophesies that 'the Saints of the most high shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever.'...Now Christ himself was to depart from the Earth. He could not then in his own person be intended in these great prophecies: If He acted it must be by delegacy. According to Romanists, therefore, these prophecies relating to Christ and his kingdom, refer to the papacy. It is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which is to break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms; which is to stand forever; which is to fill the whole Earth; to which is given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve. If this is not to put itself in the place of God, it is hard to see how the prophecies concerning Antichrist can ever be fulfilled.

"No more conclusive argument to prove that the papacy is Antichrist could be constructed than that furnished by Dr. Newman, himself a Romanist. According to him, the prophecies respecting the glory, the exaltation, the power, and the universal dominion of Christ have their fulfillment in the popes. But who is Antichrist, but the man who puts himself in the place of Christ; claiming the honor and the power which belong to God manifest in the flesh, for himself? Whosoever does this is Antichrist, in the highest form in which he can appear. Another argument to prove that the Antichrist described by the Apostle is an ecclesiastical power is that his appearance is the consequence of a great apostasy....

"According to Paul's account, Antichrist was to arise in the Church. He was to put forth the most exorbitant claims: exalt himself above all human authority; assume to himself the prerogatives of God, demanding a submission due only to God, and virtually setting aside the authority of God, and substituting his own in its place. These assumptions were to be sustained by all manner of unrighteous deceits, by signs, and lying wonders. This portrait suits the papacy so exactly, that Protestants at least have rarely doubted that it is the Antichrist which the Apostle intended to describe" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 818).

"Hence the woman appeared also 'drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' This explains why the prophet wondered at the spectacle even with a great admiration! Had it been merely a heathen power...there had been no great reason for astonishment; the ungodliness, corruption, and persecuting violence exhibited were precisely what might have been expected.

But such a transformation – a power spiritual in its origin, and claiming by its appearance still to possess a spiritual character – for such a power to have sunk so low, and come to act so atrocious a part, might well make the most profound astonishment...the symbolical designation forces on us the conclusion, that it is a fallen and degenerate church which is delineated – a power claiming the character, but opposed to the spirit and interests of the real church – worldly, temporizing, persecuting. Not only so; but it was to be also a power most extensive in its dominion, and preponderating in its influence.... It is the great apostasy of Paul come to its perfection, the Antichrist in its full development, and well-nigh total possession of the Earth which is the inheritance of Christ and his church. It is itself the church become worldly... presenting to them (those who belong to it) not the Lord's cup of manifold temptations and resistance unto blood against sin; but the golden cup of fleshly indulgence and foul abominations.... [I]f it be asked, where such a church is to be found? we cannot hesitate to reply, in that church, which in the nature and extent of its power and influence became in the course of a few generations after the apostle's time the city in another form which reigned over the kings of the Earth – in the church preeminently of Papal Rome" (Patrick Fairbairn, *Prophecy*, 1976, 374-375).

### **Protestant Confessions on the Papacy**

"The Church can have no other head than Christ. He is the one universal pastor of all His flock, and has promised His presence to the end of the world. He needs, therefore, no vicar; for this would imply His absence. We reject the Romish fiction concerning an official head and title of the servant of servants of Christ; for experience proves that this is an empty boast, and that the Pope makes himself an enemy of Christ, and exalts himself above God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God" (*Helvetic Confession of 1566*).

"And therefore we abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine, but chiefly all kind of papistry in general and particular heads, even as they are damned and confuted by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland. But in special, we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman Antichrist upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil magistrate, and consciences of men; all his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things against our Christian liberty. His erroneous doctrine against the sufficiency of the written Word, the perfection of the law, the office of Christ, and His blessed Evangel" (*The Second Scotch Confession and National Covenant*, 1580).

"Since the Roman Bishop sets himself up as a monarch of the world-wide Christian Church, appropriating to himself the supremacy over all churches and pastors, and because his insolence and pride are such that he calls himself God; and that he wishes to be worshiped; and that he apportions all power to himself in Heaven and in Earth; and that he disposes of all ecclesiastical matters without restraint, as he wills; and that he establishes the articles of faith as he wills; and the authority of Scripture is

subservient to his authority; and that their interpretation is his to give without restraint, as he wills; and that he exercises the traffic in souls; and that he releases as free, men bound by vows and oaths; and that he institutes new cults in the worship of God; and that pertaining to civil matters, he tramples the legitimate authority of magistrates by giving, taking, and transferring kingdoms – we believe and assert that he is the true and real Antichrist, the son of perdition (2 *Thessalonians* 2:3), foretold in the Word of God.... The Whore clad in purple (*Revelation* 17:1), sitting on seven hills in the great city (*Revelation* 17:9), firmly holding authority over the rulers of the Earth (*Revelation* 17:18), and wait expectantly for God, when according to His promise (which has already begun), finally destroys him, broken and conquered by the Breath of His mouth and by the glory of His coming” (*French Confession of Faith*, 1604).

“The Bishop of Rome is so far from being the supreme head of the universal Church of Christ, that his works and doctrine do plainly discover him to be *that Man of Sin*, foretold in the Holy Scriptures, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and abolish with the brightness of His coming” (*Irish Articles of Religion*, 1615).

“There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 25:6, 1648).

“There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalts himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (*Savoy Declaration*, Article IV, 1658).

“Neither can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head [of the Church] thereof, but is no other than Antichrist, that Man of Sin and son of perdition, that exalts himself above all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (*Baptist Confession of 1688*).

### **Jonathan Edwards on the Papacy**

“There have been innumerable schemes secretly laid for the overthrow of the Protestant religion; one of the most likely to have taken effect was that in the time of King James II of England. There was at that time a strong conspiracy between the king of England and Louis XIV of France, who were both papists, to extirpate the Northern Heresy, as they called the Protestant religion, not only out of England, but out of all Europe.... They looked upon it, that if the Reformed religion were suppressed in the British realms, and in the Netherlands, which were the strongest part, and chief defense of the Protestant interest, they should have easy work with the rest.... Satan has opposed the Reformation with *cruel persecutions*. The persecutions with which the Protestants have been harassed by the

church of Rome, have in many respects been far beyond any of the heathen persecutions. So that Antichrist has proved the greatest and most cruel enemy to the church of Christ that ever was in the world” (*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 1, 598).

“The other remarkable instance is, the *fulfillment* of Scripture prophecy concerning *Antichrist*. The way that this Antichrist should arise, is foretold, *viz.*, by the falling away of the Christian church into a corrupt state: ‘For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition’ (2 *Thessalonians* 2:3). And it is prophesied, that this man of sin should set himself up in the temple or visible church, as head of the church, (verse 4). And all this is exactly come to pass in the church of Rome.... How literally has this come to pass with respect to the church of Rome! I might mention many other things which are foretold of Antichrist, and show that they were fulfilled most exactly in the pope and church of Rome. How strong an argument is this, that the Scriptures are the Word of God” (*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 1, 603-604).

### **John Wesley on the Papacy**

“*And the whole Earth wondered after the wild beast* – that is, followed him with wonder in his councils, his crusades, and his jubilees. *And they worshiped the dragon* – even in worshiping the beast, although they knew it not, and *worshiped the wild beast* – paying him such honor as was not paid to any merely secular potentate. That very title: ‘Our most holy Lord,’ was never given to any other monarch on Earth.... Nothing greater, nothing more blasphemous can be conceived than what the popes have said of themselves, especially before the Reformation.

“To blaspheme His Name – which many of the popes have done explicitly, and in the most dreadful manner...*and it was given him* – that is, God permitted him, to *make war with the saints* – with the Waldenses and Albigenses.... *that no man might buy or sell* – such edicts have been published long since against the poor Vaudois.... The name of the beast is that which he bears through his whole duration, *viz.*, that of *Papa* or *Pope*.... The whole succession of popes from Gregory VII, are undoubtedly Antichrist. Yet this hinders not, but that the last pope in this succession will be more eminently the Antichrist, the Man of Sin; adding to that of his predecessors a peculiar degree of wickedness from the bottomless pit. This individual person, as a pope, is the seventh head of the beast; as the Man of Sin, he is the eighth, or the beast himself.

“*And in her was found the blood of the prophets and saints* – there is no city under the Sun which has a title to Catholic-blood-guiltiness as Rome. The guilt of the blood shed under the heathen emperors has not been removed under the popes, but hugely multiplied. Nor is Rome accountable only for that which has been shed in the city, but for that shed in all the Earth. For at Rome, under the pope...were the bloody orders given; and wherever the blood of holy men was shed, there were the grand rejoicings for it. And what immense quantities of blood

have been shed by her agents! Charles IX of France, in his letter to Gregory XIII, boasts, that in, and not long after, the massacre of Paris, he had destroyed seventy thousand Huguenots. Some have computed, that from the year 1518 to 1548, fifteen millions of Protestants have perished by the war and the inquisition! This may be overcharged; but certainly the number of them in these thirty years, as well as since, is almost incredible. To these we may add innumerable martyrs, in ancient, middle, and late ages, in Bohemia, Germany, Holland, France, England, Ireland, and many other parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia" (*Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, 719).

### **Modern Misapprehension of Antichrist**

"How does it then come about that men are today disinclined to recognize the pope as the Antichrist? Whence this strange and deplorable fact that nearly all late 'believing' theologians hunt about for the Antichrist while he does his great and mighty work in the church right before their eyes? They are not established in the living knowledge of the doctrine of justification and in the importance of this doctrine for the church. From my own experience I must confess that in my own conscience I was not vitally convinced that the pope is the Antichrist until, on the one hand, I realized what the doctrine of justification is and what its significance is for the church, and, on the other hand, that the papacy has its real essence in denying and cursing the doctrine of justification, and by its show of piety and its claims to be the only saving church binds to itself men's consciences" (R. C. H. Lenski, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles*, 1937, 434-435).

### **The Papacy and the Worship of Corpses**

Richard Owen ("Times," March 3, 2008)  
San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy – The body of St. Padre Pio, one of Italy's most popular saints, was exhumed last night to be prepared for public veneration next month marking the 40th anniversary of his death and the 90th anniversary of the first appearance of stigmata on his hands and feet.

Capuchin friars at the sanctuary at San Giovanni Rotondo in southern Italy, where Padre Pio's tomb is visited by seven million pilgrims annually, said that "parts of the body" had been found to be "intact." Archbishop D'Ambrosio said the body was in "surprisingly good condition. As soon as we got inside the tomb we could clearly make out the beard. The top part of the skull is partly skeletal but the chin is perfect and the rest of the body is well preserved. The knees, hands, mittens and nails are clearly visible.... If Padre Pio allows me, I might say he looks as though he just had a manicure." The body would be placed in a glass covered coffin for veneration on 24 April for a period of "several months."

The exhumation – the first time the tomb had been opened since Padre Pio's death in 1968 – was approved by the Vatican despite opposition from some of the saint's

most ardent followers. Padre Pio's relatives had threatened to take the local archbishop to court if the corpse was exhumed, and a group of devotees had also threatened legal action.

Padre Pio was canonised by the late Pope John Paul II in 2002. His image is displayed in piazzas, homes, shops, garages and vehicles throughout Italy....

The exhumation of the saint, who was credited with over a thousand miraculous cures, had been approved by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The Congregation's Prefect, Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, noted that the body of Pope John XXIII, who died in 1963, had also been exhumed when he was beatified, the step before sainthood. The body was found to be unusually well preserved....

Followers of Padre Pio believe he exuded "the odour of sanctity," had the gift of bilocation (being in two places at once), healed the sick, and could prophesy the future.

Italian reports said the exhumation had been carried out in the middle of the night to avoid possible protests and disruptions. The saint's body had then been taken to a "secret location" to protect it both from protesters trying to retrieve it, and from "unscrupulous relic hunters."

## **Free Book Offer**

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