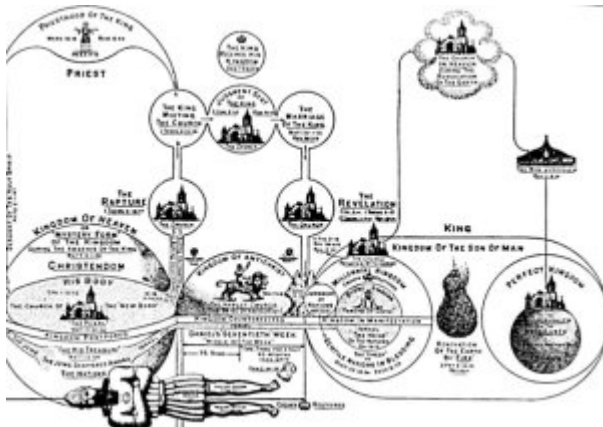


Fallacies Of Futurism – by Henry Grattan Guinness



Fallacies Of Futurism

A Reply To Futurist Objections To The Historic Interpretation Of Prophecy.

Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

Henry Grattan Guinness (1835-1910) was an Irish Protestant Christian preacher, evangelist and author. He started Harley College, also known as the East London Missionary Training School. A traveling preacher, he drew thousands to hear him during the Ulster Revival of 1859. Rev. Guinness trained and sent hundreds of "faith missionaries" all over the world. [Wikipedia]

Introduction

THREE YEARS having now elapsed since the publication of this volume, it is time to notice some replies and objections which have appeared to it.

No answer has been made, as far as we are aware, to the first section of the work devoted to the establishment of the truth of the premillennial advent of Christ. The opposite view seems to be abandoned now by most careful students of prophecy; and its promulgation amongst those who bestow but slight attention on the subject is effected less by argument, than by a tacit taking it for granted, and by an habitual employment of phraseology which assumes its truth. It is a view held mainly by those who have never examined the subject for themselves in the light of Scripture, and careful investigation generally leads to its abandonment. What is needed in order to the spread of the truth on this branch of the subject is instruction rather than controversy.

The second and third portions of this volume deal with questions on the other hand, which have long been subjects of controversy, and which indeed in the

nature of things must be so, even to the end of the age. The prophecies of the great apostasy – its history, character, and doom – cannot be expounded and applied without giving offense and raising opposition. The word of God is a sword – the sword of the Spirit, – and swords are designed for conflict. Prophetic truth is an important part of the aggressive armor of the Christian. The future is revealed in order that the Church being forewarned of secret and dangerous enemies may be forearmed against them. And how can these prophecies be used and applied without revealing and offending such enemies? Moreover, if the true comprehension and application of the prophecies would be a formidable weapon against prevailing error, we may be sure that the vigilant adversary of the Church would endeavor to substitute for it some false one, which should shield error from dangerous attack, and thus turn as it were the edge of the sword of the Spirit. Any interpretation of the prophecies of the Antichrist which did not excite controversy, would be proved to be a false one by this very fact. We must expect to find not only the enemies indicated, and all who sympathize with them, arrayed against the true interpretation, but also a variety of false interpretations springing up to distract attention from the true.

The second part of this book, "Progressive Interpretation," deals with the general principles on which the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation should be interpreted; and the third part, "Foretold and Fulfilled," traces the fulfillment of two of the most important of these prophecies, those of "Babylon the Great" and of "the beast".

Together they advocate what is commonly called the Historic or Protestant interpretation of these prophecies, as opposed to that appropriately denominated "Futurist." That is, they trace in the events which have occurred in the history of Christendom during the last eighteen centuries, and which are now occurring, the fulfillment of the predictions of "Babylon the Great" and the "beast," or man of sin, or Antichrist; regarding the Apocalypse consequently as, to a large extent, a fulfilled prophecy, instead of referring its predictions to the future, and speculating as to what their fulfillment will be.

Some futuristic answers to the volume have appeared which we will now briefly notice.

An appendix to a little pamphlet,¹ on "The Future of Europe," is entitled, "A Reply to Mr. Guinness' Work, 'The Approaching End of the Age.'"

The critic who undertakes to reply to a work of this character should at least be accurate in his statements of the views he opposes. The anonymous author of this little pamphlet is very much the reverse, and spends most of his strength in exposing and commenting on confusions which he has himself created. A peculiar tone of dogmatism which pervades his remarks is not calculated to produce conviction in thoughtful minds. The subject is one in which dogmatic assertion ill replaces solid argument and Scripture proof. This "reply" is, in fact, so superficial and inaccurate, that we should scarcely notice it at all, but for the fact that the objections raised in it are some of those most commonly brought forward by Futurists, and are of a nature to impress many minds as more solid than they really are. 1. "The

Future of Europe, what will it be? By one commonly called a Plymouth Brother." Fourth edition. (S. W. Partridge, Paternoster Row. G. Herbert, Dublin.)←

1. "The Woman" and "The Beast" of Revelation 17.

The first accusation is that a confusion is made in "The Approaching End of the Age" between "the woman" and "the beast" of Revelation 17.

"Mr. Guinness confounds 'the woman' and 'the beast' of the Apocalypse together as if they were one and the same creature, just as if one were the head and the other the body."

If this criticism is not intentionally unfair (which we do not think it is), it indicates most careless reading of the passage alluded to, or else great lack of accuracy of thought. It is distinctly argued in the volume that the two are not the same; that these widely different symbols represent realities equally distinct. One entire chapter is devoted to the consideration of the first, and a second and longer chapter to that of the second. The "woman" is interpreted in the light of its companion and contrasted symbol, "the bride the Lamb's wife," to be an apostate church – the Church of Rome; while the "beast" is interpreted in the light of the four beasts of Daniel – to be the Roman Empire, seen here under its last head – the man of sin, or Antichrist. If, therefore, there is no difference between a professing Christian Church and a great secular empire, then confusion is fairly chargeable on the "Approaching End of the Age"; but if the two are as different as possible, then the confusion is in the mind of the critic alone.

That there exists an important connection between the Roman Empire under its last governing head, and the Roman Catholic Church, is not, and cannot be, denied. The symbols employed distinctly show that connection to be close and of long continuance. The woman, or church, is supported or carried by the beast, or empire, for more than twelve centuries. The church and the empire in this its last stage, are not represented by two distinct and separate symbols, but by one double one. John saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, not a beast apart from a woman, nor a woman apart from a beast. He is told in explanation that the peoples, nations, and tongues forming the Latin Empire, under its last head, would first uphold and obey the woman, or church, and then in the end turn against and rend her. The beast would first bear her up, and accept her guidance, and then at last hate, insult, and destroy her; in either case the two are associated. There is a relation between them, but not identity. On page 227 the difference is thus stated: "There is a vast difference between the Papacy and the corrupt church which it founded, governed, and used as its tool; a difference less in degree, but similar in character, to that existing between the Head of the true Church, and that Church which He founded, governs, and employs as an instrument to accomplish His will in the world. Many things are true of the Lord Jesus that are not true of the Church which is His body, close and inseparable as is the connection between them. So, many things are true of the Popes of Rome which are not true of the Roman Catholic Church, close as is the connection between them. Widely different hieroglyphs are selected to prefigure the two in the Apocalypse, and yet the connection between them is

very clearly indicated; they are never confounded, yet never disjoined."

Could any statement more carefully avoid confusing the two? Christ is the Head of His body the Church, but Christ is also Son of God, Creator and upholder of all things, Judge of all men, God over all blessed for ever. The Church is not any of these, though very closely connected with Him who is!

So the Roman Empire, under its last ruling head – the Papal dynasty, is very closely connected with the apostate church; but that dynasty were not heads of a church merely; they were also European monarchs, temporal sovereigns, who, enthroned at Rome, succeeded to the empire of the Caesars, governed, and for more than twelve centuries united in the bond of a common obedience to themselves, all the nations of the Western Empire of Rome. The Church of Rome as such, never did this.

The beast is a political power; the woman is an ecclesiastical system; and these two are not one, whatever the relation between them.

Our futurist critics are an enigma to us! They cannot deny or be blind to certain grand historical facts. No one can fail to see how exactly the symbols of prophecy answer to these facts. Even Futurists admit this, and yet they deny that the symbols foretell the facts, and assert – what of course can neither be proved nor disproved – that they foretell other future events!

We have in the Apocalypse a great threefold symbol, and in the history of the period which has elapsed since John saw its visions, three great series of facts. These latter are: –

[1] The facts about the Roman Empire, including its course, history, character, and sway, its decline and fall, and its division into the kingdoms of modern Europe, with their subsequent common submission to the Popes of Rome.

[2] The facts about the Papal dynasty; how, from being simple bishops of a local church, the Popes of Rome rose to be first universal bishops, and then temporal sovereigns, crowned monarchs, holding and governing large states, possessing and employing armies, and collecting revenues as kings. How they rose further to be kings of kings in Europe, so that "all the kings of the West revered the Pope as a god on earth." How Charlemagne, and John of England, and Francis the First of France, and the Emperor Henry of Germany, as well as all the lesser princes of Europe, did homage to the Popes of Rome, and paid them tribute, as their ancestors did to the Caesars. How they became and continued for ages to be the mightiest power in Western Europe, uniting its various kingdoms under their own sway as one Latin empire.

[3] The facts about the Church of Rome, its character, conduct, past dominion, present decadence, and loss of influence over the continental nations, together with the facts of the Reformation, and the total withdrawal from the Roman Catholic Church of all the Protestant nations. Now bearing in mind Scripture usage elsewhere, what symbols could more appropriately prefigure these three series of closely related, yet distinct facts, than the three that are chosen?

[1] For the Roman Empire as a whole, a wild beast resembling Daniel's fourth (especially in having connected with it ten horns, and a singular power of evil), but differing from that earlier symbolization by having seven heads or successive forms of government, five of which had already fallen in John's day, the sixth was then regnant, and the seventh had "not yet come." This, when it did come, was to continue but a short space, and to be followed by an all important eighth and last.

[2] The Papal dynasty is symbolized as this eighth and last head of this Roman beast, and is represented as a power which would run a dreadful career of self-exaltation, blasphemy, opposition to God, and persecution of His saints for "forty and two months" (the miniature symbol employed in this consistently miniature symbolic prophecy, for 1260 years; the same period assigned to the "little horn" of Daniel's earlier symbol of the Roman Empire). The deadly wound foretold the destruction of Roman supremacy in Western Europe, on the fall of Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman Emperor who ruled at Rome; its healing, the revival and long continuance of Roman political supremacy under the Popes when the Potentates of Europe were crowned and uncrowned at pleasure by them.

[3] The Church of Rome is symbolized as a woman of false, corrupt, degraded, cruel character, yet exerting a marvelous universal influence over the nations of Western Europe. A woman at first and for long upborne by them (as a State Church), and as at last despised and despoiled by them. The complexity of the symbols answers to the complexity of the events themselves, and the apparent contradictions exist as much in the facts as in the figures.

The figures answer the facts. There is a woman, a seven-headed tenhorned wild beast, and an eighth head of that beast. So there is a church, an empire, and an eighth form of government or succession of rulers in that empire. The interrelation between these three in the symbols is exactly answered by what is recorded in the history of the past, and what exists in the events of the present. Why object to such an interpretation of the symbols as exactly fits the acknowledged facts of the case?

2. The Roman Empire "Removed"

The second contradiction charged is thus expressed:

"Mr. Guinness states that the Roman Empire was to be put out of the way and removed, according to ancient tradition, before the man of sin was revealed, and yet he states that this man of sin was to be one of the horns of the same empire according to the prophet Daniel, and the eighth head of the beast according to St. John... The empire could not be out of the way and in the way at the same time. This is the first great contradiction which covers the whole book."

Our critic has here again failed to master the subject of which he treats. A little more patient study would have saved him from misrepresentation or mistake. The Roman Empire is represented as existing under seven heads or successive forms of government. Five of these had already fallen in John's time, a sixth was then in existence, a seventh was to arise and continue a

short space, be apparently wounded to death, and then revive, and this revived seventh or eighth head, the last form of Roman power, is interpreted as representing the Papacy. What is asserted, is simply that the Roman power as existing in St. John's day, the empire of the Caesars, was the hindrance to the development of the Papal dynasty, the man of sin mentioned by Paul. This qualification, "as then existing," removes every shadow of apparent contradiction. It is tantamount to saying that it was needful that in a succession of symbolic heads, the sixth and seventh must fall before the eighth could appear; in other words, that in a series of successive forms of government, exercised from Rome, the Pagan must pass away before the Papal could be established. While the Caesars ruled on the Tiber, the bishops of Rome had no chance of becoming monarchs, but when the Western Empire of Rome fell, under the inroads of the Gothic barbarians, then the bishops of Rome began to develop into temporal sovereigns, and to lay the foundations for the more than regal and imperial power which they so long wielded from Rome.

That the Thessalonians and the early fathers did not understand that "the man of sin" was to be another form of Roman power has nothing to do with the matter. They did not understand a great deal that was revealed to them, nor were they intended to do so; not unto them but unto us were these things to be made plain; but they did understand clearly that the Roman empire under which they lived was the hindrance to the development of the great predicted power of evil. Their testimony on this point is unanimous, and bad as the rule of the Caesars was, they expected, on the strength of this prophecy, a worse state of things to succeed on its fall. There was nothing in the revelation made to them to show them where the man of sin should rise, but only when; but understanding as we do from later revelations, and from the fulfillments which the lapse of time has brought, that the man of sin is of Roman origin, and is the last form of Roman rule, we can see how needful it was that the old Pagan form should be "taken out of the way" before the Christian, Papal form could appear, and be established.

Daniel's fourfold image and the vision of the four beasts both represent the Roman power as continuing in existence up to the time of the second advent, and as being destroyed only by it. They represent it as rising on the fall of the Grecian power, and as occupying the whole interval between that date and the close; there is no break or gap in the image, and the fourth beast continues till the second advent. Hence since the old empire of Rome, ended in the fifth century, *some other form of power exercised from Rome must have risen*, must now be in existence, and awaiting; destruction by the second advent of Christ. What other power than the Papacy has replaced the old Roman Empire, ruled Western Europe from Rome for the last twelve centuries, and united in one body under one head the ten horns or kingdoms which rose out of its ruins?

3. The Ten Kings

The next contradiction is:

"Mr. Guinness finds all the ten kings in the Western division of the old Roman Empire, and none in the Eastern, as if ten toes were on one foot."

This objection is based on a pure assumption, and betrays besides a superficial study of the prophecies in question. It is assumed that the two legs of the image represent the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire. This cannot be proved, and indeed it can be very distinctly disproved. It is true that the fourth empire is represented by the two legs and feet of the image; but it is the attire course of the empire that is so represented, not the brief stage of twofold division, which occupied only one century of the twenty-five of Rome's history. The Grecian Empire, which was never twofold, is similarly represented by the two thighs of brass. The nature of the symbol – a human figure – required that the legs should be two. The division of the Roman Empire into eastern and western is not prefigured at all in either of Daniel's prophecies. It was merely one of several similar partitions which arose in the era of Rome's decline and fall; (Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* chap, xviii. xxv.) and its main effect was to sever the territory peculiar to Rome from the Greek provinces of the East, as if to define the sphere in which the ten horns were to rise.

Moreover a very little consideration will show that prophecy regards the four empires as being as distinct in territory as in time; as distinct in geographical boundaries as in chronological limits. They rise in a definite sequence; the supreme dominion of one does not in point of time overlap the supreme dominion of the following one, nor is the territory of a former "beast" or empire ever regarded as belonging to a later one or though it may have been actually conquered. Each has its own proper theater or body, and the bodies continue to exist after the dominion is taken away. This is distinctly stated, both in connection with the fourfold image and with the four beasts. In the first case the stone falls upon the clay and iron feet only, but the iron legs, the brazen body, the silver breast, and the golden head, are all by it "broken to pieces together." Now the empires represented by these have long since passed away. They cannot therefore be "broken to pieces" by the second advent. But the territory once occupied by them is still existing and still populous, and will fall under the premillennial judgments of the day of Christ just as much as Rome itself. It all lies within the scope of apostate Christendom.

Similarly we read (Dan. 7:12) that the three earlier beasts did not cease to be when the fourth arose. "Their dominion was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." That is, the three first empires are said to co-exist with the fourth after their dominion has ended. This proves that they are regarded as distinct in place as well as in time. They continue to be recognized as territorial divisions of the earth after the disappearance of their political supremacy. Now the Eastern Empire of Rome occupied precisely the same territory as the Grecian Empire, or "thighs of brass." It cannot therefore be one of the legs of iron, or be regarded as forming any part of the empire proper and peculiar to Rome. The ten horns of the fourth empire must none of them be sought in the realms of the third, second, or first, but exclusively in the realm of the fourth, or in the territory peculiar to Rome, and which had never formed part either of the Grecian, Medo-Persian, or Babylonian empires. The master mind of Sir Isaac Newton perceived this long ago! He says: "Seeing the body of the third beast is confined to the nations on this side the Euphrates, and the body of the

fourth beast is confined to the nations on this side of Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast among the nations on this side the Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns of the fourth beast among the nations on this side of Greece. Therefore we do not reckon the Greek Empire seated at Constantinople among the horns of the fourth beast, because it belonged to the body of the third."

4. Antichrist Power "A King"

The next objection is a very weak one. It is to the effect that the power called Antichrist is to be a secular one – a king; that the Papal dynasty cannot be the Antichrist because the Popes are not kings but ecclesiastical rulers, heads of a church.

The reply is simple. The Popes were kings as well as priests; they exercised temporal power as well as spiritual; they ranked as sovereigns in Europe. The formula of investiture with the tiara was, and still is: "Receive this triple crown, and know that thou art the father of princes, the king and ruler of the world." The Pope claimed to be subject to no power on earth, but king of kings, and for ages he acted accordingly. "Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St Peter," says Gibbon, "the nations began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate." The Pope had armies, fleets, and ambassadors, not as a priest, but as a king. Cannot two utterly distinct offices be united in one and the same individual? And were not two such offices so united for more than a thousand years in the persons of the Popes of Rome?

5. Antichrist's "Covenant with the Jews"

The next objection, or group of objections, is embodied in the following list of questions:

"But besides this, Mr. Guinness denies that 'the Antichrist cometh' (ὁ ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται – 1 John 2:18). There is no Antichrist to come, for he has come already in the Papacy. But when did the Papacy make a Covenant with the Jews, and take away the daily sacrifice, and set up in its stead the abomination of desolation at Jerusalem, as the Lord said to the Jews? And again our Lord says, 'If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive,' All the passages that speak of these things must be blotted out. For when did the Pope make a covenant with the Jews, or when did the Jews ever 'receive' a Pope as their Messiah? or by what scriptural authority is the idolatrous building of St. Peter's, at Rome, called 'The Temple of God'? or why are the Jews and Jerusalem altogether excluded from Mr. Guinness' theory? Have they nothing to do with Antichrist in the last days? or with Daniel's days and the 'little horn' or last king?"

To reply first to the first of these assertions, does the writer mean to imply that because Antichrist was a future power in the days of John, therefore he must needs be a future power still? That were a foolish assumption indeed! If he has come already, of course he is not still to come! The real question to be considered is just this: Has he come already? Has every prediction about Antichrist been fulfilled in the history of the

Papacy? We have shown that such is the case.

The questions which follow assume that certain leading predictions have not been so fulfilled. But before this assumption can have any weight, it must first be proved that the predictions in question refer to Antichrist at all; and this cannot be proved, but can on the contrary be very clearly disproved.

[1] It is assumed, as if it were demonstrable, that Antichrist is to make a covenant with the Jews, who will receive him as their Messiah; that he is then to break his covenant with them, take away the daily sacrifice, or put down their religion by persecution.

Not only by this writer, but by all writers of the Futurist school, are these supposed future acts of the supposed future Antichrist largely discussed and gravely insisted on. To hear their disquisitions on the subject, one would suppose that "Antichrist's seven years covenant with the Jews" was as unquestionable an event as God's covenant with Israel on Sinai! Few would surmise how frail the foundation on which this cardinal doctrine of Futurism rests! Few would suppose that the notion has really no solid ground at all in Scripture, but is derived from an erroneous interpretation of one single clause of one single text! The only basis for the idea is the expression in the 27th verse of the 9th chapter of Daniel: "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." The sentence occurs in the midst of Daniel's celebrated prophecy of the seventy weeks, a prophecy which does not even allude to Antichrist, but is exclusively occupied with the first advent of Christ, His rejection and death, and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, which was the result!

Interpreted in the light of history, as a fulfilled prophecy, this remarkable chronological prediction affords conclusive evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, of the inspiration of Scripture, and of the Divine origin of the Christian faith. One of the gravest evils of Futurism is the terrible way in which it tampers with this great fundamental prophecy, applying to the future doings of some ideal Antichrist its Divine description of the past deeds of the historic Christ.

What are the words of this sacred and marvelous prediction given between five and six hundred years before Christ? "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

"And He (Messiah) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (or

during the one or last week): and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it (i.e., the city) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" or desolator (Dan. 9:24-27).

This prophecy was given just as the seventy years' captivity in Babylon was drawing to a close. It announced the duration of the restored national existence of Israel up to the great epoch of all history, the advent of Messiah the Prince. It was foretold that within 490 years from the date of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem, the long foreshadowed, long predicted supreme atonement for sin was to be accomplished by the advent of Messiah the Prince, reconciliation for iniquity effected, and everlasting righteousness brought in; that vision and prophecy should be sealed up, and the most Holy anointed.

The period was then subdivided into three parts: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week; i.e., 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. The rebuilding of the city, and the re-establishment of the Jewish polity would occur in the first forty-nine years or "seven weeks." Four hundred and thirty-four years more would elapse, and then Messiah the Prince would appear. After that, at some time not exactly specified, but within the limits of the seventieth week or last seven years of the period, Messiah would be cut off; but not for Himself. It is further foretold that Jerusalem and its temple would subsequently, and as a consequence, be destroyed, and that a flood of foreign invasion would overflow the land. But though thus cut off, Messiah would confirm the covenant with many (not the whole nation) during the course of the "one week" (i.e., the last week of the seventy); in the midst of it He would "cause sacrifice and oblation to cease." Jerusalem should then be made desolate, until a certain predetermined doom should fall upon the power that should desolate it; a fact which our Lord afterwards foretold in the words, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

All this was accomplished with wonderful exactness. The edict to restore and build the city was issued by Artaxerxes, and Ezra and Nehemiah were the two great restorers of the Jewish people, polity, and religion. Their joint administration occupied about "seven weeks," or forty-nine years; the wall and the street were rebuilt in troublous times. After the lapse of 434 years more, Messiah the Prince did appear, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; i.e., the time indicated by this very prophecy. He came unto His own, and alas! His own received Him not! He was cut off, but not for Himself! Shortly after the Roman soldiery—"the people of a prince that shall come (Titus) did destroy the city and the sanctuary; the end of Jewish independence came with a flood of foreign invasion, and predetermined desolation fell on land and people. But though the nation was thus judged, Messiah did "confirm the covenant" with many; not with Israel as a people, but with an election according to grace.

What covenant? and how did He confirm it? "This is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you," said He to His disciples the night before His passion (Luke 22:20); or as Matthew and Mark give the words: "This is My

blood of His new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "He shall confirm the covenant with many," said the angel to Daniel. "My blood of the new covenant shed for many," said Christ. Is not His blood declared to be "the blood of the everlasting covenant"? And is not He Himself repeatedly styled "the Mediator of the new covenant"? (See Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.) And can any Bible student doubt what is the event predicted, when in immediate connection with the coming and cutting off of Messiah, it is added, "He shall confirm the covenant with many"? (See also Heb. 8.) What excuse is there for introducing into this most solemn and touching prophecy of the life and death and work of Christ, the political action of some future Antichrist? It is a needless, groundless, unpardonable discord! Antichrist making a league with the Jews! What? in a prophecy which speaks of the accomplishing of atonement, of the making an end of sin, of the effecting of reconciliation, of the bringing in of everlasting righteousness! What has Antichrist to do here? Oh! he is the "prince that shall come" of verse 26, it is said. Impossible! That prince was the prince of the people who did the deed here predicted, destroyed the temple and city of Jerusalem in consequence of the Jewish rejection of Messiah. That must be Titus, for it was his soldiery that did this! Then where is Antichrist in this prophecy? It is replied that even granting the earlier reference to be to Titus, still it is Antichrist who in the midst of the week causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease! No! the Actor is one and the same in all the clauses of verse 27 – Messiah Himself! Who else put an end to the sacrifices offered by the law continually, and caused them to cease by the offering of one sacrifice for sins for ever? Who else by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified? What was it that did actually, as a matter of historic fact, cause Jewish sacrifice and oblation to cease? "The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" that offering which took place "in the midst of the week," – that is, in the course of the seventieth of Daniel's predicted weeks, the one week which stands alone at the close, – the week which comprised the earthly ministry and the atoning death of the Son of God, the giving of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the formation of the Christian Church.

Christ and His work are the one great theme of this prophecy. The judgments that should overtake the Jews for rejecting Him, and Titus and the Romans by whom those judgments were to be inflicted, are mentioned, but there is no allusion to Antichrist.

How could there be? *490 years includes chronologically the events foretold here*, and Antichrist is not yet come according to Futurist views! How then could he figure in a prediction which expired chronologically 1,800 years ago? Oh, it is said, "The angel said 490 years, but he meant 490 plus 1,800 or 2,000 years; there is a chronological gap of this length between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth weeks. The last week has not begun yet. When it does begin, Antichrist will appear and make his covenant with the Jews."

To state such a theory ought to suffice for its refutation! Language has lost all meaning if a definite period of 490 years, interposed between two great historical events, may be extended by two thousand years! Prophetic revelations of such a character would be worse than none; for they would be

misleading and deceptive. Not thus was the forty years' wandering in the wilderness lengthened! Not thus was the Babylonian captivity measured! If God condescends to give chronological predictions at all, they will be truthful, accurate, divinely exact! The events mentioned as occurring in the midst of the last week, *occurred within 490 years from the Edict of Artaxerxes*, They are long, long past. The prophecy is a fulfilled prophecy. The judgments on the Christ-rejecting nation continue, it is true, and will continue till the end of this age; "even until the consummation, and that determined be poured upon the desolator." But the object of the prophecy was not to announce these judgments, but to measure the interval to Messiah the Prince. It was given to intimate beforehand the period of the greatest events of all history, the greatest events of time, not to say the greatest events of eternity, the atoning death of the Son of God, and the establishment of the new covenant.

The majority of the questions asked in the extract quoted, are answered by these considerations. The last, however, deserves a word of additional reply: "Why are the Jews and Jerusalem altogether excluded from Mr, Guinness' theory?"

The answer is simple. They are not excluded; on the contrary, they fill a very large place. The past history, and future restoration of the Jews, occupy most prominent positions on the pages of inspiration. But in prophecies of events to take place during the course of "the times of the Gentiles" or present age, the Jews are to a large extent overlooked. They are the natural branches of the olive tree, but they are for the present "broken off." They knew not the day of their visitation, and the kingdom of God is for the present taken from them and given to others. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved." Hence the great antichristian power, symbolized as "the little horn," and called the "man of sin," and the eighth head of the beast, being the last form of Gentile power, and belonging to these "times of the Gentiles," has little to do with the literal Israel, or the literal Jerusalem, or the literal Temple.

He co-exists not with a recognized Jewish nation, but with the rejection and dispersion of the Jews, and with a recognized professing Christian Church. His sphere is not Palestine, but Christendom; his throne is not Jerusalem, but Rome; his victims are not Jews, but Christians; his end and doom are brought about by that event which marks the commencement of the restoration of Israel to God's favor – the second advent of Christ; when Israel shall look on Him whom they pierced, and mourn because of Him, and when the times of the Gentiles shall be ended.

6. Amended Reading of Rev. 17:16

Another main objection to the historic view, is founded on an amended reading of Rev. 17:16.

It is asserted that the correct reading of this verse is, "the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast," instead of "the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast." This difference, though apparently slight, is important, for if the amended reading were correct, the passage would present

the Antichrist in the light of an opponent and destroyer of Babylon, (the Roman Catholic Church), and would, of course, preclude the historic interpretation, which makes the symbol to mean the Papal dynasty.

The reply is twofold. First, if the amended reading were the true one, it would not create any real difficulty; but, secondly, the context proves that it is not the true one.

If the true reading were "and the beast," it would suffice to remove any apparent difficulty, to point out that the expression "the beast," is used in two senses. It is used sometimes distinctively of the Roman Empire under its eighth and last form of government, but it is used as often of the empire as an historic, chronologic whole, the symbol identical with that used in Daniel to prefigure the fourth of the great universal empires, regarded in its entirety.

This is natural. The body of a beast is, of course, distinct from its head or heads. The body includes the territory, the mass of the people governed, with their fleets and armies, and apparatus for persecution and war, the entire empire as distinct from its rulers. If the amended reading were correct, the word "beast" in the verse in question, must be taken in its broadest sense, and the statement made in it would then be, that the kingdoms of Western Europe, the mass of the people as well as their rulers, the entire body politic, "the ten horns and the beast," should at last hate the whore, or corrupt Roman Catholic Church, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and bum her with fire; that is, forsake her and strip her of her glory, eject her religious orders, limit the powers of her priesthood, refuse her doctrines, scoff at her authority, appropriate her revenues and substance to secular uses, and adjudge her to destruction.

The verse, in short, would foretell in symbolic language the state of things amidst which we live.

The nations of modern Europe do thus hate the Roman Catholic Church to which in bygone ages they all yielded admiration, affection, and obedience. The last century has witnessed an ever-growing and deepening disaffection on their part towards the Church, whose true nature they have at length discovered, as one which has loved them not for their sakes or for their good, but for filthy lucre's sake to their injury. Rulers and peoples have alike lost their love of Popery, and despise and hate and oppose ultramontaniam; they seek to be freed from the odious incubus they have so long borne; and not only are the kings of Europe of this mind, but the masses of the people, "the ten horns and the beast," regarded as a whole.

The full results of this modern movement are not seen yet, it is only in progress.

To make a difficulty of what is a clear and present fact seems foolish. Do we not at this moment see around us in all Christendom a state of things answering to these symbols? The very nations which for ages, under the Papacy, upheld and obeyed the Catholic Church, now hating, despising, despoiling, and destroying it! _These nations are "the beast" or body of the

Roman Empire under the ten horns, their present rulers. Peoples and kings agree in their opposition to Popery and priestcraft.

But while this is a perfectly legitimate reply, we lay no stress on this solution of a difficulty created by the acceptance of what we believe to be a wrong reading, even though on merely critical grounds its claims may be strong. The fact is that the MS. authority is seriously divided, some of the ancient Greek MSS. giving the old reading, as also the Vulgate and other early versions and expositors. In such a case, the immediate context should surely be allowed to settle the question.

Now the following verse, referring to the actors mentioned in this verse, says **they** give their power and strength "unto the beast:" the "they" therefore, cannot include the beast; and hence the reading which substitutes "and" for "upon" is grammatically inadmissible. It would be absurd to say, that the "ten horns and the beast... give their kingdom unto the beast," for that would be to assert that the beast gives his kingdom to himself!

The point to be noticed is this, the parties who hate and destroy the woman, in verse 16, are the same as those who give their power to the beast (whoever he is), in verse 17, and, therefore, the beast cannot be one of them. Hence, the proposed reading is demonstrated by the local context to be inadmissible, and the beast is not presented in the light of an opposer and destroyer of Babylon.

The Dynastic Character of the Antichrist

The dynastic character of the Antichrist is confirmed by the following consideration. The identity of the eighth head in chapter 17 and the revived head of chapter 13 is evident. Now the duration of this latter (forty and two months) is the duration also –

1. Of the "little horn" wearing out the saints (Dan. 7).
2. Of the treading down of the Holy City (Rev. 11).
3. Of the sackcloth prophesying of the witnesses (chap. 11).
4. Of the sojourning woman in the wilderness (chap. 12).

The vision of Babylon the Great, the blasphemous, idolatrous, drunken, corrupt woman seated on a wild beast, and reigning in the wilderness, over "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" does not stand alone in Revelation, but is contrasted with another vision in chapter 12, of a pure heavenly woman, the object of Satanic hate, driven into, and suffering in, the wilderness by persecution, but nourished and preserved there in spite of all her foes.

It is admitted on both sides, that Babylon represents the corrupt Church of Rome, the impure, false, unfaithful, idolatrous, persecuting Church. Now the period of the supremacy of the Church of Rome – the dark ages – was historically the period also of the persecution and recession of the true Church. While Babylon reigned, Zion mourned; while Rome was triumphant, the

saints suffered, they were driven into Waldensian fastnesses, into inquisition dungeons, into cruel exile: aye, and driven in thousands by fire and sword right out of the world, so that, but for the help of God, the true Church would have been altogether exterminated.

The *chronological measures* of this period of the depression and persecution of the true Church are given in Revelation 12, as 1,260 days, and as “time, times, and a half.” The historical fulfillment proves that this mystic period must be interpreted on the year-day scale, and that it means 1,260 years: those twelve centuries of the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church, during which the true Church – like the seven thousand in the days of Elijah who had not bowed the knee to Baal but were hidden for fear of “that woman Jezebel” – was as it were invisible, driven into the wilderness.

Now this same period, under another mystic name, “forty and two months,” is the period assigned to the revived eighth head of the beast (chap. 3:5). This Antichrist therefore reigns, during the entire time that Babylon drunk with blood is supreme, and the true Church persecuted to the death, is lost to view; i.e., during the whole dark ages!

How then can Antichrist be an individual, who is yet to run a brief future career of blasphemy and cruelty?

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