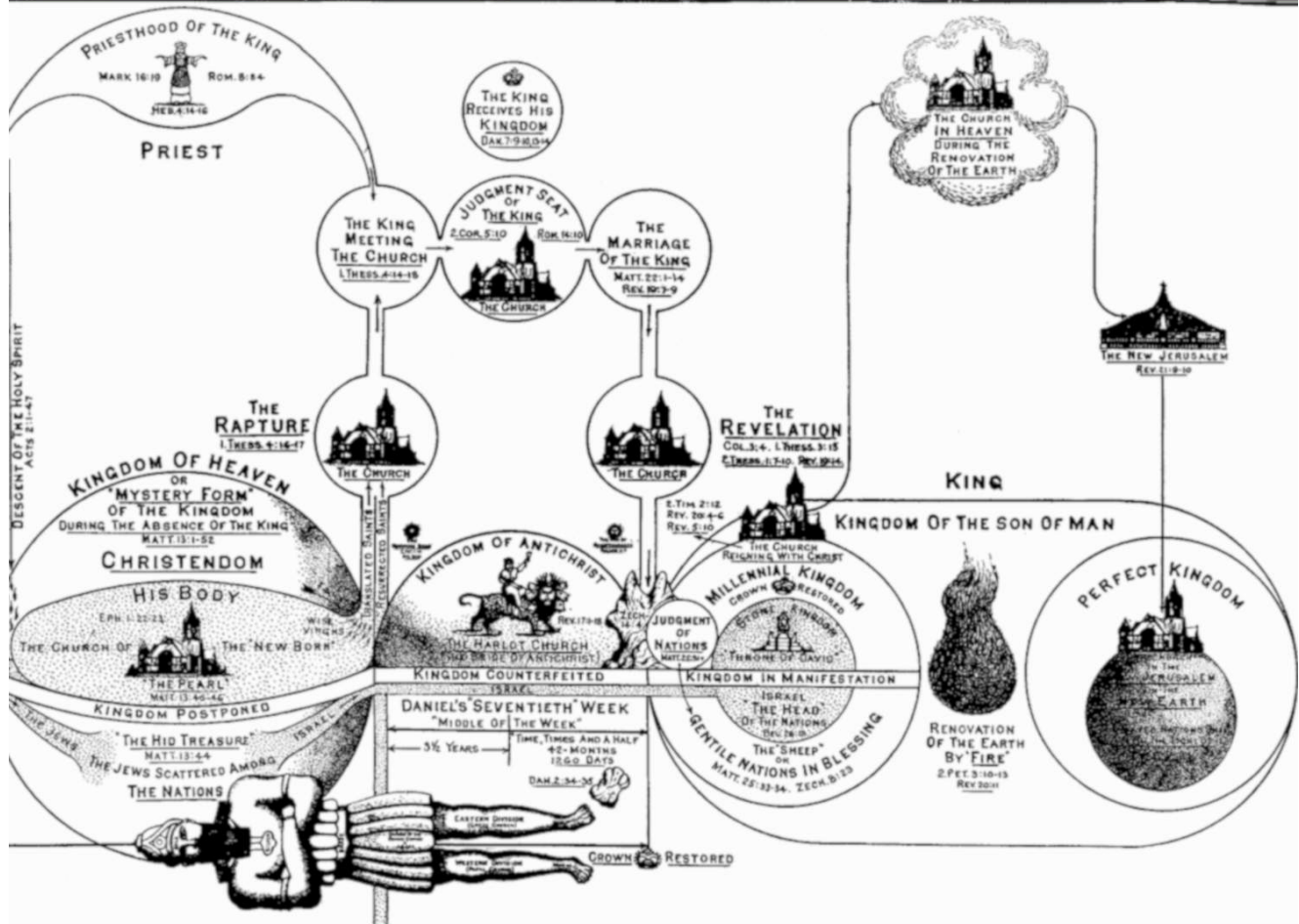


Henry Grattan Guinness

Fallacies of Futurism



Fallacies Of Futurism: A Reply To Futurist Objections To The Historic Interpretation Of Prophecy.

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Fallacies Of Futurism: A Reply To Futurist Objections To The Historic Interpretation Of Prophecy.

*Being A Reprint Of The New Appendix
To The Eighth Edition Of 'the
Approaching End Of The Age'*

Henry Grattan Guinness

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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]

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Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we’ll make sure they are corrected.

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.)↩

Fallacies of Futurism

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 ten-horned 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 the 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 ail” 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 burn 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?

Professor Birks

Two years after the publication of this volume there appeared some “Thoughts on the Times and Seasons of Sacred Prophecy” from the keen, masterly, and accurate mind of Professor Birks, of Cambridge. This little work possesses a sad and almost sacred interest, from the fact that before it had passed through the press, its gifted and invaluable author was laid low by the severe stroke of illness from which he has never since rallied. These “thoughts” may consequently be the last he will impart to the Church on this great subject, and for this, as well as for other reasons, they deserve, and doubtless will receive, the most respectful attention of students of the prophetic word. Though this is not the place for a review of Professor Birks’ book as a whole, yet we must not pass unnoticed its remarks on “The Approaching End of the Age.”

These are mainly, though not wholly, commendatory, and it is no small gratification to the author to have such approval, and to know that one to whom he owes considerable light on this subject, and through whose writings he received much helps, rejoiced in the publication of this volume. Professor Birks says:

“I believe we have now, in 1880, readied the last night-watch of the great Saturday of the world’s history. The two works of Mr. E. B. Elliott and Mr. Grattan Guinness, the ‘Horae Apocalypticae’ and ‘The

Approaching End of the Age,' may be said conjointly to indicate a penultimate stage of prophetic exposition."

He speaks of this book as "worthy of most careful study by every thoughtful observer of the ways of Providence, and every sharer in the great hope of the Christian Church," and he seems to endorse and agree with all its main views. He mentions the chapters on the "Law of Completion in Weeks" as "mainly original and highly interesting," and agrees generally with the section on "The Divine System of Times and Seasons." He notes with interest some of the remarkable facts to which this volume first attracted attention; as, for instance, that 2,520, the number of the years of "the times of the Gentiles," is arithmetically a most remarkable number — the least common multiple of the first ten numbers, and, consequently, one of extreme divisibility; that the added 75 years of Dan. 12. is the exact of the whole times of the Gentiles; and that the duration of the four Pagan empires of antiquity was exactly 1,260 lunar years.

In the main he also endorses the chronology adopted and followed in this book, He discusses in turn the chronological systems of Mr. Cunningham, Dr. Jarvis, Canon Browne (*Ordo Saeculorum*), and Gresswell (*Prolegomena*); and he adds: "Mr. Guinness' book, in care and accuracy, is a refreshing contrast to the errors, and the special or general inaccuracies, of the four systems I have named... His remarks include many elements which are both true and deeply suggestive." He then proceeds to express in the following terms a doubt which had occurred to his mind as to the importance to be attached to the numerical properties of the exacts of the prophetic times.

"It seems to me very doubtful whether much of the specialty on which Mr. Guinness founds this part of his theory is not due to a partial selection unconsciously made, of some exact numbers out of many, and that the special relations of the exacts to the numbers 6, 7, 8, 13 would probably disappear on a comprehensive examination of all exact numbers."

In reply to this, we can only say that in the course of the prolonged and careful study we devoted to this subject, we found the exacts of the times of

Sacred History and Prophecy to be in the strictest sense peculiar in their septiform and octave characters.

The calculations published in this volume constitute a very minute fraction of those performed in the process of research, and the conclusions here reached are the results of a very wide induction, if not of an exhaustive one. As Mr. Birks himself says, "Without this labor (that of an exhaustive induction) we may trace in the sacred times of Scripture many features indicative of a Divine plan." This is all "The Approaching End of the Age" professes to do.¹

The only points which Professor Birks indicates as needing correction in "The Approaching End of the Age" are two, one chronological and the other doctrinal. The former is a slight difference of one year in the dates assigned to the nativity and crucifixion of our Lord. Mr. Birks, in common with Gresswell, Alford, Wordsworth, and others, accepts B.C. 5 and A.D. 30; while we have been led, in common with Lactantius, Augustine, Origen, Tertullian, Benson, Brown, Ideler, Bianchini, Sanclemonti, and many others, to think that the true date of the crucifixion is the spring of A.D. 29, and consequently B.C. 6 that of the nativity, since our Lord was about thirty years of age at His baptism, and His ministry lasted three and a half years. We consider also that the earthly lifetime of our Lord was probably three months longer than Mr. Birks believes it to have been, but it is impossible to arrive at absolute certainty on these questions,

Mr. Birks says: "The question of a year earlier or later, can be rightly decided only by a careful historical investigation of the Passover dates and the courses of the priests. I have made this investigation, and hope shortly to publish it in a work on the historical basis of the Gospels."

We can only add our sincere desire that this investigation may yet be published, notwithstanding the serious illness of its author. We are open to conviction on this, or any other point, if further light on the subject is forthcoming. The difference is in some respects unimportant, for as Mr. Birks, in closing his remarks, says: "My view, in which both events are placed one year later, fully satisfies whatever is sound in Mr. Guinness' own theory. My conclusion is that the earthly lifetime of our Lord was thirty-three solar years and four month or thirty-four lunar years and four months... Thus a slight correction of Mr. Guinness' hypotheses only

confirms and redoubles the evidence for the general principle, and frees it from some of the details that disguise and obscure the simplicity of the main idea.”

Before leaving this point, we must indicate one slight error in Mr. Birks’ own statements, as it is not only a mistake, but a misrepresentation, accidental of course, of one of the important statements of “The Approaching End of the Age.” He says: p. 54, and the mistake appears twice on p, 122; “Now seventy-five is the exact epact, or the excess in the complete period of seven times, or 2,520 years, of the number of lunar years over the solar, 2,520 solar years being 2,595 lunar years.”

This last statement is incorrect. 2,520 solar years are not 2,595, but 2,597 $\frac{1}{3}$ lunar years. The epact of this period is not 75 lunar, but **seventy-five solar years** (see pages 442-448).

Mr. Birks also says " that the interval of thirty-three years, seven months, seven days" (which we have called “The Emmanuel Cycle,” and believe to have measured the earthly lifetime of our Lord) “is not a cycle at all.” This is true if the word cycle be used in the limited sense of “The coincidence of an integer with an integer period.” But the word has also another meaning. A cycle is a circle, a perpetual round of any kind. The annual revolution of the sun is a cycle, though it does not answer to Mr. Birks’ definition. The period in question is a cycle in this sense, that during its course the sun gains on the moon one entire annual revolution.

The doctrinal point on which Mr, Birks seems to differ with the views expressed in this volume, is that of the judgment of saints. He fully agrees with the main principle that revelation teaches that judgment like resurrection, is to be accomplished in two successive stages, differing alike in their period, character, and issue; but he seems to think that we have further stated, that the saints are not to come into judgment at all.

This is a clear case of misunderstanding: and a perusal of pp. 76, 77, and 78 ought to clear it up. We hold, as distinctly and strongly as Mr. Birks, that a we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," but we believe that in the judgment of saints, the question is one of their works and not of their eternal destiny. At the same time, we must confess that we cannot agree with Mr. Birks in rejecting Alford’s corrected reading of John 5:24,

which has been confirmed since by the Revised Version, and which is sustained, as it appears to us, by the context.

Robert Anderson's Futurism

Some strictures on this volume, though no attempt to reply to it, have also appeared in a strongly futuristic exposition of the seventy weeks of Daniel, published this year.²

On one or two minor points this author has detected some verbal inaccuracies in "The Approaching End of the Age," which he politely terms "blunders." They are in reality statements in which (as the context abundantly proves) expressions not strictly correct, yet perfectly legitimate, because evidently elliptical, are for brevity's sake employed. It is not worth while to dwell further on these.

Some of the other objections raised by this writer are sufficiently answered in the preceding remarks; but there remain one or two on which it seems needful to enlarge somewhat more fully.

Dr. Anderson gives us quite too much honor in saying "Mr. Elliott's mantle appears now to have fallen on the author of 'The Approaching End of the Age.'"

Would that it were so! Would that we could serve the Church in the exposition of the prophetic word as did that learned, pious, patient, and enlightened teacher!

But we have made no attempt whatever in this volume to expound the Apocalypse, and though Dr. Anderson may credit us with a wholesale adoption of Mr. Elliott's views, he does so without any warrant. We doubt the wisdom of attempting to explain the entire book, and to interpret every symbol, nor can we adopt Mr. Elliott's view as to the structure of the book, the interpretation of the seals, or some other points. But without this it is possible to be assured that the Apocalypse is a symbolic prophecy of the main events in the history of the Church during this dispensation; and that the prophecies of Babylon and "the beast" are largely fulfilled. We should be sorry to be bound by any system in the study of this wondrous revelation, and while diligently availing ourselves of light from any source,

would study the Apocalypse with teachable, unbiased mind, and allow it to produce its own proper effect undisturbed by any forced or unnatural exposition. It is possible to understand some portions of a prophecy without understanding others, and without being able to adjust its parts one to another, or to perceive their precise relation. The main object of the book is a practical one; its great moral and spiritual lessons are clear, and must always have been perceived, even before its historic application was or could be understood, and the prayerful study of this closing prophecy of inspiration will always have a sanctifying effect

Dr. Anderson says:

“As such books are read by many who are unversed in history, it may be well to repeat once more, that *the division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms has never yet taken place*. That it has been partitioned is plain matter of history and of fact, that it has ever been divided into ten is *a mere conceit of writers of this school*” (The italics are ours.)

On pages 162 and 169 of this work a view diametrically opposed to the above statement is expressed, but the scope of this volume hardly permitted enlargement on the subject. It is, however, one of such great importance that we must in reply to the above astonishingly reckless assertion, give some arguments and proofs in support of our position, that the division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms took place fourteen hundred years ago, has continued ever since, and is conspicuous at the present moment.

So close and accurate is the correspondence of history with prophecy on this point, that one is at a loss to conceive how candor can fail to recognize it. This writer himself perceives it even while he denies it, for with strange self-contradiction he admits elsewhere that the existing state of things in Europe "is undoubtedly a feature of the prophecy? By this somewhat vague expression he appears to mean that it *answers* to the symbol of the ten horns, while yet he denies that it is *the fulfillment* of that symbol.

The prophecy foretold that when the Roman Empire ceased to exist as one, it should continue to exist as ten. The empire losing its pristine strength and unity should be broken up into a commonwealth of nations, bound together by a **common connection with Rome**. Dr. Anderson admits that

“it is plain matter of history and of fact” that the Roman Empire has been partitioned, but denies that it has “ever been divided into ten.”

A little accurate attention first to the *symbols*, and then to the *history*, will, we think, convince unbiased students, that the correspondence between the two is so marvelously exact as to warrant the boldest assertion that the facts were foretold, and that the prophecy has been in course of fulfillment for the last fourteen centuries.

First, it must be borne in mind that, as we have already proved, the ten kingdoms are to be sought only in the territory peculiar to Rome, that is, in the territory west of Greece. The notion that five of the ten kingdoms are to be sought in the East and five in the West, is entirely without Scripture foundation, and, indeed, distinctly contradicted by Scripture. The ten kingdoms must be sought exclusively on this side Greece, in the territory which was comprised in the Western Empire. (See pp. 708-9.)

Secondly, it must be noted that while the prophecy distinctly predicts that the number of the fragments into which the one empire should be divided should be generally ten, that it nevertheless distinctly implies also that it should not be constantly, invariably, or exactly ten, When the little horn sprang up among the ten, there must have been eleven; and when three were plucked up before it, there could have been only eight left for a time. Fresh horns, however, took the place of the uprooted ones, for in Revelation the number is presented as distinctly ten, at the close of the beast’s history. Hence the number of the kingdoms was to be generally, but not rigidly or unvaryingly, ten; there would as a rule throughout the whole period be ten kingdoms, occupying the sphere of the Western Empire of Rome; but the number would be elastic, sometimes less, sometimes more, but always about ten, so that no other number of horns would as correctly represent the facts of the case. Alexander’s empire was represented by one notable horn, the dynasties that arose amidst its broken fragments by four horns; but Rome was to break up into a larger number, and ten different kingdoms would appear upon the scene, and occupy even till the end, the territory belonging to the fourth beast, still having Rome as in some sort their center and bond of union, for they were to be horns of the Roman beast.

Such are the symbols, and they are the more remarkable because they foretell a state of things which had never existed in the world at the time when the prophecy was given, and which never did exist till a thousand years afterwards Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome in its first phase, all sought and obtained universal dominion, and could brook no rival power. The prophecy foretold that in the distant future another state of things should arise, and that co-existing side by side, a family of ten kingdoms should divide the heritage of Rome, and while no longer in subjection to it as provinces, should yet, as independent kingdoms, continue to have a common connection with Rome. The fact that the portion of the prophecy devoted to the detailed history of these horns is two or three times as long as that devoted to the history of the undivided empire, suggests that their actual history might probably extend over a much longer period than that of the undivided empire; and there is no question that they continue in existence until the coming of Christ, and the establishment of His millennial kingdom. The important question is, when do they rise? Dr. Anderson says they have not risen yet; the prophecy shows on the contrary, that they rise on the fall of the empire, for there is no gap in the image, and no break in the continuity of the history of the fourth beast, no indication whatever that any interval is to exist between the united and the dismembered conditions of the Roman world. The iron legs run right on to the ten toes, and the story of the beast is continued without a break in the story of the ten horns.

What now have been the facts of history? Was the Roman Empire on its fall divided into a number of separate kingdoms, and has it continued to be so ever since? Has the number of such kingdoms averaged ten? Have they retained a common connection with Rome? And how many such kingdoms now occupy the scene?

The ten kingdoms must first of course be sought among the Gothic dynasties of the fifth and sixth centuries by which the Empire of the West was overthrown; and then at intervals ever since. Should we find that Europe has for ages been united under one monarch, or should we on the other hand find that it has been divided as a rule into thirty or forty kingdoms, we shall be driven to conclude that the prophecy is still unfulfilled. But should we on the contrary find that amid incessant changes the number of the kingdoms of the European commonwealth has, as a rule, averaged ten, we must surely admit that this portion of the prophecy at any

rate is fulfilled. What further evidence of fulfillment can be desired, than that the thing predicted has come to pass?

As it would be impossible to note the exact number of kingdoms for each year of the thirteen or fourteen centuries which have since elapsed, we must content ourselves with taking a census each century,

The historian Machiavel, without the slightest reference to this prophecy, gives the following list of the nations which occupied the territory of the Western Empire at the time of the fall of Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor of Rome.

The Lombards, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Vandals, the Heruli, the Sueves, the Huns, and the Saxons; ten in all.

After a time the Huns disappeared, but other powers arose and obtained a home in the domains of old Rome. The changes were incessant, as horde after horde of barbarian invaders pressed in on every side to share the spoils; but still the number of established kingdoms was again and again ten. It never rose to twenty or thirty, it never fell to two or three. Charlemagne in his day reduced it for a time, and attempted, like Napoleon in a later age, to restore unity; both utterly failed, and after a very few years the normal ten kingdoms reappeared.

The following list gives the cotemporary kingdoms existing in Western Europe at intervals of a hundred years apart, from the 9th to the 19th centuries. It is extracted from a much longer series in "The Four Prophetic Empires," by the Rev. T. R. Birks, and is introduced by the remark that a measure of uncertainty must exist as to whether some of the States should be included, as "it is sometimes doubtful whether a kingdom can claim an independent sovereignty on account of the complex and varying nature of its political relations."

- A.D. 860. — Italy, Provence, Lorraine, East France, West France, Exarchate, Venice, Navarre, England, Scotland. Total, 10.
- A.D. 950. — Germany, Burgundy, Lombardy, Exarchate, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Navarre, Leon. Total, 10.

- A.D. 1050. — Germany, Exarchate, Venice, Norman Italy, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Normandy (?), Hungary (?). Total, 9 to 11.
- A.D. 1150. — Germany, Naples, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary, Lombardy (?). Total, 10, or perhaps II.
- A.D. 1250. — Germany and Naples, Venice, Lombardy, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary. Total, 10.
- A.D. 1350.— Germany, Naples, Venice, Switzerland (?), Milan (?), Tuscany (?), France, England and Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary. Total, 9 to 13.
- A.D. 1453. — Austria, Naples, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland (?), Savoy (?), Milan (?), Tuscany (?). Total, 11 to 14.
- A.D. 1552- — Austria, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Spain, Naples, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland (?), Lombardy (?). Total, 9 to 11.
- A.D. 1648. — Austria, Venice, France, Britain, Spain and Naples, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland, Savoy, Tuscany, Holland. Total, 11.
- A.D. 1750. — Austria and Hungary, France, Savoy and Sardinia, Venice, Tuscany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Naples (?), Britain, Holland. Total, 10 or 11.
- A.D. 1816. — Austria, Bavaria, Wurtemberg (?), Naples, Tuscany, Sardinia, Lombardy (?), France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Britain, Switzerland. Total, 11 to 13.

An examination of this list reveals the surprising fact, which would only become more apparent were the list lengthened ten times, so as to present a census of each decade instead of each century only, that amidst increasing and almost countless fluctuations, the kingdoms of modern Europe have from their birth to the present day always averaged about ten in number. They have never since the break-up of old Rome been united into one single empire; the word of prophecy forbade this: " They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another" They have

never formed one whole even like the United States; no scheme of proud ambition seeking to reunite the broken fragments has ever been permitted to succeed when such have arisen they have been invariably dashed to pieces by Providential interference — witness the legions of Napoleon buried beneath the snows of Russia, the Armadas of Spain wrecked by Atlantic storms, and all the futile royal marriage arrangements by which monarchs vainly sought to create a revived empire. The plans of ambitious men that have been frustrated by this one verse of Scripture, or rather by the purpose of God which it announces, are countless. In spite of all human effort, in defiance of every attempt at reunion, the European commonwealth for thirteen or fourteen centuries has numbered on an average ten kingdoms.

And the division is as apparent now as ever! Plainly and palpably inscribed on the map of Europe this day, it confronts the writer and the entire Futurist school, if they would only withdraw their eyes from the misty future into which they love to gaze, and use them to observe present facts. It confronts them with its solemn silent testimony to the fulfillment of this great prophecy, Can they alter or add to this tenfold list of the kingdoms now occupying the sphere of old Rome?

Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, England, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal.

Ten, and no more; ten, and no less! The Franco-Prussian war and the unification of Italy, have once more developed distinctly the normal number of the kingdoms of Europe. Yet in the face of this present fact, and of all the past facts we have cited, Dr. Anderson and other Futurists still maintain that the Roman Empire has never been divided into ten!

Moreover, Scripture not only predicts the rise of these ten kingdoms, but their character and conduct during the period of their existence. It foretells that they should first sustain and then destroy the corrupt and persecuting Church of Rome. In fulfillment of this we have the incontrovertible facts that all the kingdoms above named did for ages submit to and sustain the Romish Church; and that most of them have now revolted from her, and turned against her, under the influence either of Protestantism or of infidelity.

Apart from all questions of number and place, therefore, the horns are identified with the kingdoms of modern Europe by their character and

conduct.

And yet we are told that “the tenfold division of the Roman earth has never taken place!”

Has its united state then continued? No! that is not asserted, and could not for a moment be maintained.

What then has succeeded? A divided condition, but one which, though it bears, as is admitted, a very strong resemblance to the one predicted, is, if their view be true, never even glanced at by the prophecy at all!

And how long has this unpredicted state of the Roman earth already lasted? Some thirteen or fourteen centuries! And how long is the predicted tenfold condition to last in the future? Three or four years! So then we are required to believe — first, that a prophecy which professes to give the history of the Roman Empire from its rise to its fall, omits any notice whatever of a full half of its long history, and devotes itself instead to giving details of a fraction so minute as one seven-hundredth part of the time! and, secondly, that twelve or thirteen centuries of history, answering in every respect to the prediction, have yet nothing to do with it, or at any rate do not fulfill it!

This is what is required by the monstrous “gap” theory of the Futurist school! It is maintained in the most dogmatic way by Dr. Anderson, who (surely by oversight!) makes the strangely false assertion that “all Christian interpreters are agreed in it” He says that “all Christian interpreters are agreed that between the rise of the fourth beast, and the growth of the ten horns, there is a gap or parenthesis in the vision (of Dan. 7.), including the entire period between the time of Christ and the division of the Roman earth into the ten kingdoms.”

We conclude " Christian" stands here by a misprint for “Futurist,” as *the entire Historic school of Protestant interpreters*, including Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Mede, Faber, Frere, Elliott, Bickersteth, Birks, Habershon, Gosse, Brooke, and a hundred others, would utterly and unhesitatingly reject such an interpretation as offensive to common sense, and as doing violence to the oracles of God.

Here then are two widely divergent views as to the fulfillment of this prediction. The historic interpretation, comparing the prophecy with the

history of the period indicated by the context, points out as its fulfillment a most remarkable, unprecedented, and unparalleled series of momentous facts, which influenced the destiny of forty or fifty generations, including the larger part of the Church of Christ, and which continue in our own day to have much practical importance to the people of God. They have in this prophecy a weapon which infidelity cannot meet, and a light that shineth in the dark place which the Church is now traversing; for the duration of the ten kingdoms proves that their end is near! They have also the clue that identifies the greatest power of evil that has ever arisen in the earth, and unmasks the most treacherous and deceptive foe the Church has ever had to meet; for if the ten horns be the kingdoms of modern Europe, there can be no question as to what the little horn is!

Dr. Anderson and other Futurist writers admit the facts, but deny that they are the fulfillment of the prophecy. They teach that the ten horns are not yet risen, that when they do rise five will be found in Greek territory and five only in Roman, and that when at last developed — after a gap of fourteen hundred years, of which the prophecy takes no notice at all — they will last for three and a half years!

Taking such a view of this magnificent far reaching and practically instructive prediction, they rob it of all its glory and utility. They cannot of course use it for the conviction of unbelievers, for it is not yet fulfilled! They can extract from it no consolation of hope, for as the “gap” has already extended over fourteen centuries, it may well extend over fourteen more! They can derive no practical guidance from it, for the great predicted evil and enemy has not yet appeared.

What can they do with it? Speculate, that is all! Delineate future maps of Europe, and describe beforehand the doings of “the last great monarch of Christendom!”

Which interpretation is most harmonious with the known character and providence of God, with the acknowledged end and object of all prophecy, the guidance and sanctification and comfort of the people of God, and the public demonstration of His Divine foreknowledge of human history?

Dr. Anderson raises afresh the oft-answered objection that the universality of the expression in Rev. 13:7, 8, proves its non-fulfillment in the history of the Papacy, "all that dwell upon the earth" never having worshipped the Roman Pontiff, adding that half Christendom is outside the pale of Rome, and antagonistic to the claims of the Papacy.

This is irrelevant, for it is self-evident that the prediction refers exclusively to the sphere of "the beast," whoever he may be, during the time of his reign. If these limits be ignored, the prediction might be made to mean that Hindus and Chinese and Hottentots of all ages were to worship him. The "earth" in question is the Roman earth, and the "kindreds and tongues and nations" spoken of are, as a comparison with Daniel's parallel prophecy proves, those figured by the ten horns. Hence the nations belonging to Eastern Churches, whether Greek, Coptic, Nestorian, Armenian, or any other, are geographically out of the question. They form no part of the territory peculiar to Rome (see pp. 708-9), and are not numbered among the ten horns. Protestant nations, on the other hand, are chronologically out of the question, for this description applies to the culmination of the power of the beast, which was synchronous with, or just prior to, the rise of Protestantism.

The verses in question simply predict that in the sphere of his power (the Roman earth), and during the height of his power (i.e., the dark ages), all, save true believers, would worship the beast; and we point to the fact that throughout Western Europe, and throughout the dark ages, all men revered, served, and obeyed the Popes of Rome, as the fulfillment of the prediction.

We have shown (note p. 217) that comparison with other Scripture proves that the expression "all" must frequently be taken with limitation suggested by the context, so that its absolute universality cannot be insisted on here, which is all that is required in order to remove any vestige of difficulty.

Our critics maintain that Babylon runs her career, and is destroyed by the ten horns, who then agree and give their power to Antichrist or the beast. That is, they hold that the reign of Antichrist follows the destruction of Babylon by the ten horns.

Now this is clearly wrong. The entire career of the beast or revived Latin Empire is described in the latter part of Revelation. Chapter 13 gives his rise, dominion, persecution of the saints, worship, etc. Chapter 14 gives the woe pronounced on his worshippers. Chapter 15 presents the martyr company, who gain the victory over him, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire. Chapter 16 presents vials of wrath poured out upon his worshippers and on his seat; while his last acts and his destruction are given in chapter 19.

The order of these episodes in his history observed in this narrative of them must in the very nature of things be the true chronological order. His career must of course precede his doom, and the worship rendered to him must precede the execution of wrath on his worshippers; while the persecution unto death of those who oppose him, must go before the presence of the martyrs in heaven, so that the order of events in the prophecy must of necessity be the order of events in the history.

The seven vials of chapter 16 are also evidently in chronological order, as is admitted. Now in this series of vials the first and fourth are poured out on the worshippers and on the seat of the beast, while not until the seventh vial is poured out, does great Babylon come in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, as detailed at length in chapters 17 and 18. Under this vial the "seven last plagues" terminate, and the voice from the throne declares "It is done."

Thus it is clear that the Futurist theory, which confines the evil career, world-wide worship, and cruel persecution of Antichrist, to a period subsequent to the destruction of Babylon by the ten horns, must be erroneous.

So far from that career and those persecutions following the destruction of Babylon under the last vial, they precede the entire series of vials, and are indeed the cause of most of them!

Again, Futurists are obliged to admit that the Babylon of Rev. 17 is the Apostate Church of Rome. They cannot moreover question that the Church of Rome has endured for twelve or thirteen centuries.

Now it can be demonstrated from the prophecy, that the eighth head or Antichrist, is cotemporaneous with Babylon, and that therefore this

Antichrist is a dynasty and not an individual. The importance of this point demands that the evidence be carefully weighed, and the proof, though simple, requires attention that it may be firmly grasped.

First it should be borne in mind that all the beasts of Daniel's visions represent empires, not individuals, hence there is a presumption that this does the same. Secondly, the angel distinctly interprets the beast which carried Babylon, as the eighth or last revived form of Roman power. Having shown the apostle the persecuting corrupt Church seated on the Roman beast or state he adds, "I will tell thee the mystery... of the beast that carrieth her." "The beast that thou sawest was, is not, and yet is," "and the beast that was, and is not, **even he is the eighth.**"

The beast that carried the woman during her whole career of twelve or thirteen centuries then, is the revived, or eighth and last form of Latin Empire, i.e., the antichristian form of it. It is evidently of the beast that carried the woman that the angel here speaks. All through, he is interpreting this hieroglyph, and no other. Note the words, "the beast that thou sawest/" "the horns which thou sawest," "the waters which thou sawest," "the woman which thou sawest." We have the same reason to conclude that the beast he describes in the interpretation, is the beast that carried the woman, as that the woman he describes is the one carried by the beast!

Now the beast he describes "was, and is not, and yet is." It is the Latin Empire in its revived (Papal) form, "even he is the eighth"; it is also the last form of Latin or Roman power.

The woman is cotemporaneous with, not any earlier form of Roman power, nor with the brief interval in which Roman power seemed wounded to death, but with its last revived form, with the eighth head.

Now as Babylon has existed for twelve or thirteen centuries, this beast must have been in existence for the same period, and the eighth and last and peculiarly evil and antichristian form of Roman power predicted in prophecy, cannot be a shortlived individual, but must be a **dynasty**, or succession of rulers, like all the other "beasts"; and further, since no other succession of rulers have swayed the Roman earth from Rome, during the career of Babylon, must be the line of the Roman Pontiffs.

This settles the historic Protestant interpretation on a foundation not to be removed. Babylon and the beast are cotemporaneous; the one has we know lasted for twelve or thirteen centuries; so then has the other.

The beast, under its revived wicked and persecuting eighth head, is cotemporaneous with Babylon regnant, and not subsequent to Babylon destroyed by the ten horns. It was, in fact, only by means of these ten horns and the mouth of this eighth head, that the woman could persecute and slay the saints, and become drunk with their blood.

The persecuting *Church* always handed her victims over to the *secular power*, to be dealt with by it, and with a mockery of mercy, always enjoined the secular power to deal leniently with her children. Even the Inquisition never burned its own victims, but called upon kings and princes to kindle the fire of the *auto da fè*. The persecutions were Babylon's in one sense, yet effected by the beast on which she sat. At times she instigated the eighth head to issue bulls for crusades of slaughter against heretics; at times she compelled the ten horns to rend and tear and destroy. The beast was under her control, so that though the bloody deeds might be his, the responsibility was hers, and "in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (chap, 18:24).

The great antichristian persecution takes place during the reign of Babylon, not after her destruction. That destruction is followed not by that great antichristian persecution, but by the marriage of the Lamb! (chap, xix.)

For a true understanding of the prophecies of Babylon and the beast, a clear idea of the relations of Church and State during the dark ages is needful, the relations between the Church of the Seven Hills, and the kingdoms of Western Europe. Had the Apocalypse prefigured a persecuting Church merely, or a persecuting State merely, it would have omitted half the truth. What actually existed for ages, and what, consequently, had to be depicted in prophetic vision was, Church and State, distinct in themselves as secular and spiritual, united in the persecution of the saints, and the one acting through the other, the head of both cooperating and sharing the blood-guiltiness. What creates apparent complexity, is the strange fact that the head of one was the head of the other, that a succession of priests

claiming descent from Peter, became a dynasty of sovereigns, the oldest monarchy in Europe, the supreme rulers of the kings and temporalities of the Roman world. Prophecy could not omit to prefigure this long continued state of things, and how could it have done so better than in the method it has employed?

The importance of this point must not be overlooked. It is radical to the whole question at issue between the Historic and Futurist schools of interpretation. If the ten kingdoms have existed for the last thirteen or fourteen centuries, so has the Antichrist, for he is their cotemporary; and Futurism falls to the ground!

On p, 465 of this work, after showing the bearing of our inquiry into the Divine system of times and seasons, on the points in dispute between the Futurist and Historic systems, we invited Futurist expositors " to consider the arguments on this subject " which we had adduced, "and either to refute them or to acknowledge their force."

Mr. R. Govett, of Norwich, an author who has written largely on prophetic subjects, accepted this invitation, and has published a little work in response.³

The arguments against the Futurist system, peculiar to our book, are chronological ones, and it was to these arguments, as being new, and in our opinion so cogent as to be unanswerable, that we mainly called attention. The chronological question once settled, — the truth or otherwise of the year-day theory established, — the rest would settle itself; for the length of their period, over twelve centuries, would involve the dynastic character of the ten horns, and their cotemporary the little horn, or man of sin. It was because of the fresh light thrown on this subject by our investigation into the law of completion in weeks, and into the epochs of the prophetic periods, and the Bible systems of times and seasons in general, that we ventured to challenge afresh the attention of Futurist students to the question.

Mr. Govett, in his " Refutation," makes not the most distant allusion to a single argument or fact adduced in "The Approaching End of the Age" on this great subject. He ignores completely the fourth part of the work, which is its distinctive part, never even attempting a reply to a single fact out of

the hundreds there brought forward, in support of the view that the times and seasons of prophecy can be understood only when studied as parts of a more comprehensive system — the terrestrial, celestial, and biblical system of times and seasons.

In what then does Mr. Govett's "Refutation" consist? In a reiteration of old Futurist objections to the Historic system which have been satisfactorily answered over and over again, and many of which are answered in our own pages as well as elsewhere! It was a disappointment to us, we confess, on glancing through Mr. Govett's book, to find no evidence that he had even read, much less candidly weighed, the new arguments on the subject adduced in this volume: to find nothing but statements already abundantly disproved, and arguments whose fallacy was triumphantly exposed by Mr. Birks forty years ago!

He urges, for instance, that the great question is, whether the Apocalypse is to be regarded as a literal or as a symbolic prophecy, and decides that it is literal, "that the main body of the book is to be accepted in the letter." We have given our reasons for an opposite conclusion. We have shown that the book is, as to its grammatical construction, the record of a series of past visions, which visions were significant of things to come; that it is a verbal description of hieroglyphs, shown to the Apostle as a revelation of future events; that the divinely given interpretation of some of these hieroglyphs proves that such is the nature of the book, and affords besides the true key for the translation of its hieroglyphic language (see p. 99 *ei seq.*). Scripture usage elsewhere interprets many of the signs, and one way in which the Holy Spirit fulfills His mission of showing to the Church things to come, is by making clear to her, in the light of their own fulfillment, the meaning of others. We have shown that one reason why this prophecy, like some of those of Daniel, was given in this peculiar hieroglyphic language was, that it was designed to be understood only by degrees, in harmony with the principle of progressive revelation. Without discussing these or any of the important general principles which must guide the interpretation of this evidently mysterious prophecy, and without assigning any satisfactory reasons, Mr. Govett boldly lays down the axiom that "the Apocalypse is not to be understood as in general figurative," that it is "not allegorical" Yet, while laying down this as the rule, he is forced to admit that there are no less than forty exceptions to it, which, considering that the book has only

twenty-two chapters, is a proportion large enough to suggest a little modesty in insisting on the rule!

The only shadow of a reason advanced by Mr. Govett for demanding that the Apocalypse should be understood literally, is, that “whenever we have Divine authority for saying a prophecy has been fulfilled, such fulfillment has been literal, as for instance,” “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” and the predictions quoted as fulfilled in the early chapters of Matthew.

This is not correct, for “Thou art this head of gold” is a divinely given statement as to the fulfillment of a symbolic prophecy; yet it does not imply that the king was literally part of a metallic image. The Lord Jesus commenced His ministry by saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” What time was fulfilled? Clearly that indicated in the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel, Yet those weeks had been fulfilled not literally, but on the scale of a year for a day. Hence we have Divine declaration that prophecy has been fulfilled, when it is demonstrable that it has not been fulfilled literally. But even if we had not, it would prove nothing! It would simply amount to this, that we have no inspired statement with regard to the fulfillment of a symbolic prophecy. Now as this is unquestionably the case with regard to a multitude of literal predictions which have been fulfilled, what wonder that it should be the case with the symbolic ones also? especially as the great majority of these latter predict events subsequent to the close of the canon of Scripture, and it is difficult to see how their fulfillment could be alluded to in Scripture.

Its title, the “Revelation,” is also urged as an argument for the literality of the book, with the very cogent remark that nothing couched in symbolic language could be “an unveiling” of the future, but would be rather a veiling. It is sufficient to reply that the entire course and character of the times of the Gentiles was revealed through Daniel, not in literal but in symbolic language. A revelation may be made in Hebrew, or in Greek, or in hieroglyphics; the language in which it is conveyed little matters so long as the Divine purpose is communicated beforehand to mankind. Besides, it is not only admitted but contended in “The Approaching End of the Age,” that the very purpose for which symbolic prophecy is employed, is to conceal while revealing, and reveal while concealing; to hide from some generations, a future which it concerned them not to understand, and at the

same time to show to subsequent generations that the true course of events had been foreseen and foretold.

Mr. Govett assumes, without the slightest warrant, that a secret disbelief in future miracles lies at the bottom of the deliberately formed opinion of the majority of Bible students, that the Apocalypse is a symbolic and not a literal prophecy. " In short, the matter is a question about the reader's state of mind. If he be a man of faith in miracle as yet to come, (!) he will find the Apocalypse in the main easy of comprehension."

Now, in common with all the Historic school, we believe, as firmly as Mr. Govett can do, in miracle as yet to come. The first resurrection and the rapture of the Church will be the most stupendous of miracles, and will be accompanied by miracles of judgment, including the destruction of Babylon and of the beast and the false prophet.

But such miracles as the literal fulfillment of the Apocalyptic hieroglyphs we certainly do not expect. We believe such are nowhere predicted; and that they would be utterly inconsistent with the past providence of God and with His revealed and known character. Moreover if such prodigies were to precede the second advent, it could not come upon the world, as it is foretold it will come, by surprise and unexpectedly, "as a thief in the night," and as the flood in the days of Noah. Heralded and introduced by such miracles, all the world would be expecting it!

To confound the sign with the thing signified, and expect a literal fulfillment of such predictions as those for instance in the ninth of Revelation, is to violate common sense as well as spiritual instinct, and to degrade the miraculous into the ridiculous.

To refuse to see the working of the mighty power of God in connection with momentous and marvelous movements of vast masses of mankind, as in the Saracenic conquests and Turkish invasions of Christendom, movements which have affected myriads of human beings for all succeeding ages, and influenced not their temporal destiny only but their religious faith; movements which were just as distinctly a judgment on idolatrous Christendom, as the Babylonian captivity was on idolatrous Israel: to refuse, we say, to see the hand of God, and the fulfillment of sacred predictions, in these events, and to insist on expecting instead a literal plague of horse-like, human-like, scorpion-tailed, iron-armored

insects, which shall hurt men for five literal months, is not to exalt one's conception of the word and power of God, but the reverse. The parallel which it is sought to establish between the plagues sent of old on Egypt and those predicted under the vials of wrath in Revelation utterly fails. The former are described in the simple language of authentic history, and consist, for the most part, of an extraordinary employment of ordinary agents, frogs and flies, lice, locusts, hail, darkness, fire, sickness, etc. The latter are associated with clearly symbolic phraseology, and contain strange and unreal features which forbid us to rest in the signs, and drive us to ask what is signified. The miracles of Scripture are entirely unlike the monstrosities of mythology,

God is not a God of confusion, but of order. A literal fulfillment of the Apocalyptic prophecies would involve confusion worse confounded in both the moral and physical worlds, and would distance all the mythologies ever invented in monstrosity. Not even Mr. Govett can consistently interpret the book on the literal principle, as his forty exceptional "mysteries" prove!

A moral objection against the Historic system is also raised by this writer. He argues that since the Apocalypse distinctly presents God as acting in judgment > it cannot possibly be fulfilled in any events occurring during this dispensation of grace.

While fully agreeing that this age is characteristically a day of grace, in contrast to the age of law which preceded it, and to the age of righteous rule which is to follow it, we maintain that this is not inconsistent with the exercise of judgment also, and that the distinction which Mr. Govett seeks to establish is far too broad and unqualified.

As a matter of simple fact, the whole course of this dispensation of grace has been marked by acts of judgment, just as the whole course of the Jewish dispensation of law was marked by acts of grace. Justice and mercy are never disjoined in the character nor in the actings of God. The one attribute may be displayed more prominently in one age, and the other in another, but both exist eternally, and are always more or less manifested.

In Ezek. 14:2 1, the sword, famine, and pestilence are mentioned by God as His " sore judgments." When have the nations of the earth been free from these? If they were Divine judgments in Ezekiel's day, are they not so still? If the Titus siege of Jerusalem was a Divine judgment, was not the sack of

Rome by Alaric equally so? If the overthrow of the Jewish people was a Divine judgment, was not the subsequent overthrow of the profoundly corrupt and guilty Roman Empire the same?

No judgment in this dispensation? Why, concerning its whole course it is said of Israel, "wrath is come upon them to the uttermost"; "these be the days of vengeance." Nor on them only! Have we seen no other judgments on guilty nations? Had not the indescribable horrors of the French revolution a character of retributive judgment on the bloodstained nation which perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and for centuries persecuted Protestants to the death? God has not ceased to govern the world in Providence, because He is saving men in grace! Witness Ananias and Sapphira, witness Elymas the sorcerer, witness Herod smitten by the angel because he gave not God the glory!

The powers that be are ordained of God; the ruler is declared to be "a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," and it is error of a serious nature to assert, that He who is the fountain head of all government, He who institutes . . . parental government, church government, and national government, has himself ceased to govern and to execute judgment and justice throughout the course of this day of grace. Can any thoughtful observer note the history of families and of nations, and fail to see the retributive hand of Providence? Have the present comparative positions of Spain and of England, for instance, no connection with the way they treated God's truth and people at the time of the Reformation? Does the prosperity of North America, and the lack of it in South America, teach no similar lesson? "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," even though this be a day of grace, and this principle of the Divine government applies to nations equally with individuals.

We feel no force whatever in Mr. Govett's dogmatic assertion, "it is still the day of grace, the throne of grace, and therefore all the historic interpretation of the prophetic part of revelation is false."

To conclude; the Futurist conception of Antichrist as an openly avowed atheist, an infidel king, who will oppose all religion and all morality, and set himself in direct and daring opposition to Christ, is, to say the least of it, an unutterably poor and low conception, even intellectually, compared to the

great and terrible reality. Such an Antichrist would be incomparably less injurious to men, and less abominable to God, than the Antichrist that has been and is.

An infidel king! Is that then the worst thing that Satan himself can produce, the worst snare he can devise to delude men with? Is that to be his great triumph and masterpiece? Will the arch-enemy of God and man, after all the ages of experience he has had, and after all the awful and gigantic systems of organized evil he has succeeded in producing, will he at last, as the very *ne plus ultra* of his diabolic ingenuity and enormous permitted power, as the god of this world and the prince of the powers of the air, content himself with producing one single man, one bad, willful, proud, atheistic king, who will run a brief career of a few years, and then perish before the power of Christ? If this were all the result of 6,000 years of practice in deluding mankind, it would say little for the wisdom of Satan! The mountain in labor would indeed have brought forth a mouse! It is a rude, commonplace, unworthy conception to form of an evil which is unquestionably presented in Scripture as the greatest of all evils; the one unparalleled, unique, matchless, supreme evil of human history! The Papacy on the other hand is a system which the more it is studied and understood, the more it impresses the mind as a worthy master-piece of Satanic opposition to Christ, as “the very perfection of Antichristianism,” as the worst insult that ever has been or could be offered to the majesty of God.

“Which would you view with the deeper amazement and abhorrence, an avowed, open, desperate enemy, sworn against your life, family, friends, and property, or one that professing the utmost friendship should, by some strange impersonation of you in your absence, insinuate himself into your place in the family; seize your estate; seduce your wife to be as his wife; your children to look to him as their father; and, if yours be a king’s dignity, seize your kingdom for himself; who should then make use of his opportunities to train your wife, children, and subjects into unfaithfulness and rebellion to all your most solemn and cherished wishes and commands; falsifying your letters; forging your handwriting in order the more effectually to carry out his plan; and even at length framing an image, breathing voice into it, and by magic art and strong

delusion making men believe that it was your own self speaking in perfect approval of his proceedings as those of your chief friend, plenipotentiary, and chosen substitute? Such is somewhat the view of Antichrist sketched in Scripture prophecy, such what has been realized in the Popes and Popedom. And horrid as was the atheism of the French revolution, I doubt whether it was as horrid an abomination in God's view, even at its worst, as the blasphemous hypocrisies and betrayal of Christ in the polished court and church councils of His usurping vicar and impersonator at Rome. Sharp as were the thorns and nails and spear of the Pagan soldiery, they were surely less painful to the Saviour than the kiss of Judas!"

But our great fundamental and invincible objection to the Futurist system lies in this, that its reception necessitates a belief that God has left unrevealed the events of eighteen, or nineteen centuries of the history of His people; that He has in His word cast no gleam of prophetic light on these all important ages of the history of the Church and of the world; that He has violated His own declared purpose to do nothing without first revealing it to His servants the prophets; that a tremendous gap and void of nearly 2,000 years exists in the stream of prophetic revelation, and that no events of this dispensation are subjects of prophecy at all.

This notion we hold to be exceedingly mischievous in its tendency, and distinctly disproved by Scripture. Every event of importance to the people of God in all ages has been foretold before it came to pass (see pp. 122-126). None of the continuous prophecies of Daniel give any hint of a mighty unrepresented vacuum of nearly 2,000 years, existing in their midst. To insert such a gap is to destroy all their proportion and all their harmony. Yet Futurism absolutely demands such a gap, in the midst of the history of the fourth empire, and in the midst of the seventieth of the weeks of Daniel, and falls to the ground without it

No gap of even one century occurs in the long series of predictions as to the events of Israel's history, from the birth of Isaac to the destruction of Jerusalem, and their present experiences and their future restoration, all equally predicted, carry on the chain. Israel had always the light of prophecy shining on their path. And has the Church, whose privileges are so much higher, and which is indwelt by the Spirit who shows her things to

come, been deprived of such light? Nay verily. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed in our hearts as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise.” We urge a careful consideration of ch. iii., Part II., of this volume, on all who are in doubt on this subject.

The mischievous result of this gap theory is, that it deprives our holy faith of the marvelous and matchless support which at this stage of the dispensation it receives from the fulfillment of prophecy. The fulfillments of Messianic prophecy are long past or still future, those connected with the first advent occurred 1,800 years ago, and those connected with the second have not occurred yet Neither class therefore can have the same evidential value, as prophecies the fulfillment of which is matter of current history and daily experience. The prophecies about Babylon and the beast, the prophecies of the Roman Church and the Roman Antichrist are such.

Moreover these prophecies, and almost these only, have connected with them chronological landmarks. Hence they afford a kind of light obtainable from no other source. They indicate, in a definite way, the present position of the Church in the stream of time, and the relative nearness of the second advent.

But further, and more important still, these prophecies rightly applied give us the Divine estimate of the greatest system of corrupt religion the world ever saw, and stamp as Satanic the power which claims to be Divine and infallible, and which still lords it over hundreds of millions of mankind.

All that God has said about this power — this terrible, world-wide, age-enduring, soul-destroying, spiritual and temporal despotism, Futurism refers to some coming man of its own creation, who, whatever he may be, can never by any possibility, on their own showing, do one-thousandth part of the mischief that the real Antichrist actually has done, seeing his reign is to last only a few years, and can therefore affect only a fraction of one generation. Why should such a power occupy a place of such importance in the volume of prophecy?

It is earnestly to be desired that in these last days there should, if possible, be more unanimity among teachers and expositors of prophetic

truth, so that their views might command respectful attention instead of being regarded with distrust, if not derision, on account of their wide divergencies as at present.

A drowsy Church and an unbelieving world are not likely to pay much heed to the voice of prophecy, while those who study the subject most closely hold and teach such utterly dissimilar views.

We are most anxious to diminish, as far as possible, this difference of judgment, and especially to induce our Futurist friends to reconsider their position.

We have tried to discover what are the leading errors which lie at the basis of the strange Futurist system of interpretation, and we think they are mainly two: (1) A wrong conception of the nature of the Antichrist of Scripture — that the power so called is an individual instead of a dynasty; and (2) a wrong impression as to the character attributed in Scripture to the predicted Antichrist, supposing it to be that of an avowed instead of a covert enemy of Christ.

In these two important points we differ from Futurist interpreters, though we agree with them as to what Scripture teaches about Antichrist on many points.

We agree that it is foretold that his origin would be Satanic, that his power would be mighty and universal, that his wickedness would be preeminent, his pride and blasphemies unparalleled, and his persecution of the saints excessive. We agree that his political connection is with Rome, and that his cotemporaries are the ten horns of the Roman beast, or empire; and we agree that his is the last and final form of evil power predicted, prior to the second advent of Christ. His reign closes the times of the Gentiles, and is followed by the restoration of Israel and of the throne of Judah, — the millennial reign of Christ the Son of David.

But agreeing in so much, we differ altogether as to whether Antichrist is an individual ruler, or a dynasty of rulers; and as to the character of his opposition to Christ, whether it is the undisguised, open opposition of an infidel atheist, or whether it is the concealed, unacknowledged, but none the less real, opposition of a professed friend, a Judas-like traitor.

In Part III. chap. ii. of this volume we have dealt pretty fully with the first of these points, and given the arguments on which our conviction of the dynastic character of the Antichrist rests. If these arguments have been fairly weighed, and are still deemed inconclusive, it is probably because the second idea— of an Antichrist infidel in character — is so deeply rooted in the mind as to forbid the conception of a Papal Antichrist.

We must add a few remarks on this point, as we have not treated it so fully in the volume, and we request careful attention to the following thoughts.

Whence is the notion of an infidel Antichrist derived? Mainly, if not exclusively, from the only part of Scripture where the name Antichrist occurs at all — the Epistles of St. John, and especially from the second chapter of his First Epistle. Now, if this letter be carefully studied, it will at once be perceived that it was elicited by the actual then existing local state of things in the churches of Asia Minor. This is made clear by John's own words: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce," or are seducing, "you." His object in writing about Antichrist at all was to meet then prevalent heresies. He speaks of the time then present, and says: "Now are there many antichrists, many false prophets are gone out into the world." His one great object in the whole letter is to confirm the Christians of his day in their most holy faith, and to preserve them from being carried away with the flood of error which had already come into the Church, error which was at that time being actively propagated.

The burden of his exhortation is: "And now, little children, abide in Him." He does not go into many details as to the nature of the errors which he had in his mind, and his words must be read in the light of the Church history of the period.

Now John lived and died at Ephesus in the midst of the Church which Paul, when taking his final leave of it, had forewarned that of themselves men would rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. John had lived long enough to see the fulfillment of Paul's predictions. In writing to Timothy, bishop of the Church at Ephesus, Paul had also foretold that some would "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits," and the great doctrines which were especially attacked in

John's day in the churches of Asia were the doctrines of the real incarnation and real divinity of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The heresies which sprang up and prevailed at the end of the first century and during the second century were, as is well-known, mainly four: the first — that of Ebion — affirmed that Jesus was a mere man; the second — that of Cerinthus — taught that Christ was a different being from Jesus, and only indwelt in Him for a time; the third— that of the Docetae — asserted that Christ had no real human body, but only the appearance of one; and the fourth — that of the Nicolaitanes — denied that the creation was the work either of Christ or of the Father, and maintained that there was no sin or danger in idolatry and other evil practices.

In one way or other these Gnostics denied the Father and the Son, as is clearly demonstrated in the writings of Irenaeus and the other cotemporary fathers. Now it is the persons who taught these heresies that are by John in his Epistles called "deceivers and antichrists," and said to "deny the Father and the Son."

The point to be noted is this, these antichrists were not open and avowed enemies of the gospel, like the Jews and the Pagans; they were on the contrary, professing but apostate Christians; they had been members of the Church: "they went out from us." In John's view their corruption of the cardinal truths of the faith was not only heresy but anti-christianism, and we have his apostolic sanction for branding with the name of Antichrist various forms of apostasy from the faith, and various individuals teaching various heresies.

The Gnostics denied the Father and the Son, while in a sense confessing both; they were errorists and heretics, but not atheists, or infidels; they were false friends, not open enemies, and they were the precursors of the great Antichrist that should come, of whom John says to those early Christians, "As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists" (i John ii. r8). Where and from whom had they heard of Antichrist? From Daniel's prophecies, from Paul's letters to the Thessalonian Church, and from the traditions of his teaching on the subject, they had learned that a great power of evil was to rise; the ancient prophet called it a little horn; the Apostle Paul had called it a t: man of sin " and " son of perdition."

In this letter the Apostle John tells them that these Gnostic heretics were possessed with the spirit of the Antichrist, whose full revelation was to be later. " The spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." Hence we may learn that the spirit which inspires false doctrine, and seeks to corrupt the Church and lead away disciples after false prophets and teachers, is the spirit of Antichrist, such teachers are antichrists, *and the greatest teacher of false doctrine in the Church, the one who shall lead away the greatest number of disciples after him, will consequently be the greatest Antichrist.*⁴

There is no need to expect in Antichrist any different character of opposition to Christ (whatever its degree), than that of the early Gnostic heretics, who were by profession Christians. Theirs was the spirit of Antichrist.

The Thessalonian prophecy strongly confirms this view of the Antichrist's character. It presents him not as denying the existence of God, but as personating God, taking His place, claiming His prerogatives, denying the Father and the Son, not in words, but in acts, exalting himself in the Church and claiming Divine honors.

There are three ways of denying the Father and the Son: errorists and heretics deny both, as did these early Gnostics; men that claim to be as God, and usurp the headship of Christ in his Church, equally deny both the Father and Son, as did and do the Popes of Rome, though by profession confessing both; and there is a third class — the open atheists and infidels of modern times, who unquestionably do also deny the Father and the Son; but are not the only or main representatives of the spirit of Antichrist.

These three forms of denial co-exist, as they always have done and always will do. All are equally antichristian, but there are distinct predictions which attribute to the great Antichrist, not the last, but the earlier style of denial. He is an apostate, a Judas, a false apostle, a corrupter of the truth. There is nothing whatever in Scripture to authorize the expectation that infidelity will, in the last days, be universally substituted for superstition and corruption of the truth. The fact that just before the final consummation, three unclean spirits like frogs, from three distinct and contrasted sources, go forth to gather the kings of the whole world for the

last great conflict against Christ, shows that up to the very end, antichristian error will be various in form.

The predictions of Scripture as well as the state of things existing around us, leave no room to doubt that infidel anti-christianism will be, as indeed it already is, one mighty power for evil in the last days,

Many things conspire to produce this result; the clay-iron state of society, the strongly democratic socialistic tendencies of the masses leading to impatience of all moral and religious restraints; the tendency of populations to congregate in great cities, where the very physical conditions of life war against faith and reverence; the increase of superficial knowledge among the people; and the evil influence of a press whose liberty is abused to the point of blasphemous license; the advance of science among the learned with its tendency to make men wise in their own conceits, and to incline them to put reason in opposition to faith; and the worldly luxury of modern society with its deadening and demoralizing effect on the Church, all tend to produce in these last days that state of things in foreview of which our Saviour said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Rapid and terrible has been the spread of skepticism and atheism already, and there is every reason to believe that the advancing tide will rise higher and higher even until the Lord come. The unclean spirit out of the mouth of the dragon (as it was foretold it would do just before the end) is croaking out its loathsome blasphemies in infidel papers and books and by infidel lectures and discussions. It is undoubtedly one of the active agents gathering the last great muster of the forces opposed to God and to the Lamb.

But this form of evil, bad as it is, cannot be as important an evil as that to which it *owes its origin*.

The infidelity of Europe in these days is the offspring and inevitable result of the Apostate Christianity of Europe in the past. The tyrannies and usurpations, the corruptions and lying wonders, the superstitions and cruelties of the Papal anti-christianism of the middle ages, gave birth to Voltaire and the French Revolution, and thus indirectly to all the democracy and infidelity of our own day.

The very enormity of this last evil shows the greater enormity of that from which it sprang. An apostasy which for twelve centuries deprived the salt of the earth of its savor, and covered the light of the world with an extinguisher, thus blinding and deluding to their destruction thirty or forty generations, and presenting an insuperable stumbling block to the reason and conscience of mankind, — is a far greater evil than its own fruit and consequence, the mad infidelity of the last century.

Even now are there many antichrists, as there were in John's day, and have been ever since. But among them all has been and is, one paramount form and power of evil, so preeminent and peculiar as to well merit its distinctive title "The Antichrist"

Many evils have afflicted the Church and the world, and will to the end; but among them all none ever has done, or ever can do, such widespread and long continued spiritual damage to men, or such dishonor to God, as this Antichrist, the dark central figure of all the prophecies relating to the period between the first and second advents of Christ, — the little horn of the fourth Empire, — the eighth head of the Roman beast, — the man of sin, — the son of perdition, — **The Antichrist**,

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1. "We have traced, very imperfectly, but still sufficiently to demonstrate its existence, a system of times and seasons running throughout nature, organic and inorganic, and through Scripture, historic and prophetic, a system which, consequently, we have ventured to call a Divine system of Times and Seasons." — p. 461

"Grouping together the epochs of the prophetic times, we observe among them a striking similarity, and indications of the existence of some underlying law inviting research." — p. 447. ←

2. "The Coming Prince, the last great Monarch of Christendom," by Robert Anderson, LL.D.

We cannot say of this book what its author says of "The Approaching End of the Age," that "a perusal of it will go far to remove the prejudice which its title is fitted to create." Why our title, "The Approaching End of the Age," should create prejudice, we are at

a loss to conceive. Our Lord's last words to His disciples, "Lo! I am with you alway, even an to the end of the age" show that there is such a point somewhere in the future, and the fact that eighteen hundred years have elapsed since those words were uttered, points surely to the conclusion that it is approaching. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." What is there then in this title to create prejudice?

The title of Dr. Anderson's book, on the other hand, is fitted to create well grounded prejudice, for it is a combination of error and assumption, "The coming Prince," intended as it is for a quotation from Daniel 9:26, is an erroneous citation, for there is no definite article in the Hebrew. The passage speaks simply of "the people of a prince" that should come, and is believed by the majority of sound interpreters to refer to the Roman soldiery of Titus, who did what it is here predicted the people of this prince should do — destroy the city and the sanctuary of Jerusalem. The title of this book assumes, however, that it means a future Antichrist, and that this Antichrist is to be " the last great Monarch of Christendom."

The book though containing some valuable truth, and original research, is marred by error and assumption, as well as by rash statements and wild speculations. It is also marred by a disrespectful, supercilious manner of speaking of opponents which is neither gentlemanly nor Christian, for we are commanded to "be courteous."

Where the writer cannot answer cogent scriptural arguments, he contents himself with dogmatic denial, and with calling them "transparent fallacies," "pleasing romances," "mere conceits," etc. We cannot sufficiently reprobate that style of writing on these important and difficult subjects winch attributes evil motives and wicked conduct to fellow-Christians and fellow-students of the prophetic word, because of difference of opinion. Into this grave fault this writer is continually betrayed. He accuses us, for instance, of "blind and obstinate determination to establish conclusions, no matter at what cost to Scripture"; he charges the entire Historic school with "looseness in dealing with Scripture," of "the merest trifling with its solemn language," of holding views direct antagonism with the great foundation truth of Christianity," and insists that the real question at issue is "the character and value of the Bible."

The dignity of truth and godliness forbid unseemly pride and positiveness, exaggeration and antagonism, and any cause that employs them is thereby discredited in the judgment of sober-minded Christians.↵

3. “How Interpret The Apocalypse? As Naturalists Or As Supernaturalists? a refutation of the Historic interpretation, with special reference to the Rev. G. Guinness’ ‘Approaching End of the Age.’”↵
4. The word **Antichrist** is used only by the Apostle John, and by him four times in the singular (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7), and once in the plural (1 John 2:18). The interchange between the singular and the plural is itself a clear proof, that when the singular is employed, it is not to be understood as denoting the same kind of exclusive personality which is indicated by the Christ.

Before the close of the apostolic age, John found what he meant by the Antichrist already realized in a number of individuals. “Ye have heard,” says he, “that Antichrist cometh, and already many have become antichrists” (so the words in 1 John 2:18 should be rendered); they had become such, having originally professed to belong to the Christian community, but afterwards, in accordance with their real principles, separated themselves from it. This seems to imply, that what the apostle meant by anti-christianism was some sort of apostasy, or deprivation of the faith, which rendered those who fell into it really opponents of the truth of the gospel of Christ, though without setting themselves in formal contrariety to it. They did not avowedly abjure the Christian name, but they evacuated it of its proper and essential elements. And so we are taught more expressly in the other passages, which describe the Antichrist as “denying that Jesus is the Christ,” “denying the Father and the Son,” “not confessing that Jesus is of God,” or “not confessing that Jesus is come in the flesh,” — this, he emphatically adds in his Second Epistle, verse 7, “is the deceiver and the Antichrist.”

...The “not confessing” rather points to the defective and essentially hollow nature of the faith maintained, than to its formal contrariety to the truth of the gospel. The parties in question made

some pretensions to this, but they did not, in any proper sense, confess that Jesus is of God, and that He has come in the flesh; and so they virtually denied both the Father and the Son, or were ignorant of the true nature and mutual relations of both. It is, indeed, scarcely possible to understand the expressions used, coupled with the assertion that there were many to whom even then they applied, but by supposing that the apostle alludes in them to those who became infected with the Gnostic spirit, and who were thereby led, not formally to disavow the name of Jesus, but in some sense to deny the realities of His being or passion, explaining away either His proper humanity or His essential Divinity, and, by means of docetic appearances or shadowy emanations, substantially making void the true doctrine of the incarnation. We know from other sources, that a tendency of this description manifested itself at a very early period among the Asiatic churches, although the regular development of the Gnostic systems belongs to a later time. And St. John stamps even the first imperfect exhibitions of the tendency, which struck at the historical basis of the Christian faith, as the manifestation of the spirit of Antichrist...

It thus appears to be beyond any reasonable doubt that in St. John's use of the term Antichrist, there is a reference to the early heretics, who sought, by philosophical subtleties, to explain away, after one fashion or another, the facts of the incarnation, and infringe upon the true doctrine of our Lord's person...

St. John's antichrists were corrupters of the faith; and St. Paul's man of sin and mystery of iniquity are, in like manner, the perfected result of an apostasy from the faith. Then, as the spirit of Antichrist, in the one apostle, involved some kind of antithesis in doctrine and practice to Christ, a certain use of Christ's name with a design entirely subversive of Christ's cause; so, with the other apostle, the power described is portrayed as the opposer (ὁ ἀντικείμενος), aspiring against all authority to the highest place of honor and glory. Yet, with this unholy and presumptuous daring in act, there was to be no open defiance of things sacred in form; for the power is represented as developing itself by a mystery of iniquity (that is, by subtle and hypocritical pretenses, cloaking the most unhallowed and selfish aims), and by signs, and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of

unrighteousness. Not only so, but it is spoken of as seating itself in the temple of God, by which can only be understood, in Christian times, the professing Church of God, as in that alone can be found the theater of a widespread apostasy from the faith. The general idea, therefore, is the same in both sets of representations; though, in the descriptions of St. Paul and the Apocalypse, the features are more darkly drawn and strikingly portrayed, — Dr. Fairbairn’s *Bible Dictionary*, article “Antichrist.”↵

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