

Antichrist.

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- “ I will come again, and receive you
unto Myself ” JESUS.
- “ Whom having not seen ye love ” PETER.
- “ Be patient therefore, brethren ” JAMES.
- “ We shall see Him as He is ” JOHN.
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ANTICHRIST.

“**Y**E have heard that antichrist shall come.” (1 John ii. 18.) This statement is made to the Church of God. This statement, therefore, will remain in force as long as the Church of God is on earth. If any one were to say antichrist *has* come he would deny Scripture, for Scripture says “antichrist *shall* come.”

What is antichrist? Antichrist is the embodiment of all that Christ is not. The word *anti* attached to anything or any person gives the mind to understand that the exact

opposite is intended of the thing or person that *anti* is prefixed to.

Antichrist may therefore represent an antagonist in person or an antagonist in principle. If we say, "Antichrist shall come," or, "This is the deceiver and the antichrist," we refer to the one that is the complete embodiment of all antagonism to Christ. If we say, "Now are there many antichrists," we speak of numberless persons in the world during the Church of God period, who, by not owning the Christ of God, are exponents of the antichrist, and bear his name. The principle or power that animates such is called "the [*spirit*] of the antichrist." (1 John iv. 3.)

In John's epistles, where only this word is used (for it could not be used until the Christ of God had appeared in the world), we find how antichrist principle works, where the representatives of it came from, and further, that the very fact of its display was a proof that the past time, which Daniel and other prophets had pointed out as in the distant future, had arrived, and was then present, as, of course, it is to this day, because the Church of God is still upon earth. But as soon as the Church of God is removed to heaven, then that "spirit of antichrist which is now in the world" shall find its complete embodiment in one awful being under the com-

plete power of Satan—a being alluded to in many ways and by various names in the Holy Scriptures.

Antichrist, then, has three phases. (1) *Was* in the Church; (2) *It is* in the world; and, alas, shall we add, is still infecting the Church most grievously? (3) *It shall* come when He (the Holy Ghost) shall be taken out of the way.

This last sentence is not John's teaching, which we have been considering hitherto, but that of Paul. Let us hear what Paul has to say of this well-known, but unnamed, being—for antichrist as a person not having come, cannot be named as if he had come. In the Revelation

of Jesus Christ he is named under a symbolical number, as 666. When the right time arrives every one will know his name from this number. At present the uncertainty covered by the number hinders wicked men from assuming it, or the speculative from being sure of it.

Let us now hear what Paul has to say about him. Some one had tried to deceive the Thessalonian Church that the day of Christ had come. That is impossible, writes the apostle, for the apostasy has not come. Man individually may often have apostatized, but THE apostasy [when men renounce the doctrine of Christ, and so, as John (2 Epistle 8, 9) teaches, have not

God ; for only those who *abide* in the doctrine of Christ have the Father and the Son], has not come. When it has come, then that man of sin will be revealed, that son of perdition who opposes [Christ] and exalts HIMSELF above all that bears the name of God, or is the object of worship. So open and public is this exaltation of HIMSELF that in the Temple of God, which Jews will once again in the hardness of their hearts have reared, just as Herod reared his to suit his own purposes, will this daring personage sit as God, setting forth HIMSELF that he is GOD !

And now, continues the apostle, you know what restrains [*i.e.*, that

the apostasy has not taken place, because the Holy Ghost is on earth]; that he [the man of sin] might be revealed in his own season. The mystery of iniquity [that is, its secret and covered leaven, not its open and manifest exhibition] is already working, only there is He who restrains [the Holy Ghost] at present until from the midst He be gone, and THEN shall that wicked one be revealed [see Rev. xiii.], whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth [see Rev. xix. 15], and bring to nought by the manifestation of HIS coming. [Rev. xix. 20.] For the coming of the COUNTERFEIT is according to the energizing of Satan [Rev. xiii. 2] with all power

and signs and lying wonders. [xiii. 13.]

The 13th chapter of the Apocalypse is the concentration of what was revealed in the book of Daniel as extending over some twenty-five centuries. The Book of Daniel was to be sealed till the time of the end. The Apocalypse was not to be sealed, because the time of the end had come. (1 John ii. 18.) The Book of Daniel shews us four beasts rising out of the sea. The Apocalypse shews us one beast rising from the sea, and another from the land. The four beasts were an exposition of the Gentile powers only, and in the order of their succession; but the two beasts of the Apocalypse set

forth Gentile and Jew working together (Rome and Jerusalem) to monopolize the worship of man, and exclude God. They each play into the other's hands, and, to give unity of design, the second beast makes an image of the first beast, endows it with breath, and makes it speak; so that men shall fall down and worship it, or be killed. This is to shew that the same spirit that wrought in Nebuchadnezzar, who, at the beginning, set up a golden image 60 x 6 for men to worship or be slain, is at work in the beings that oppose and counterfeit Christ at the end. But it is their final effort. Both are cast into the lake of fire, and the devil who lent his

power is chained up for 1000 years, and then he shares their fate.

It is beyond question that the seventh chapter of Daniel refers to the power we have been considering; for although the horn had a primary fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes, yet the fact that the prophet looked till the beast was destroyed and its body given to the burning flame, shews that the vile effort made B.C. 173 to supplant Judaism with Paganism is given more to shew the abortive attempt, and to indicate the kind of being that shall wear out God's people at the end.

It is not necessary to refer to other scriptures which allude to this power which shall be manifested just be-

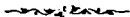
fore Christ takes *His* power and reigns. They are abundant, especially in the Psalms and the Prophets ; for these scriptures, in speaking of the glories of Christ, have also to speak of His untiring adversary and opponent. Every divinely instructed person will readily recognize that the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, are the same being, in whom the devil makes his supreme effort before his power of doing mischief is brought to a close by the manifestation of the Blessed One. The secret foe through so many ages is brought out into the light of day ; and first his agents, and then himself, are cast into hell-fire.

This is a day in which it is essential that truth should be clearly and scripturally unfolded. The shades of the dark night of the apostasy we have spoken of, are falling fast. The upholders of truth are dying out. The rationalist and the speculative writer are first questioning, and then denying, the truth of God. This is where the spirit of Antichrist has his great hold on souls. Let Scripture be held loosely, and the "wresting" which Peter speaks of becomes easy. Some are saying that the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the Beast, the Harlot, and all the actors of that fearful day of God's judgment on the earth, the culmination of 6,000 years of iniquity, are found within the domain

of the Papacy. Without losing sight of the iniquities that will have to be laid to the charge of that world-church, it is nothing less than falsification of the word of God to divert the stream of God's declared judgments (which, if rightly maintained by God's people, would keep much of the iniquity of the present day in check), and to so apply them to what is of the past as to remove the wholesome fear that such awful judgments should have upon man. God loves not judgment. He calls it His "strange work." What He delights in is to shew mercy and to forgive. He has let His Son come under the judgment of the Cross in order that He might shew the won-

ders of redeeming grace to a perishing world. But as is His grace and long-suffering, so also must be the terrors of His wrath when they fall. His holiness and righteousness absolutely demand that His nature should be vindicated. We poor worms must not talk about wrath, which, though now believers, we once were children of, even as others; but woe to the man who falsifies what is due to God's holiness and righteousness.

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