

## THE ANTICHRIST

### CHAPTER 12

Ye know," says the apostle John, " that Antichrist shall come." He at once goes on to say that already there are many antichrists; but he distinguishes clearly between these lesser forerunners of the final apostasy and the future impious personage who is so frequently mentioned in prophecy as the very incarnation of lawlessness and blasphemy, but is only here distinctly called by name.

I suppose there are very few prophetic teachers, of any scriptural discernment, who question the application of the present passage to Antichrist. The only question would be as to his identity; and as to that, a great many different solutions of the problem have been proposed. According to many, Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled in himself all that is here predicted of the willful king. Others, who recognize the interval referred to in the last address, between verses 35 and 36, apply the passage, together with the first part of Revelation, chapter 13, which they consider parallel with this, to the emperor Nero, the first Roman persecutor of the Christians. To many of the fathers, Simon Magus, the impostor of Acts, chapter 8, was the Antichrist. Some Romanist doctors applied the passage to Mohammed, the false prophet of Arabia; while Protestant interpreters without number, from Luther's day to the present, have found in these words a description of the papacy. Others there are and their judgment seems to me to be the correct one who hold that neither any nor all of these characters fully meet the requirements of the case; and that consequently the Antichrist is still to arise in the future, and will only come upon the scene in the Time of the End.

Before concluding this lecture, I hope to make clear my reasons for not being able to accept the hypothesis that the papacy, while manifestly antichristian in character, is the Antichrist. At present I shall simply endeavor to bring out what seems to me to be the clear teaching of the passage.

And first, in order that we may have plainly before our minds the part to be played by Antichrist in the world's great crisis, I desire briefly to attempt to point out the various leaders who are to occupy prominent positions in the coming day.

We have already found, in our study of this book, that in the latter times, when the transgressors are come to the full, the Roman empire is to be revived in a ten-Kingdom condition. Ten European powers are to be united in one federation. To bring this about there will be a union of socialistic and imperialistic policies. One of these ten kings will become arbiter of Europe. This chief ruler it is who is called in Revelation, chapter 13:1-3, and other portions, emphatically, " The Beast." In the seventh chapter of Daniel, he is seen as the Little Horn of the West. In the Time of the End this Little Horn, the Beast, will have his seat in Rome. He will be utterly infidel, throwing off all pretension to the fear of God, and will set himself up as the only god worthy of adoration. To him apostate Christendom will pay universal homage after the destruction of the great anti-church, " Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." This worship will evidently not only be the acknowledgment that Deity dwells in this man, it will be also the recognition of the blasphemous tenet (for which Christian Science, so-called, and the self-styled New Thought are now preparing the way) that God and man are one. The Beast will be the

embodiment of intellectual force and brilliancy, the peerless coming man for whom the nations have been waiting so long. Like Napoleon. Bonaparte, who perhaps more nearly corresponded to this character than any other man that ever lived, he will dazzle the nations by his almost superhuman abilities and unparalleled success. To him men will gladly grant the title Napoleon arrogated to himself, " The Man of Destiny."

In the East, as we saw in chapter eight, another power will for a time dispute the preeminence of the Beast. This will be the Little Horn of Asia. The last Gentile ruler of the lands now dominated by Turkey will be the one in whom this prophecy is fulfilled. He is in no sense to be confounded with the Little Horn of the seventh chapter. The one arises out of the Roman empire; the other, from one of the divisions of the empire of Alexander the Great. This latter king is identified, I believe, with the Assyrian of Isaiah, chap. 10:24, 25. He will be the special enemy of the Jews in the Time of the End. In the passage referred to we read, after the prophecy of the return of the remnant to their land, " Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction." We get the manner of this destruction in Isaiah, chap. 14:24, 25: " The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in My laud, and upon My mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders." It is not to any past destruction of Assyria that these words refer; for this discomfiture is to take place after the restoration of Israel to Palestine in the last days. It will be God's settlement of the so-called Eastern Question.

We learned that this Little Horn will stand up in great wrath against the Jews, " but not in his own power." He is evidently to have the backing of some more powerful nation, who for selfish purposes will aid him in his nefarious effort to destroy the people of God in that day. In Ezekiel. chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine, we find, I have no doubt, a full account of the power referred to. There we read of " Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." Scholars generally are agreed that in place of " chief prince," we should read, " prince of Kosh "; and there can hardly be any question that Kosh means Russia. " Gog, the prince of Kosh, Meshech, and Tubal," will evidently be the last czar of all the Russias. Some suppose Meshech and Tubal to be identical with Moscow and Tobolsk, the ancient European and Asiatic capitals of the Slav empire. It would seem that this ruler will join with the Turkish sultan in opposing the pretensions of the Beast. We can already see events in Europe tending to this. There will be a western and an eastern confederation, and Palestine will be the bone of contention between them.

A fourth figure, destined to attract considerable attention in the crisis will be the King of the South, a future ruler of an apparently independent Egypt, who, while opposed to Antichrist, nevertheless, would seem to act in conjunction with the Beast in opposition to his hereditary enemies the Turks.

In the book of the Revelation the apostle speaks of the drying up of the Euphrates, " that the way of the kings of the East (or, from the sunrising) might be prepared." The drying up of the Euphrates would seem to imply the breaking up of the Turkish power; for as the Nile stands for Egypt, so does the Euphrates for the Ottoman empire. The kings of the sunrising may very well

be a descriptive term referring to the nations of the Far East, the " Yellow Peril," dreaded by European statesmen, disputing the possession of the gate to the Orient with the Beast.

If we are thus far correct in our effort to forecast from Scripture the principals in the last great drama of Gentile dominion, we have located an emperor-king of the West, a king of the North, a king of the South, and an alliance of kings of the East, all of whose armies will be marching down upon Palestine at about the same time Jehovah's land to be the battle-ground for the fearful Armageddon conflict. Thus, Palestine will be exposed to all the horrors and ravages incident to the last premillennial war. It is for this time of horror, little as they realize it, that the Jews from eastern and southern Europe are now returning in large numbers to their ancient home. They are going back that their forefathers' awful prayer may be fully answered, " His blood be upon us and upon our children." Poor misguided people, the nation of the wandering foot, they fancy that at last a refuge is being provided for them where they will be safe from persecution and secure from danger; but they are really preparing unwittingly for the wine-press of the wrath of God, from which blood shall flow to the horses' bridles for one thousand six hundred furlongs, the whole actual length of Palestine (Rev. 14:18 to 20).

After the Church has been called away to heaven, there will arise in the city of Jerusalem a man who will present himself to the Jews as the Messiah long promised through the prophets. The apostate part of the nation will at once acknowledge his claims; they will say of him, " This is indeed the Messiah for whom we have waited so long; this is the one of whom our Scriptures speak." I judge he will be largely instrumental, in the beginning, in securing them concessions from the Turkish government, that they may be established in their land. Afterwards he will form a league with the Roman Beast, establishing a covenant between him and the nation for seven years, guaranteeing his protection and the integrity of the new Jewish state. Such is the program already outlined by the great Zionist leader Zangwill, and the Jewish agitator Max Nordau, who said, some time ago, " We are ready to own any man as our Messiah who will establish us again in the land of our fathers."

This will be, I doubt not, exactly what will take place in the coming day. Some great Jew perhaps he is living now, is going to come to the front who will have much to do in bringing about this restoration. He will be acknowledged by the western powers as political head of Palestine. He is " the king" of verse 30 in our chapter, " who shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces: and a god whom his father's knew not shall lie honor with gold and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. There shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause certain literal rendering to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

I now desire to bring to your attention the proofs that the Antichrist must be a Jew living in the land of Palestine, with his seat in Jerusalem, who will be acknowledged by the nation of Israel as their Messiah; and in doing so I wish to contrast with this the position of the Roman Catholic pope, and point out why, to my mind, he cannot possibly be the one here prophesied of; for no

pope has ever yet fulfilled these necessary qualifications; nor is there any likelihood that one ever shall. In the first place, it is important to notice that the name Antichrist means simply the false Messiah; that is, he is the one to whom our Lord Jesus Christ referred when He said, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." "The Antichrist then is to be received by the Jews. Has this ever been the case with the popes, or is there any apparent possibility that the Jewish people will ever acknowledge the papacy (which has existed for long centuries) as their Messiah, the hope of their nation? It was to the Jews that Messiah was promised. To them He came in grace, only to be rejected. When the false Messiah comes they will own *his* claims, and hail his advent with joy.

You should not imply from this that Judah alone will be deceived by him. From the second chapter of 2d Thessalonians (a passage we shall be considering later on), it is plain that apostate Christendom will also fall into his snare. The Roman Beast will be the civil ruler of the West, while Antichrist will be the religious ruler. The power behind both will be "that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan." This will be the anti-trinity, the devil, the Beast, and the false prophet. By these will all the nations of the earth be deceived.

Now, *as* the Jews have never owned the pope as Messiah, neither has any pope made a seven years' covenant with them, nor yet had his throne in Jerusalem, nor dwelt in the land of Palestine, so it seems clear that there is practically nothing in Scripture to identify the papacy with the Antichrist. Do not misunderstand me, and think that I am pleading for the papacy. I believe it to be a most evil thing, but it is not the Antichrist.

When he comes, he is to do according to his will, and to exalt himself and magnify himself above every god. These gods are undoubtedly the idols of the heathen. But he is also to "speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and he shall not regard the God of his fathers." Now I submit that only in the wildest hyperbole can such words be applied to the worst of the popes. It is true that some have permitted themselves to be addressed most blasphemously. It is true that a Jesuit writer even dares to speak of "our Lord God the pope." It is likewise true that the pope has been said to have an intimacy with the Father in which even the Lord Jesus Christ does not share. This is based upon the Lord's words to Peter concerning his confession: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." From this, argue the Jesuit sophists, it is evident that the first pope (!) had special illuminations and secrets with the Father in which the Son did not share; and the same privilege, they have declared, belongs to his successors; so that it is safer in some cases to go to the pope than to Christ! Now all these things, I grant you, are terrible enough: they are horribly blasphemous, and must make every truly devout soul shrink in horror from such teaching. But when the last great antichrist arises there will be worse even than this. The pope, at least, has never claimed to be above every god. His very title disproves this. He is called the vicegerent of Christ, and he takes the place of being, in a very special sense, God's representative upon the earth. It will be otherwise with, the Antichrist. He refuses to own any God. He comes in his own name, and he utterly denies "the God of his fathers." What are we to understand by this last expression? Can it be other than that he is a Jew, and that his fathers after the flesh were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Such is the invariable use of the expression in the Old Testament. I take it as conclusive evidence that the Antichrist is by birth a Jew, but a Jew who has apostatized from the God of his fathers. How could any but a Jew

impose upon his nation as being the Messiah, when it is clearly predicted in their Scriptures that the Hope of Israel is to spring from the favored nation?

We are also told, in verse 37, that he shall not regard the desire of women, nor any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. Now it seems evident that One only can be meant by "the desire of women." Every Jewish woman hoped that it might be the will of God that through her the Messiah would be born into the world. He was emphatically the Desire of women. Antichrist utterly disregards Him, pretending to be himself the predicted One.

But there is a god whom he owns, though evidently a merely natural and human personage. He "shall honor the god of forces, a god whom his father's knew not, and whom he shall honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things." This god can be no other than the Little Horn, the Roman Beast. To him, as we have seen, Antichrist will turn for assistance and support; and, on his part, he will acknowledge and increase with glory this civil head of the empire, "causing him to rule over many" who might not otherwise have owned his sway, and dividing with him the land of Palestine for gain. Now I maintain that it is utterly incongruous to attempt to apply all this to the pope; but taken in its natural meaning, all is plain and simple.

From the fortieth verse to the end of the chapter we have a graphic account of the beginning of the conflict of the last days. The King of the South marches against Jerusalem, and the King of the North comes down like a whirlwind with a vast army and navy, entering into the glorious land and the adjacent countries, with the exception of the lands anciently occupied by Edom, Moab, and Ammon. He is at first everywhere triumphant. Egypt is unable to stand against his victorious armies, and he asserts his sway over the land of the Pharaohs, and Libya, and Ethiopia. But alarmed by tidings out of the East and the North, he turns back with great fury to meet the powers, doubtless of the Beast and the kings from the sunrising. But upon the mountains of Israel, between the seas, he comes to his end, and none can help him. Thus, the last King of the North, the Eastern Little Horn, is finally destroyed. Of Antichrist's destruction we do not here read. That is given us in Revelation, chap. 19:20.

Ere closing, I wish to link up with this several other scriptures that add to our knowledge of the false Messiah. In the eleventh chapter of Zechariah, after the prophet, personifying the Lord Jesus as the Good Shepherd, is priced at thirty pieces of silver, Zechariah is bidden to take the instruments of a foolish shepherd. "For, lo," says God, "I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their hoofs in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened" (vers. 16, 17). This idol shepherd is clearly the same as the willful king of our chapter. He is to be raised up in the land an expression which can refer only to the land of Palestine. He is, beyond a doubt, the one to whom the Lord Jesus was referring in John, chap. 5:43, who would come in his own name. The true Shepherd had been rejected; the false one they would receive.

We may now turn to the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. In the first half of the chapter we have the description of the Roman Beast. But, beginning with verse 11, we read of another Beast coming up out of the earth, or land; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke

as a dragon. That is, he looks like, and presents himself as, the Lamb of God; but his speech is that of the great deceiver of souls. He exercises all the power of the first Beast before him, demanding that all worship the first Beast; even doing great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, to deceive them, in order that they may acknowledge the claims of the Beast. He it is who sets up the abomination of desolation, causing men to make an image to the Beast, which all must worship on pain of death. All this is in perfect harmony with what we have learned as to the mutual relationship of the Beast and Antichrist in the book of Daniel. The lamblike Beast comes up from the earth. He is in the land, and his placing the abomination that maketh desolate is the signal given by the Lord Jesus for the faithful remnant to flee from Jerusalem.

The signs and wonders by means of which he deceives the world are also mentioned in 2 Thessalonians, chapter two. When laboring in Thessalonica, the apostle had shown them that before the day of the Lord would come Christ Himself would descend into the air, and all His saints would be caught up to meet Him. Of this He reminds them in 1 Thessalonians, chapter four. But it would seem that a report had gotten abroad among them that the day of the Lord had already come, and he writes to correct this, he bids them not to be shaken in their minds, nor fearful in regard to this; for, he tells them, that day could not come until the apostasy had first taken place and the man of sin been revealed, "the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." But he goes on to speak of a Hinderer, who at the present time is holding back the floodtide of evil. That Hinderer is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth. At the rapture of the saints, when all the redeemed are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the Holy Spirit will have returned to heaven. "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed! not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (vers. 8 to 12).

How perfectly this fits in with the testimony we have been examining in other parts of the word of God! While the Church is on earth the mystery of lawlessness is already working, but the full revelation of evil cannot be while we are in this scene. When that time comes we shall be above it all, having been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

The mystery of lawlessness and the many antichrists of 1 John chap. 2:18 are intimately connected. So here we have a point of agreement with persons who think that the papacy is the Antichrist. We differ with them only as to the use of the article. The papal system is an antichrist; and this is true of every system that turns souls away from the truth concerning Christ and His work as the alone ground of salvation. Christian Science is an antichrist; Theosophy is another; Mormonism is another; and so, with Spiritism, and a host of other ancient and modern cults and fads. The crowning evil of them all is perhaps what is now known as the New Theology, heralded from a thousand pulpits as the finished product of modern thought, by men who glory in their freedom from subjection to the word of God, and do not hesitate to brand the Scriptures as a collection of myths and fables, untrustworthy, and less to be relied upon than their own

vapid utterances. Every little while someone who has been supposed to be an orthodox Christian preacher comes out with the declaration that he has discovered the unreliability of this or that book of the Bible, and his reckless assertions are received with delight by congregations of Christless, unconverted professors, who are glad to be absolved from allegiance to a book whose teachings make them uneasy in conscience while living for themselves in the world.

If the day ever came that a man who had actually known the Lord Jesus as his own Saviour, and had enjoyed communion with Him, was forced by irresistible evidence to believe that the Bible was not true, and the precious gospel story an unreliable tradition of men, do you know what would happen? *It would break his heart.* He would never be found among the shallow, empty religionists of the day, who can complacently acquiesce in the vapoing's of the so-called Higher Critics and New Theology preachers. He would be found weeping with Mary, and exclaiming in deepest grief, " They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

But it is far otherwise with these unreal professors who drink in so greedily the veneered infidelity that Christless preachers proclaim. What does it do for these men? When they thought the Bible true, it served as a check upon their lawless desires and appetites. They chafed under its restraints. But when the time comes that the whole thing goes out of the window, and they become enfranchised, as they call it, they were never so happy in all their life! Ah, I assure you, beloved, people who really have known Christ would feel very differently about having to give up the precious word of God through which He had been revealed to their souls. You see, such are acquainted with the divine *Person*, the Son of the living God. The others had but a *theory* which they are thankful enough to be rid of.

Those who preach these false gospels are the many antichrists of the present dispensation. When the lawless one himself is revealed, they will be the first to acknowledge his impious claims, deceived by the strong delusion sent from God that all might be judged who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

Already it would seem as though that strong delusion were beginning. I know nothing sadder, nothing more lamentable, than the awful power of these evil things that are spreading through Christendom, eating out its very life, like a moral or religious cancer. How seldom you ever see a soul brought back from the awful abyss of Spiritism! How seldom persons are ever recovered from Theosophy or Christian Science! And the reason is plain: there is a Satanic power, working in them all, that gains absolute control over those who have heard the gospel of God only to refuse and reject it. But, thank God, there are those to whom the words of the apostle apply: " But we are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

God grant that each one that hears these words may thus be manifested as a child of God, born of the Holy Spirit and of the word, happy in the knowledge of peace made and redemption accomplished through the glorious work of Christ upon the cross.