

The Church shall flee as to a desert in Anti-christ's time, but not decay or be unknown, no not for so short a time.

6. *The woman fled.*] This great persecution that the Church shall flee from, is in the time of Antichrist, and shall endure but three years and a half, as is noted v. 14 in the margin. In which time for all that, she shall not want our Lord's protection, nor true Pastors, nor be so secret, but all faithful men shall know and follow her: much less shall she decay, err in faith, or degenerate and follow Antichrist, as Heretics do wickedly feign. As the Church Catholic now in England in this time of persecution, because it hath no public state of regiment nor open free exercise of holy functions, may be said to be fled into the desert, yet it is neither unknown to the faithful that follow it, nor the enemies that persecute it: as the hid company that the Protestants talk of, was for some worlds together, neither known to their friends nor foes, because there was in deed none such for many ages together. And this is true, if we take the flight for a very corporal retiring into wilderness. Where in deed it may be, and is of most expounded, to be a spiritual flight, by forsaking the joys and solaces of the world, and giving herself to contemplation and penance, during the time of persecution under Antichrist. And by enlarging the sense, it may also very well signify the desolation and affliction that the Church suffereth and hath suffered from time to time in this wilderness of the world, by all the forerunners and ministers of Antichrist, Tyrants and Heretics.

7. *A great battle.*] In the Church there is a perpetual combat betwixt St. Michael (protector of the Church militant as he was sometime of the Jews Synagogue. *Dan. 10:21*) and his Angels, and the Devil and his ministers, the perfect victory over whom, shall be at the judgment. Mark here also the cause why St. Michael is commonly painted fighting with a dragon.

15. *To be carried away.*] By great persecution he would draw her, that is, her children from the true faith: But every one of the faithful elect, gladly bearing their part thereof, overcome his tyranny. At whose constancy he being the more offended, worketh malicious attempts in assaulting the frailer sort, who are here signified by *the rest of her see that keep the commandments*, but are not so perfect as the former.

St. Michael fighting with the dragon.

Anti-christ's attempts to draw from the true faith.

CHAPTER 13

2. *A beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns and ten diadems, 5. blasphemeth God, 7. and warreth against the Saints and destroyeth them. 13. And another beast rising out of the earth with two horns, was altogether for the foresaid beast, constraining men to make and adore the image thereof, and to have the character of his name.*

AND I saw a beast coming up from the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.
2. And the beast which I saw, was like to a lizard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth, as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his own force and great power.

3. And I saw one of his heads as it were slain to death: and the wound of his death was cured. And all the earth was ^vin admiration after the beast.

4. And they adored the dragon which gave power to the beast: and they adored the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast? and who shall be able to fight with it?

5. And there was given to it a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies: and power was given to it to work two and forty months.

6. And he opened his mouth unto blasphemies toward God, ^vto blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven.

7. And it was given unto him to make battle with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was given him upon every tribe and people, and tongue, and nation,

8. And all that inhabit the earth, adored it, ^{*}whose names be not written in the book of life of the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world.

9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10. He that shall lead into captivity, goeth into captivity: ^{*}he that shall kill in the sword, he must be killed with the sword. here is the patience and the faith of saints.

^vThey that now follow the simplest and grossest heretics that ever were without seeing miracles, would then much more follow this great seducer working miracles.

^vNo Heretics ever liker Anti-christ, then these in our days, specially in blasphemies against God's Church, Sacraments, Saints, ministers, and all sacred images.

Apoc. 3:9

Gen. 9:6
Matt. 26:52

Another false prophet inferior to Anti-christ, shall work wonders also, but all referred to the honor of his master Anti-christ. So doth Calvin and other Arch-Heretics pervert the world to the honor of Anti-christ, and so do their scholars also for the honor of them.

11. And I saw another beast coming up from the earth: and he had two horns, like to a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12. And all the power of the former beast he did in his sight: and he made the earth and the inhabitants therein, to adore the first beast, whose wound of death was cured.

13. And he did many signs, so that he made also fire to come down from heaven unto the earth in the sight of men.

14. And he seduceth the inhabitants on the earth through the signs which were given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast which hath the stroke of the sword, and lived.

15. And it was given him to give spirit to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak: and should make, that whosoever shall not adore the image of the beast, be slain.

16. And he shall make all, little and great, and rich, and poor, and freemen, and bondmen, to have a character in their right hand, or in their foreheads.

17. And that no man may buy or sell, but he that hath the character, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18. Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man: and the number of him is six hundred sixty six.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 13

Many mysteries expounded

1. *A beast coming up.*] This beast is the universal company of the wicked, whose head is Antichrist: and the same is called (*Apoc 17*) the whore of Babylon. the 7 heads be expound (*Apoc 17*) seven kings: five before Christ, one present, and one to come. The 10 horns be also there expounded to be 10 kings that shall reign a short while after Antichrist. this dragon is the Devil, by whose power the whore or beast or Antichrist worketh. For in the words follow (v. 3 & 4) Antichrist is called the beast, to whom the dragon, that is, the Devil giveth that power of feigned miracles. And as we adore God for giving power to Christ and his followers, so they shall adore the Devil for assisting Antichrist and giving him power.

Great persecution by Anti-christ and his ministers.

7. *To make battle with the saints.*] He shall kill the saints then living, Elias and Enoch, and infinite more that profess Christ. Whereby we must learn, not to marvel when we see the wicked persecute and prevail against the just, in this life. then shall his great persecution and cruelty try the saints patience, as his wonderful means to seduce shall try the steadfastness of their faith, which is signified by these words following, *Here is the patience and the faith of saints.* And when it is said, *They adored*

Their blessedness that continue constant.

the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, it giveth great solace and hope to all them that shall not yield to such persecutions, that they are of God's elect, and their names written in the book of life.

The honor of Christ's image is for the honor of Christ.

14. *The image of the beast.*] They that now refuse to worship Christ's image, would then worship Antichrist's. And we may note here, that as the making or honoring of this image was not against the honor of Antichrist, but wholly for it, as also the image erected of Nabuchodonosor, and the worship thereof was altogether for the honor of him, so is the worship of Christ's image, the honor of Christ himself, and not against him, as Protestants madly imagine.

17. *The character or the name.*] As belike for the perverse imitation of Christ, whose image (specially as on the Rood or crucifix) he seeth honored and exalted in every Church, he will have his image adored (for that is Antichrist, in emulation of like honor, adversary to Christ's) so for that he seeth all true Christian men to bear the badge of his Cross in their foreheads, he likewise will force all his to have another mark, to abolish the sign of Christ. By the like emulation also and wicked opposition he will have his name and the letters thereof to be sacred, and to be worn in mens caps, or written in solemn places, and to be worshipped, as the name of JESUS is and ought to be among Christian men. And as the ineffable name of God was among the JEWS expressed by a certain number of 4 characters (therefore called *Tetragrammaton*) so it seemeth the Apostle alludeth here to the number of Antichrist's name.

Anti-christ's triple honor against the honor of Christ.

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And here it is much to be noted, that the Protestants plucking down the image of Christ out of all Churches, and his sign of the cross from mens foreheads, and taking away the honor and reverence of the name JESUS, do make room for Antichrist's image, and mark, and name. And when Christ's images and ensigns or arms shall be abolished, and the Idol of Antichrist set up instead thereof, as it is already begun: then is the abomination of desolation which was foretold of Daniel and our Saviour.

The Protestants by abolishing of Christ's images, and cross and irreverence to the name JESUS, make a ready way to the honor of Anti-christ.

John 14:19

18. *Let him count.*] Though God would not have it manifest before hand to the world, who in particular this Antichrist should be: yet it pleased him to give such tokens of him, that when he cometh, the faithful may easily take notice of him, according as it is written of the event of other prophecies concerning our Saviour. *That when it is come to pass, you may believe.* In the mean time we must take heed that we judge not over rashly of God's secrets, the holy writ here signifying, that it is a point of high understanding, illuminated extraordinarily by God's spirit, to reckon right and disciples truly before hand, Antichrist's name and person.

Anti-christ's name secret.

18. *It is the number of a man.*] A man he must be, and not a Devil or spirit, as here it is clear, and by St. Paul, *2 Thess. 2.* where he is called, *the man of sin.* Again, he must be one particular person, and not a number, and the characters thereof be (though obscurely) insinuated. Which reproveth the wicked vanity of Heretics, that would have Christ's own Vicars, the successors of his chief Apostle, yea the whole order of them for many ages together, to be this Antichrist. Who by his description here and in the said Epistle to the Thessalonians, must be one special man, and of a particular proper name, as our Lord JESUS. And whosoever he be, these Protestants undoubtedly are his precursors. For as they make his way by ridding away Christ's images, cross, and name, so they exceedingly promote the matter by taking away Christ's chief minister, that all may be plain for Antichrist.

Anti-christ shall be one special man, and of a peculiar name.

If the Pope had been Antichrist, and had been revealed now a good many years sithence, as these fellows say he is to them, then the number of this name would agree to him, and the prophesy being now fulfilled, it would evidently appear that he bare the name and number here noted. For (no doubt) when he cometh, this count of the letters or number of his name which before is so hard to know, will be easy. For he will set up his name in every place, even as we faithful men do now advance JESUS. And what name proper or appellative of all or any of the Popes do they find to agree with this number, notwithstanding they boast that they have found the whole order and every of them these thousand years to be Antichrist, and the rest before even from St. Peter, foreworkers toward his kingdom?

The Pope cannot be Anti-christ.

Iren. li. 5 in fine.

18. *The number 666.*] For as much as the ancient expositors and other do think (for certain knowledge there no mortal man can have without an express revelation) that his name consisteth of so many, and such letters in Greek, as according to their manner of numbering by the Alphabet proper and common: (as St. Irenaeus findeth them in *Latinos* and *Teitan*, Hippolytus in *αριθμος*, Aretas in *Lampetis*, and some of this age in *Luderus*, which was Luther's name in the Alaman⁹⁵ tongue:) therefore we see there can be no certainty, and every one frameth and applieth the letters to his own purpose. And most absurd folly it is of the Heretics, to apply the word, *Latinos*, to the Pope: neither the whole order in common, nor ever any particular Pope being so called. And St. Irenaeus the first that observed it in that word, applied it to the Empire and state of the Roman Emperor, which then was Heathen, and not to the Pope of his days or after him: and yet preferred the word, *Teitan*, as more agreeable, with this admonition, that it were a very perilous and presumptuous thing to define any certainty before hand, of that number and name. And truly whatsoever the Protestants presume herein of the Pope, we may boldly discharge Luther of that dignity. He is undoubtedly one of Antichrist's precursors, but not Antichrist himself.

All framing of letters to express Anti-christ's name is uncertain.

⁹⁵Alaman: The German tribe of the Alemanni which gave the French their name for Germany, Allemagne.