

The Papal plot to rid itself of its identification with Antichrist

An extract from: *Daniel and the Revelation: The Chart of Prophecy and Our Place In It.*

A Study of the Historical and Futurist Interpretation.

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So great a hold did the conviction that the Papacy was the Antichrist gain upon the minds of men, that Rome at last saw she must bestir herself, and try, by putting forth other systems of interpretation, to counteract the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist.

Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of her most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men's minds from perceiving the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the Papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bring into prominence the *Preterist* method of interpretation, which we have already briefly noticed, and thus endeavoured to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Popes ever ruled at Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the Papal Power by bringing out the *Futurist* system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times.¹

It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the Futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are thus really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist. It has been well said that "Futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon Popery." More especially is this to be deplored at a time when the Papal Antichrist seems to be making an expiring effort to regain his former hold on men's minds. Now once again, as at the Reformation, it is especially necessary that his true character should be recognised, by all who would be faithful to "the testimony of Jesus." That the work of the Reformation is being sapped and mined in England is only too evident. It has been boldly and eloquently proclaimed by Archdeacon Farrar, and is acknowledged by some of our Bishops. Is it not time, therefore, that those who oppose the Historical system, which, by identifying the Papacy with the Antichrist, formed the prophetic basis of the Reformation, should ask themselves whether they are not in this way really strengthening the hands of those who are now endeavouring to undo that glorious work?

¹ *Introduction to the Revelation.* Alford.