

## **ANTI-CHRIST.**

This word occurs five times, and is found only in John's epistles. Anti signifies against; hence, anti-Christ means against Christ. It will readily be seen, then, that the term will apply to anything or any person opposing Christ. Peter was anti-Christ when he endeavored to dissuade Jesus from dying on the cross, and Jesus so indicated, when, turning to him, He said: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (adversary). He was Jesus' enemy, because he sought to prevent His doing the Father's will. Paul, also, was at one time anti-Christ, when persecuting the body of Christ (the church), as Jesus said to him when stricken down on the road to Damascus: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest (oppose, injure). All who, like Paul, persecute the church, or, like Peter, attempt to dissuade from duty and sacrifice, and put hindrances in the way to prevent the body from taking up the cross and following the head (Jesus) – all such are evidently anti-Christ. The adversaries of the body of Christ are more especially the latter, who, claiming to belong to the same family, cast a stumbling-block before the weak ones.

In this sense Anti-Christ's have been numerous since the days of Jesus, and we are assured that the closing of the gospel age will be a time above all others in which the principles and doctrines of Jesus Christ will be antagonized and opposed by many Anti-Christ's (opposition from many sources).

We should recognize a difference between false Christ's (pseudo-kristos) and anti-Christ's (anti-kristos). Jesus tells us (Matt. 24:24) that in the end of the age there shall arise many false prophets [teachers of error] and false Christ's. As all true believers in Jesus, obedient to their head, constitute the body of the true Christ [anointed], so, the various churches which recognize the authority

of another head than Jesus constitute the body of a false Christ. Thus, the Roman church recognizes the Pope [papa; father] as the head of that church. The church of England recognizes its Government as its head, protector and "defender of the faith;" so, also, do the churches of Germany and Russia. These are false Christs, and the basis upon which they were established was false teachings of false prophets [teachers]. Of these, Papacy is especially noted as the chief in scripture, and is sometimes spoken of as "The Man of Sin," who ensnared and seduced so many of Jesus' virgin church with the delusion that the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdom of God, and that the time to suffer with Christ was over, and the time to reign begun. Thus was the church corrupted by the "Man of Sin," and so became the "harlot" and the "mother of harlots." [Rev. 17.] Many are her offspring. [See Z.W.T., vol. 1, Nos. 6 and 7].

But we must draw the line more closely, and suggest that every company of religious people who recognize as a head and authority any man or set of men, is in that proportion, false to the real head.

We know that the various Christian sects claim to recognize Jesus as their head and director, but by their works they deny it; for let an occasion arise for a church trial, and the condemned will be tried, not by the teachings and words of Jesus, but by the "Standards of the Presbyterian Church," or by the "Authorities of the Methodist Church," or otherwise according to the denomination in which it occurs. Thus they acknowledge other heads and authorities than Christ.

Again, as there is only one true Head, so there is only one true body of Christ. Jesus is the true head, and every follower and disciple united to that head by living faith is reckoned a member of the body, having his "name written in heaven." Whence, then, are these numerous so-called churches, or bodies of Christ, and their

various heads? They are the offspring of error; false systems; false Christs; and give a confused idea to the world, who might well inquire, with Paul: "Is Christ divided?" No, but there are many false Christs, and we are glad to know that those Christians in various churches who most honor Jesus as the only Head, are earnestly inquiring whether the reason Christians are unable to have "one Lord (ruler), one faith, one baptism," is not, in great measure, due to their each "teaching for doctrines the [creeds or] commandments of men."

And among these we must, to some extent, class many religious denominations who worship the tenets and laws of their church – their body, over which they have appointed a head, or controlling power. Let us lay aside every such yoke of bondage, and be most fully Christ's freemen, receiving assistance in our pathway to the divine likeness from whomsoever and whatever we can, but never looking to any man or men as our leader, nor depending on any but "The Great Shepherd of the Sheep" and "Captain of our Salvation."

Now these false Christs (churches) are to a certain extent Anti-Christs. Also, in proportion as their teachings and systems are untrue, they are upholding error, and consequently are opposed to Christ and the truth. It is for this reason that "The Man of Sin" (Papacy) is said to oppose all that is called God. Attempting to gain the homage of mankind to itself as the head of all, it of course, in that proportion, antagonizes and opposes the true head of the true church.

But are these the only Anti-Christs, the only ones opposing Christ? By no means. The world is still opposed to the Christ of God, both head and body because it knoweth Him not. Infidels in common with Jews deny the man Christ Jesus – deny that Jesus is come in the flesh. In the early days of the church before false christs and false systems had come in, it was more easy to define a christian than

now. So we read: (2 John 7.) "many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ. It has been suggested to us that the word rendered is come in this text, might be rendered is coming and thus be made to apply to the second coming of Jesus. We have examined carefully the word he translated, is come. It comes from the Greek – erkomai and is generally [R144 : page 2] used to indicate presence as of one who has come. It is translated coming only 26 times, and in many of these it, in our judgment could have been better translated otherwise: for instance (Matt. 25:27.) "at my coming, I should have received my own with usury." Evidently a master would not expect a settlement until he had come, not while on the journey coming. We should therefore translate – "on my arrival." The same word – erkomai – while rendered 26 times, coming, is rendered came 182 times, and this usual translation agrees with its use in the scripture under consideration – "who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is Anti-Christ.

We know that it could not mean that Jesus is coming in the flesh. This he did once when he came as a sin-offering in a flesh body prepared for the purpose – "A body hast thou prepared me, etc." But he comes not again to death and consequently would have no use for a body of flesh: "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet, now henceforth know we Him (so) no more." The same apostle continues the same subject saying: (1 John 4:3.) "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come (erkomai – came) in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of Anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come." Here again John is not discussing the second coming of Jesus but is endeavoring to prove his having come once. (See verses 14 and 15.) This was the only thing necessary to combat in that day. People believed that Jesus had lived, but denied his being – the Christ, the sent of God, as the same

class of anti-christs do to-day who deny that "Jesus is the Son of God."

The same thought is expressed again (1 John 2:18.) "Ye have heard that Anti-Christ shall come; even now there are many anti-christs. Now he proceeds to describe as before whom he meant by Anti-Christ, using the same argument as before, vs. 22. "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the ANOINTED? This is the anti-christ – he who denies the Father and Son; no one who denies the son has the Father." (Diaglott).

Thus we have seen from various standpoints what constitutes Anti-Christ. Those against which we most guard are the power and influence of the various false heads and so called bodies of Christ, seeing to it that we recognize but one fold and one shepherd and that we heed not the voice of strangers but flee from them. And let us take heed lest we become adversaries of our Lord and Master as beloved brother Peter once did and thereby deserve the reproof – "Get thee behind me Satan." Let us not hinder by word or act any who are seeking to crucify the flesh – the human nature – and to thus abide as members of the body of Christ, branches in the vine, else we shall to that extent be opposed to Christ or anti-christ.

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