

As for the objections likely to be made, I have carefully weighed, and found them wanting. The Revised Version is doubtless neither perfect nor final; but it is the most accurate version likely to be publicly issued for a long time. The Authorised Version is more rhythmical and stately in its flow; but where strict fidelity in rendering the sense seems sacrificed to purchase this, shall we rest content with the bargain?

The matter came up subsequently for discussion, when—

Archdeacon Beamish moved "that in the judgment of this Assembly it is much to be desired that the lessons be read in Church from the Revised Version, rather than from the Un-revised Version, of the Holy Scriptures." This was, after discussion, withdrawn in favour of a motion by Archdeacon Cooper, which was carried unanimously, "that this Assembly rejoices to know from the President's address that lessons may be read in church from the Revised Version."

As a matter of fact, the Revised Version has been used for lessons in several of the churches for some time past; it is invariably used in the pulpit, and in many houses it is used in family worship.

With the publication of each Testament, I delivered courses of lectures upon the materials available for the purposes of revision, and the chief alterations made by the Revisers. The suggested use of the Revised Version in churches gives me the opportunity of redelivering the lec-

tures (in another parish), and considerable interest is being manifested.

We would gladly introduce the Revised Version in our Sunday schools, but the prices, except for very small type, are prohibitory. An edition in strong binding, nonpareil type, at one shilling, would meet with a ready sale; but the following comparison shows how heavily the Revised Version is handicapped:—

	Pearl.	Ruby.	Nonpareil.	Minion.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bible Society (A. V.),	0 8	0 10	0 11	1 6
S. P. C. K. (A. V.), (non-members),	0 8	0 11	1 0	1 6
R. V.,	0 10	3 0	—	5 0

In the Diocese of Ballarat we are offered the "Pearl" edition at 9d., and the others at a corresponding reduction; but "Pearl" type is altogether too small for school use.

I am convinced that the Revised Version would be more appreciated if it were better known; and the publishers would do well to encourage its use both in Sunday and day schools by the publication of a cheap, readable edition, which, even if sold at cost of production, would be profitable as leading to a demand for higher-priced editions.

I thank you for reviving interest in the question by eliciting the opinions (mostly favourable) of so many head-masters of public schools.

## The Early Narratives of Genesis.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR H. E. RYLE, B.D., CAMBRIDGE.

### VIII.

#### NOAH AS THE VINE-DRESSER AND HIS THREE SONS.

Genesis ix. 18-29.

IN the short section which follows the narrative of the Flood, is related the prophetic declaration of the Patriarch Noah concerning the future destiny of the races that were to spring from his three sons.

The description of Noah as the first vine-dresser is quite in the style of iv. 17-24; and the incident, it will be observed, has no direct connexion with the narrative of the Flood. It is therefore not

impossible that what is here related (vv. 20-27) was drawn by the Jehovist from a distinct source of ancient Israelite tradition, and was connected by him with the Deluge section by means of vv. 18 and 19. Anyhow, this supposition is worth remembering in view of the well-known difficulty in the present passage occasioned by the fact that the curse is pronounced not upon Ham, but upon Canaan.

The suggestion has been made (1) that, in one Israelite form of the tradition, the three sons of Noah were Shem, *Canaan*, and Japheth; (2) that it was Canaan who treated his father with

contumely, and therefore received his father's curse ; (3) that the compiler of the book, on appending this narrative to the story of the Flood, harmonised it with what had gone before by the insertion of the words "Ham the father of" before "Canaan," in ver. 22, and by the explanatory gloss "and Ham is the father of Canaan," in ver. 18. This explanation, bold as it appears, deserves consideration. It accounts for the sudden mention of Canaan's name in vv. 18 and 22 ; it satisfactorily accounts for the curse being pronounced upon Canaan in ver. 25 ; it explains the abruptness which marks the introduction of the whole incident.

The more usual explanation is that the prophetic glance which could see in Shem the chosen race of Israel saw also in Ham the Canaanites that were to be Israel's foes ; and that Ham who shamed his father appropriately received the curse in the prediction of the shameful destiny of his own youngest son. But we should expect that if the curse were pronounced upon Canaan as the typical son of wrath, the blessing would also have been predictively pronounced upon some typical son of grace. The difficulty at once disappears if vv. 20-27 represent a separate stratum of Israelite tradition in which Canaan was a son of Noah ; and if the parenthetical words in vv. 18 and 20 reflect an endeavour, on the part of the compiler, to harmonise this tradition with that which has already appeared in the story of the Flood.

It is sad to reflect that the words of the curse pronounced upon Canaan (ver. 27) were a century ago quoted in justification and support of negro slavery. Literalism must indeed have been tyrannous, when men who recognised that slavery was a curse could justify it on the ground of the Patriarch's prediction, and were even found ready to identify themselves with its actual infliction. Modern interpretation is exposed to perils of quite a different class.

The candid exegesis of the oracle of Noah does not permit us to imitate those who would associate with his words modern scientific conceptions as to the distribution of races. It has now for a long time been well known and generally recognised, that the old and simple plan of assigning the population of Asia to the descendants of Shem, that of Africa to the descendants of Ham, and that of Europe to the descendants of Japheth, is utterly unscientific ; it fails in nearly every respect to satisfy the complex problems presented

by the history of language and the descent of nations.

Even in recent times, scholars have too rashly sought to trace the fulfilment of the curse upon Canaan in events of Greek and Roman history, which, if disastrous to Hamitic races, were equally so to the kindred of Israel, *e.g.* the Phœnicians and the Carthaginians, the Syrians and the Assyrians.

We should do wisely not to read into this section of Scripture the discoveries of modern ethnological science. Probably the most reasonable line of interpretation will consistently decline to expand by a process of mere conjecture the range of this prophetic oracle beyond the circle of those races which were known to the early Israelite people (see chap. x.).

To their restricted view, Ham (or Canaan) represented especially the heathen dwellers of the Promised Land, whom Israel had but partially dispossessed ; Japheth represented the nations at a greater distance, of whom but little was known.

The thought of the mission of Israel to the world supplies the key to the utterance of Noah. The curse of Canaan is the curse of Israel's greatest foe and constant source of moral temptation ; the shamelessness of Canaan reflects the impression produced by the sensuality of the Canaanite upon the minds of the worshippers of Jehovah. The blessing of Shem is bound up with the family of Israel, which alone worshipped the one true God, Jehovah. The blessing of Japheth is made dependent on the connexion of the northern races with the Hebrews, and on their peaceful relations with Israel : "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Israel's blessing granted by Jehovah shall be dispersed by the instrumentality of the other nations throughout the world. It is in reality a Messianic forecast ; it is a proclamation of the blessing which through the line of Israel is assured to them that are "afar off," as well as to them that are nigh.

#### THE TABLE OF THE NATIONS.

##### Chapter x.

The Israelite compiler follows a clearly indicated plan. His immediate goal is the history of the chosen family. Before he can reach that point, it is needful he should account for the rise of the other nations. After a brief but comprehensive survey, he will notice the line of the descendants of Shem (chap. xi.) ; then, still more narrowly

restricting this area, he will devote himself to the traditions of the family of Terah (xi. 27-32, xii., etc.).

Wearisome as the list of names will seem to many a reader of the chapter, it is the more necessary for us to recognise its place and its true religious significance in the Hebrew Scriptures. It reminded the Israelite that God made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and that the heathen, who knew not Jehovah, were nevertheless brethren of Israel. It reminded him that his own nation was only one among the nations of the earth, by origin and descent in no way separated from them, but, only by the grace of God, selected and chosen to be the bearer of His revelation to the world. Thus the genealogies of Japheth and Ham are duly recorded before the genealogy of Shem; and the branches of Nahor's family are mentioned before the history of Terah's son, Abraham, begins (xi. 27-32).

The nations, it will be observed, are presented to us *genealogically*. But the genealogical relationship of nations is not to be understood literally. The terms of genealogy express, pictorially, the ethnology of prehistoric times. The names are very rarely the names of individuals. In some cases, possibly, the name of a nation or tribe was derived from some famous individual, warrior or chieftain. But these are apparently exceptional. In some cases, the plural termination "*-im*" shows that not an individual, but a whole community is denoted, e.g. Kittim (ver. 4), Dodanim, Ludim, etc. (ver. 14). In others, the name is strictly geographical, thus Mizraim (vv. 6, 13) with its dual termination *-aim*, denotes Upper and Lower Mavor or Egypt, Sidon is "a fishing place" (ver. 15). Canaan denotes the "lowlands" or maritime plain of Palestine (vv. 6, 15).

If, then, the genealogical terms are to be treated metaphorically, it will perhaps not appear evident, at first sight, upon what principle the various races have been distributed among the three sons of Noah. According to one theory, it is a distribution by colour, Shem answering to the Assyrian *samu* or "olive coloured," Ham to *khammu* or "burned black," Japheth to *ippah* or "white." But a glance at the list suffices to show that this hypothesis breaks down. Others have sought for a solution in a division according to three main families of speech; but it is sufficient to condemn this view to point out that while the Hebrews and

the Syrians are assigned to Shem, the Phœnicians and the Zidonians are assigned to Ham.

The ethnology of prehistoric times must not be confounded with modern scientific conceptions of ethnology. It preserves the primitive traditions—traditions of immense value and interest to the historian—respecting the origin of races and nations. In a great measure, however, these traditions more accurately represent prevalent opinions as to the geographical distribution of the races than actual facts as to their origin and descent.

By far the most probable explanation is that the Table of the Nations presents a classification based not upon any scientific principle, but roughly upon geographical situation. The descendants of Shem occupy a central position, the Hamites lie chiefly to the south, the Japhethites on the north. Slight exceptions are admitted in deference to special traditions. But, generally, the Table represents the geographical knowledge of the Israelite. Into the identification of the various names, we have not space to enter here; but the reader may refer to Professor Sayce's chapter upon the subject in *The Races of the Old Testament* (Religious Tract Society). The Table ranges from Armenia in the north to Ethiopia in the south; it extends from Greece (Elisha) and the mysterious Tarshish (? Tartessus) in the west to the country of Elam, beyond Babylonia, on the east.

It will probably have struck an observant reader that the names of Edom, of Moab, of Ammon, so closely bound up with the history of Israel, have no place here. In the Hebrew tradition their origin is associated with a later, the patriarchal or nomadic, period of Semitic history. On the other hand, it is worth while noticing that no mention is here made of the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine, the Anakim, Rephaim, Emim, and Zamzummim. They must have disappeared from the land long before the tradition on which this register is based took its shape; while the absence of the names of Persia and Arabia is claimed by some to indicate a certain pre-exilic date for its construction.

The mention of Nimrod (vv. 8-12) deserves something more than the passing notice, which is all we can here bestow upon it. According to the Hebrew tradition, Nimrod was the founder of the kingdom of Nineveh, and went forth from Babylon to build Nineveh. The Assyrian records, so far as they throw light upon the subject, seem to correspond in

an interesting manner with this tradition. That Nineveh was founded from Babylon appears to be a thoroughly established fact. The further discovery that the earliest known rulers of Assyria were sprung from a non-Semitic race is thought to agree with the mention in this passage of Nimrod's Cushite origin. But the meaning of Cush is disputed. According to some, the name denotes Ethiopian influence; according to others, Arabian; according to others, the Cossæan dynasty in the early Babylonian empire.

Nimrod's name has yet to be discovered in the Inscriptions. The identification of Nimrod with Izdubar (Gilgamesh), an old Accadian divinity, rests on too precarious a foundation to warrant us in putting any confidence in it as yet. But the Nimrod section has undoubtedly been derived by the Jehovist narrator from traditions based on the earliest recollections of the Hebrew race.

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL.

##### Chapter xi. 1-9.

This strange narrative is probably also derived from the records of the Jehovist. It preserves a tradition which goes back to very early times. The purpose of it was obviously to account for the two great phenomena of human society—(1) the distinction of races, and (2) the diversity of language. How these originated must have seemed one of the greatest mysteries to the men of the ancient world. It was clear that while variety of speech constituted the great bar to free intercourse, it was also the constant source of conflict. Given the original unity of the human race, the problem was how to account for the differences which had arisen to divide the children of men so completely and so permanently.

On the other hand, it was easy to perceive that if the original inhabitants of the earth could be supposed to have kept together, there was nothing to account for the wide spread of the population or for the origin of different languages.

The familiar story of the Tower of Babel supplied an answer to such primitive questionings suited to the comprehension of a primitive time. But in the language of the popular tradition, we must not look for the teaching of modern science. It should be enough for us that the Hebrew version of the narrative emphasised the supremacy of the One God over all the inhabitants of the world, and

attributed to His wisdom that distribution into languages and nations which secured the dissemination of mankind over the continents, and necessitated the conception of co-operation for the practice of industry and for the protection of life and property.

The legendary character of the narrative was not altogether removed by the Israelite compiler who gave it its present place in the great historical work. Evidence of this is found in the derivation of the name Babel (the ordinary Hebrew title for Babylon, cf. x. 10), from a Hebrew word employed to denote the confusion of tongues. Now it is well known that the actual Babylonian word for Babylon, "*Bab-itu*," is compounded of two words, "*Bab*" and "*Ilu*," and means "the Gate of God." The Hebrew legend, seizing upon the similarity in the sound of this word to the Hebrew word "*balbel*," "to confound, mix together," chose to derive the name of the Babylonian capital from its "punning" resemblance to this latter word. Whether the *Babylonian* interpretation or pronunciation gives the correct derivation, we cannot perhaps say for certain. But the *Hebrew* derivation given in this narrative is a mere play upon the name, and is probably accountable for the form of the tradition in the Israelite narrative.

A trace also of the early Hebrew mythology, from which, as a general rule, the Israelite historians so completely purged the primitive traditions of the nation, probably survives in the language "Let us go down," which, in ver. 7, is put in the mouth of Jehovah (cf. i. 26).

As the Tower called by this name was evidently connected in Hebrew tradition with Babylon, we should expect that the origin of the legend is to be traced to some remarkable structure or gigantic ruins of an ancient building either within the walls or in the vicinity of Babylon. Scholars have been divided in opinion whether the building which gave rise to the story was the celebrated Tower of Birs-Nimrud at Borsippa which stands at a little distance south-west from Babylon, on the west bank of the Euphrates, or the great Temple of Merodach within Babylon itself, which Nebuchadnezzar mentions that he found in a dilapidated condition, and restored to great splendour and magnificence. Travellers, struck by the enormous size of the Birs-Nimrud mound, have generally inclined to the former alternative. But the name of the Tower favours the view that it was the Temple in Babylon itself. For this Temple was erected in prehistoric

times; its earliest name was Accadian, "*Bit-Saggatu*," "the house of the lofty summit"; it was frequently restored by Babylonian kings; it was the principal shrine in Babylon. Its situation, its size, and its great antiquity favour the supposition that it was the structure around which grew up the story of Babel. No legend answering to that of the tower of Babel has yet been found in the cuneiform records; but such a tradition may naturally have arisen among the dwellers in Babylonia, and have been transported thence by the ancestors of Israel.

Whichever of the two ruins is to be identified with the Tower of Babel is a matter of comparatively small moment. But it may be observed that in both cases the structures were built of brick, both rose out of the plain of Shinar, both probably were built in seven successive stages or terraces, the pinnacle or highest point being occupied by the sanctuary.

Just as the Greek fable told of the giants who strove to scale the heights of Olympus, so the Semitic legend told of the impious act by which the sons of men sought to raise themselves to the dwelling-place of God, and erect an enduring symbol of human unity to be seen from every side.

It should be noticed that, in the words of ver. 2, "they journeyed," the subject of the verb is perfectly indefinite. It does not appear clear who are referred to. There is no allusion to the sons of Noah, or to the members of any one family. The abruptness with which the narrative is thus introduced, and the absence of any reference to Noah and his sons, lead us to suppose that the tradition was derived from some source independent of the Deluge narrative. Possibly the allusion both here (ver. 2) and in x. 11 to "the land of Shinar" is an indication that the Jehovist narrator is drawing from a tradition which had been current in the Sumerian (Shinar) district—the southern portion—of Mesopotamia, and which the ancestors of the Hebrew race had brought with them from their sojourn in that region.

The old belief that Hebrew was the original language, and that the family of Shem alone preserved it, has long been shattered by the science of Philology. There is no need now to go over such familiar ground as the evidence to show that Hebrew is only one of the branches of the great Semitic family of languages, to be classed with Phœnician, Assyrian, Arabic, and Aramaic.

The story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues attempts to account in a pictorial manner for the diversity of speech. No one would ever think now of accepting it as a scientific explanation. It preserves the Hebrew version of a legend which connected the origin of difference in speech with the mystery that enveloped the history of a marvellous enormous tower; and if it assumed that Hebrew was the primeval language, it did but resemble the traditions which, in other races, made for other languages a similar claim.

But beneath the story lies clearly discernible its religious significance. Once more the element of evil asserts itself in the self-exaltation of man against his Maker, the seeking of his own glory ("let us make us a name," ver. 4) rather than Jehovah's will. Once more the Israelite religion shows that the way of Jehovah's punishment is fraught with mercy. If the sentence on the soil had necessitated the blessings of human industry, so here the decree of the separation into races provided for the dispersion of civilising influences into different quarters. Above all, it revealed that rebellion against God is the true source of discord. The gift of Pentecost, as the Fathers saw, is the true converse to the story of Babel. The true unity of the race, made known in Christ, is confirmed by the utterance of the Spirit to be heard by all alike. The believer "journeys" not away from God's presence, but draws nigh to Him by faith.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF THE SHEMITES.

##### Chapter xi. 10-26.

We pass again to the writing of the Priestly narrative. The change from the narrative to the genealogy, so strangely abrupt, illustrates once again the structure of a compilatory work.

The genealogy here is confined to the descendants of Shem. It corresponds to the genealogy in chap. v. For while that genealogy bridged over the period between the Creation and the Flood, this one bridges over the period between the Flood and the calling of Abraham. Its purpose, therefore, is to effect the transition from the history of the world to the history of the chosen people.

The strictly historical character of this genealogy cannot be maintained. (1) The period of 365 years between the Flood and the calling of Abraham is much too brief to allow for that development of

the races, and for that growth of civilisation, which appear in the patriarchal age. Egypt and Babylon, as we know from their inscriptions, had, for centuries, enjoyed a highly-developed civilisation before the time of Abraham. (2) The subsequent Patriarchal narrative in no way favours the idea that, at the time of Abraham's calling, and down to the birth of Jacob, the Shemite forefathers, including Shem himself, were most of them alive (xi. 11); for if the figures given in this chapter were literally correct, this consequence would have to be admitted. The duration of life in chap. xi. occupies an intermediate position between the ages of the antediluvian Patriarchs and the ages of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Shem lived 600 years, Arpachsad 465, Shela 465, Eber 464, Peleg 239, Reu 239, Serug 230, Nahor 148. In the duration of Nahor's life, we may observe a transition to the more historical period of the nomad Patriarchs.

The Septuagint, probably recognising the difficulty caused by the short interval between the Flood and the call of Abraham, raises it from 365 to 1245 years; the figures in the Samaritan version bring it to 1015. But it cannot be doubted that, in both instances, the variation from the Hebrew text has been made intentionally, with the view of rendering the narrative more probable, and of removing the difficulty mentioned above.

The genealogy of Shem brings us to the threshold of the Patriarchal period. It introduces us to the history of the Terah family from which the nation sprang. We pass out of the region of those traditions which, presumably, the Israelites shared in some degree with other branches of the Semitic stock. But upon those other narratives which preserved the nation's recollection of its nomadic age, it is not our province in the present series of papers to enter.

In bringing to a conclusion these slight and fragmentary contributions to the understanding of a most important section of the Old Testament, I need add but a few words. My endeavour has been to discuss the contents of these chapters in the light of modern science and of modern criticism. If I have failed to do so with the reverence due to Holy Scripture, I most humbly express regret for a fault I have striven especially to avoid.

In these eleven chapters are recorded the popular and unscientific narratives which, in early Hebrew tradition, conveyed pictorially the pre-

valent conceptions as to the origin of the Universe and the foundations of human society. Inspiration did not *infuse* into the mind of a writer accurate scientific knowledge of things unknown. But the Israelite writer, gifted by the Holy Spirit, was overruled to draw here from one source and there from another the materials for a consecutive account which, while it embodied the fulness and variety of Hebrew tradition, was itself the appointed medium of Divine instruction.

If we look for perfection of scientific teaching, whether of geology and astronomy, or of history, ethnology, and philology, we shall inevitably be disappointed. Earthly learning is not the subject of Divine revelation. But if we look for spiritual teaching, our search is amply rewarded. Here, no less than in the other narrative portions of Scripture, the Word is powerful, not so much because of the facts which it records, but because of the instruction which it is the means of conveying to our hearts, spiritual instruction, "things necessary to salvation."

The literature of Holy Scripture differs not widely in its outward *form* from other literature. In its prehistoric traditions the Israelite literature shares many of the characteristic features of the earliest legends which the literature of other nations has preserved.

What though the contents of these chapters are conveyed in the form of unhistorical tradition? The infirmity of their origin and structure only enhances, by contrast, the majesty of their sacred mission. In a dispensation, where every stage of Hebrew thought and literature ministers to the unfolding of the purpose of the Most High, not even that earliest stage was omitted, which to human judgment seems most full of weakness. Saint and seer shaped the recollections which were the inheritance of a forgotten past, until they too, as well as chronicle and prophecy and psalm, became channels of eternal truths.

The poetry of primitive tradition enfolds the message of the Divine Spirit. Criticism can analyse its literary structure; science can lay bare the defectiveness of its knowledge. But neither in the recognition of the composite character of its writing, nor of the childish standard of its science, is there any reproach conveyed. For, as always is the case, the instrument of Divine revelation partakes of limitations inalienable from the age in which it is granted. The more closely we are

enabled to scan the human framework, the more reverently shall we acknowledge the presence of the Spirit that pervades it.

Frankly to accept the teaching of science, and the results of criticism, is no concession to scepticism on the part of the Christian student; it is but a step forward in the recognition of God's way of making known His will to man. That such a step is not incompatible with the loyal and reverent treatment of Holy Scripture, I have endeavoured, even at the risk of wearying my readers, to make

plain at each stage in the course of the series which I now conclude.

Very imperfect at the best, as I am too well aware, these studies have been; but it is my prayerful hope that at least the temper and spirit in which they have been conceived, if not the actual line of thought which has been pursued, may have been welcome to some who have wished to recognise the claims of science and criticism in the reverent interpretation of "The Early Narratives of Genesis."

## Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ROTHE, D.D.

### CHAPTER II. 18-23.

"Children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that the antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. They have gone out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they had to be made manifest; because not all are of us. And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you that ye know not the truth, but that ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also."

VER. 18. In ver. 17 John had supported his exhortation to renounce the love of the world by pointing to the fact that the world passeth away. He now, in verse 18, strengthens the force of this latter consideration by remarking that the moment of the passing away of the (material) earthly world is near at hand: "*It is the last hour.*" This expression denotes the juncture of the dissolution of the world (*consummatio mundi*), which juncture occurs with the reappearing of the Redeemer. Jewish theology divided the whole duration of the world into two great periods or æons, which were separated by the appearing of the Messiah, viz. into the present and the future æon. At the close of the present period the long-looked for Messiah would appear, redeem His people, judge the heathen nations, and begin His reign on earth. This notion was cherished also by the Christians along with the terms expressing it; but as entertained by them it had to undergo an essential modification. From the Christian point of view the line of demarcation between the two æons could not be the appearing of the Redeemer that had already taken place, but only His still impending second appearing in Messianic glory, His reappearing.

They, therefore, looked upon the last hour as still future. John must also declare to his readers upon what it is that he bases his statement, that it is already, in this sense, the "last hour." He says that the peculiar sign of the immediate nearness of the last hour, the appearance, viz., of the antichrist, is already plainly manifest. When he adds that his readers had already *heard* this, he takes for granted that this doctrine was an element of the evangelical teaching as generally proclaimed (*vide* Matt. xxiv. 5 ff., 11, 23-26; Mark xiii. 22 f.; Acts xx. 29 f.; 2 Tim. iii. 1 ff.; and more especially the Apocalypse). John expressly distinguishes the *antichrists* from the antichrist. The former are the forerunners of the latter; the elements, as it were, out of which he is to be formed by their suddenly uniting together. According to vers. 19-23, iv. 1-3, 6; 2 John ver. 7, they are false teachers. From the coming upon the scene of many such antichristian false teachers, John now infers the existence and activity of the antichrist himself. But who is this antichrist? This expression is found only in John's Epistles (here and in ver. 22, iv. 3; 2 John ver. 7). Like the expression "he that opposeth" of 2 Thess. ii. 4, it denotes