

A review of the origins of futurism may be helpful at this point. Its revival by Roman Catholic scholars is put down as a purely apologetic device, and the real origin of the view in the writing of Irenaeus is obscured. It is proved to be a needed and satisfactory interpretation of Revelation, and therefore to malign and reject it because of its Roman Catholic origin is unjustified. The animus against it is only further proof of the deep-seated addiction to date-setting which depended on the day/year theory.

Apparently the revival of the ancient futurism of Irenaeus came through the work of Francisco Ribeira (1537-1591). In a commentary on Revelation, Ribeira denied the Protestant application of Antichrist to the Church of Rome. His purpose may have been purely apologetic, but the adoption of the simple futurist view of Irenaeus was a move toward the restoration of sanity in the interpretation of Revelation. It is an interesting speculation whether Ribeira, and later Bellarmine, consulted the last five chapters (chaps. 32-36) of Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*. Even if they did not consult this ancient source, the part of Irenaeus that Ribeira had and quoted, contained the essentials of futurism. Chapter 30 is Irenaeus' famous passage on the number of Antichrist and also contains the remarkable summary in Sect. 4 in which Antichrist's reign of three and one-half years is specifically mentioned. Also, his analysis of the ten-king kingdom of the end times is remarkably faithful to Daniel and Revelation, and though he does not mention the three and one-half year reign of Antichrist, he comments on the passage in Daniel where the time, times, and half a time of Antichrist are mentioned (Dan 7:25). and advances an interpretation of v20 which is the key to a proper interpretation of Rev 17: 11 and its eighth king.

Hence, we may say that Ribeira, even without the suppressed section of Irenaeus, could have found encouragement for the futurist idea. Ribeira's work was only the first step toward the restoration of the ancient premillenarian futurism, because he retained the Augustinian church-historical view of the millennium. Ribeira's futurism dealt only with the futurity of the Antichrist and the ten-horn kingdom. In his rejection of Augustine's view of the temporal rule of the saints on earth<sup>25</sup> and of the Protestant application of Antichrist to the Church of Rome, Ribeira was obviously in agreement with Revelation which makes Antichrist a political figure. Here, no doubt, is a source of the age-long confusion. The name Antichrist sounds a religious note, but the beast is not so named in Revelation. His religious ally, the false prophet, is the religious leader and answers to the woman riding on the beast. The identification of the political head, the beast, as Antichrist, has no doubt been a great source of confusion. We need to remind ourselves that "Antichrist" is not used in Revelation. John consistently speaks of that evil eschatological figure as "the beast." The false prophet, speaking like a lamb, is more properly typed as Antichrist.

We return to our tracing of the historical development. The obvious failure of the supposed fulfilment of biblical predictions in 1798 was but another in a long series of delusive predictions of the End. We seem to have reached the limit of plausible conjectural dates for the beginning and