

Christ would not be yet. He says: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

The "falling away" is to be of so definite a character, and on so large a scale as to be called, by way of distinction, "the apostacy"—not a minor defection, not a petty schism, not the most widely spread heresy; but that great apostacy—the repudiation of Christianity by a vast mass of those who have formerly professed Christ. And this view of the matter is abundantly borne out by the Lord's own statements:—"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" that is, He shall not find faith on the earth. "All the tribes of the earth shall mourn," when they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven.

The Man of Sin is to oppose himself to all that is called God—he is to exalt himself above every other object of worship. He will not represent himself then as the Vicar or Agent of Christ, nor will he profess to be the Paraclete or Comforter Christ promised to send down upon His people. He will not come merely as a great reformer, to call us back to primitive purity of worship, nor will he be merely a great leader of heresy and schism. St. Paul's idea is evidently that of a mighty potentate who is to have nothing to do with the worship of any God at all, but is to oppose himself to every other object of worship, and claim to be above all the gods, whether true or false that have ever been adored in the world. Now it is perfectly clear that no such individual has ever yet appeared on the face of the earth. So terrible a development of impiety—so fearful a leader of a true apostacy, has never yet appeared to blacken the page of history. Many forms of error have grown up in the world; blasphemy and impiety have cursed the richest and the fairest lands of the earth; and have converted the loveliest paradise into the abode of fiends. But so monstrous a form of evil, has never crossed the face of the Universe, as a blot upon God's creation, since the day when the Prince of fallen angels "put to proof the High Supremacy of Heaven, and defied the Omnipotent."

St. Paul further adds that, "he as a god, sitteth in the Temple of God showing himself that he is a god." If any thing more were needed to show that the Man of Sin has not yet appeared, this part of the description is conclusive. The Temple, in Holy Scripture, when spoken of literally, always means the Holy Temple, at Jerusalem. It never means the Ka-aba at Mecca, St. Peter's at Rome, the Church at Wittenberg, or the meeting houses of the Puritans, as some have supposed. Now the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed about fourteen years after St. Paul wrote this epistle—and has not since been rebuilt. Until then the Temple of God at Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, the Man of Sin will not appear. When he shall come, he

must as a god, sit in that Temple of God, showing himself that he is a god.

This great apostacy then headed by the Man of Sin will be a total falling away from Christ, not in practice only, but in profession also. It will include a renunciation of Baptism with its vows and obligations. It will involve the denial of Him who is the Great God and our Saviour; while the leader of this giant apostacy shall, with all power and signs and lying wonders persuade his followers that he is the great power of the Divinity. Not Romanism—not even Puritanism—not all the heresies and schisms that have appeared in the Christian community, are for a moment to be compared with this great apostacy. This stupendous development of evil prophesied of by St. Paul, which will be the summation, the final embodiment of all the evils that have ever sprung up in connection with the Church.

Some have supposed that St. Paul referred to Mohammed, but this false prophet answers fairly to none of the marks the apostle so distinctly points out; and especially is the description inapplicable which St. Paul gives in the ninth verse, where the coming of the Man of Sin is said to be "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" for it is well known that Mohammed made no pretension whatever to working miracles.

Others have supposed that the Popes of Rome are intended. This is the most absurd opinion of any. St. Paul refers to one man—not to a succession of men; and scarcely any of the other marks will apply to the Roman Church. Schism and heresies in abundance have from time to time been developed in that community; but apostacy from Christianity is not a sin for which she has to answer.

One or other of the reformers in Germany, and one or two leaders of sects in England, have been fixed upon by some interpreters. But, although these men were guilty of causing division, and of spreading errors of various kinds; yet, neither in their case, does apostacy—that terrible crime against the Christian religion, appear to be chargeable on any one of them.

After the revelation of that Wicked one, St. Paul says: the Lord Jesus "shall consume him with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming." These great events will not take place in a corner. Their magnitude will fill the earth. And as all tribes of the earth shall mourn, when they shall see the sign of the Son of Man coming in the distant heavens; so shall all the nations of the world speedily learn the achievements of Messiah, when He Himself shall come in His kingdom to reign with all His ancients gloriously.

The tendency of the present age is towards infidelity—its tendency is to make theology, the oldest and best established of the sciences, bend to the newest and crudest guesses in physical science, and to make the testimony of every past age submit to the verifying faculty of the present. The progress of this subtle system,

which carries with it a show of learning, is becoming fearfully rapid; and it may, for aught we know, be preparing the way for "the apostacy," headed by "That Wicked one" referred to by St. Paul.

#### THE CEYLON DIFFICULTY.

There are some other facts than those we lately mentioned which may serve to elucidate this question. It appears, among other things, that at Badulla, the Tamil Coolie congregation memorialised the Bishop of Colombo to instruct the Catechist to reinstate them in the Church. The Bishop is said to have complied with their request, telling the Catechist that he might hold services in the School, but that such services must be supplemented to those in the Church. The Bishop wrote to Mr. Clark telling him what he had done; and Mr. Clark countermanded the Bishop's order! From this statement it would appear that the Bishop's action in the matter was the result of a direct appeal from native converts to preserve to them a privilege they had learned to value so highly. In fact, every additional item of news on the subject only tends to increase the conviction that the Bishop has consulted the interests of the Church and the privileges of his people in the steps he has taken.

#### BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH'S CORRECTION.

The Bishop of Peterborough has accepted Canon Ryle's correction of the stigma he cast upon the Society which has carried on the assaults upon the so-called Ritualistic clergy. It appears somewhat strange that if the Bishop thought it worth his while to notice the thing at all, he should not have made the correction himself at an earlier date. However that may be, his Lordship says these are the words he used: "Prosecution in these days is reduced to a science, and is carried on like many other enterprises, by joint-stock companies, with limited liability." He says that the word "persecution" may possibly, and if so very pardonably, have been substituted by mistake, for the word "prosecution," in some reports of his speech; and this may have given rise to the incorrect version which he has frequently seen, without thinking it, however, of sufficient importance to call for public correction. As the Bishop evidently used the one term or the other in an opprobrious sense, and with the intention of conveying a reflection on the Society to which he referred, we cannot see that it matters much whether he used the term "persecution" or "prosecution," understanding by the latter, the employment of legal means to annoy and worry clergymen, for purposes of mischief. His Lordship clearly has the same impression; and there are considerable numbers in England who were present at the time, and who assert they have a distinct recollection that they heard the Bishop use the term at first reported.