

there is no full report of the addresses. But the chairman, after declaring that the personal return of the Lord Jesus will take place speedily and suddenly, at a time when the world at large is least looking for it, charged both churchmen and nonconformists: "Go forth and preach, day by day and night by night, the great and glorious truth of the approaching Advent of our blessed Lord."<sup>26</sup>

While there was diversity of view upon some matters, Lord Cavan declared: "*The grand leading fact of the speedy Personal and Pre-Millennial Advent of Christ* is one upon which we are all agreed."<sup>27</sup>

With this brief introduction, we now turn to the leading British expositor of the time.

### III. Guinness—Outstanding Modern Expositor of Prophecy

DR. HENRY GRATTAN GUINNESS,<sup>28</sup> of London, was one of the most outstanding among all modern expositors, exerting a telling influence in America and other lands as well as in Britain. He was conspicuous as a preacher and trainer of missionaries. His greatest contribution was doubtless the writing of nine major works on prophecy, issued between 1878 and 1905. Note the titles, size, and circulation: *The Approaching End of*

<sup>26</sup> Lord Shaftesbury, "Remarks on Christ's Second Advent," in *Forty Coming Wonders*, p. 487.

<sup>27</sup> Earl of Cavan, "Address on the Second Advent," in *Forty Coming Wonders*, p. 490.

<sup>28</sup> HENRY GRATTAN GUINNESS, D.D., F.R.A.S., F.R.G.S. (1835-1910), was born near Dublin, his early education being received at Cheltenham and Exeter. During several years of carelessness he plied the sea and became a world traveler. Returning home, he was soundly converted, studied for the ministry at New College, London, and was ordained as an interdenominational evangelist in 1857. He became a powerful preacher, traveling constantly for twelve years, speaking to large crowds in outdoor meetings, and sometimes needing police protection from Catholic mobs. Later, at Whitfield's Tabernacle (London's largest), he drew immense congregations, also in the Town Hall of Cheltenham and at Birmingham in crowded chapels, and in Wednesbury preaching to the miners in the pits six hundred feet below ground.

He was active in the Ulster revival of 1859, speaking at Belfast to 20,000. He was often compared with Wesley and Whitfield in pulpit power. Tall and well proportioned, with full voice and rapid utterance, and intensely earnest, he was markedly pictorial in preaching style, and rivaled Spurgeon in popularity. Preaching for the millions was his goal. His preaching tours included the Continent (thrice), the Near East and North America (thrice), where he inspired training institutes in Boston and Minneapolis. Africa (twice), India, Japan, China, Australia, and New Zealand. He received his D.D. degree from Brown University, Providence, in 1889.

In 1873 he concentrated on foreign missions and founded the interdenominational Regions Beyond Missionary Union, and East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions, with two training colleges, and sustaining one hundred missionary families. Over thirteen hundred missionaries of thirty denominations were sent out to Africa, India, and South America. He also edited *The Regions Beyond*. But his greatest contribution was unquestionably the production of his nine books on prophecy, based on the premillennial premise.

*the Age* (776 pp.), passed through eleven British and three American editions; *Light for the Last Days* (434 pp.), four British and one American; *Romanism and the Reformation From*



**DR. HENRY GRATTAN GUINNESS**

Without a Peer in Britain in Modern Exposition of Prophecy, and Powerful Exponent of the Historical School Interpretation

*the Standpoint of Prophecy* (244 pp.), also had three American editions; *The Divine Programme of the World's History* (450 pp.), three British and one American; *The City of the Seven Hills* (302 pp.), two editions; the two-volume *Creation Centered in Christ* (536 plus 627 pp.), two British and two American; *History Unveiling Prophecy* (476 pp.), with two American editions; *Key to the Apocalypse*; and *The Fallacies of Futurism*.

1. **OCCASION AND SCOPE OF WRITINGS.**—His volumes on prophecy were launched only after twenty years of intensive, independent study of Scripture prophecy and the second advent, during which he gathered an entire library of expositions of prophecy, including 150 on the Revelation alone.<sup>29</sup> The twin incentives for all this were, first, the alarming inroads of the Futurist School of counterinterpretation, stemming originally from the Spanish Jesuit Ribera and his Catholic counterinterpretation,<sup>30</sup> but now sweeping over one segment of Protestant-

<sup>29</sup> H. G. Guinness, *History Unveiling Prophecy*, p. v.

<sup>30</sup> See also *Prophetic Faith*, Vol. II, chap. 22; Appendix "A."

ism, after its espousal by the Plymouth Brethren. And second, the popular Protestant acceptance of the relatively recent Whitbyan postmillennial innovation.<sup>31</sup> He found that all early Christian teachers and expositors, except Origen, were premillennialists—Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Methodius, Lactantius, et cetera—holding that the first resurrection of Revelation 20 was literal, and prior to the thousand years.

But now, he discovered, there were currently three schools of interpretation, each differing from the other. First, there was the fanciful Preterist scheme springing from the seventeenth-century Jesuit Alcazar, holding to a Neronian date for the Apocalypse, with the prophetic element considered as fulfilled in the downfall of the Jewish nation and the overthrow of the old Roman Empire. This was held in modified form by Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Eichhorn, Moses Stuart, and Davidson,<sup>32</sup> and by current rationalists generally. Second, the reveries of the Futurist view, maintaining that the prophetic visions of Revelation 4 to 19 prefigure "events still wholly future," and destined to take place just at the close of this dispensation.

This, he found, originated with the astute Ribera, at the close of the sixteenth century, to relieve the Papacy of the terrible stigma cast upon it by Protestant Reformation interpreters. This was accomplished by getting Antichrist wholly into the future, just as the Preterists had attempted to thrust him entirely into the past. This Futurist view was at first confined to the Romanists, but was taken over in the early nineteenth century by the two Maitlands, Burgh, Tyso, Todd, then the Plymouth Brethren, and some Puseyite expositors. They were thus espoused by opposite groups who, though Protestant, held the Reformation to have been an unwarranted schism, and sought to verge as closely as possible on Rome.<sup>33</sup>

Guinness championed the Historical School of Protestant

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 649-655; Appendix "C."

<sup>32</sup> H. G. Guinness, *Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 92, 93; see also *Prophetic Faith*, Vol. II, pp. 507-510; Appendix "B."

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.

view, which holds to the progressive fulfillment of prophecy from John's time to the second advent. Then, following the early church, it came into prominence among the Waldenses, Wyclifites, and Hussites, and was embraced by all the Reformers of the sixteenth century. It next became a powerful, formidable weapon motivating the Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, Britain, France, Denmark, and Sweden, and nerving the martyrs of Spain and Italy. It was also held by the earlier Joachim and Brute, as well as by Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Knox, and scores of associates. It was the view of such post-Reformation leaders as Bullinger, Bale, Foxe, Brightman, Mede, the Pilgrim fathers and Puritan theologians, Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton, Daubuz, Whiston, Faber, Cuninghame, Frere, Birks, Bickersteth, and Elliott<sup>24</sup>—who all agreed on the grand outline.<sup>25</sup>

It was this progressive fulfillment of prophecy, Guinness maintained, epoch by epoch, and its accomplishment event by event, for which the Confessors stood and the martyrs suffered. But both Futurists and Preterists deny the fulfillments recognized by the great mass of solid prophetic interpreters. They have forsaken the main well-trodden highway of interpretation, he held, for questionable historical evidence and empty speculations about a short-lived infidel antichrist to be seated in a literal temple in Palestine. And this character, in the brief compass of 3½ years, is to fulfill all the wonders of the Apocalyptic drama, they say, and to exhaust the majestic sweep of prophecy—which the church of God had been blindly misinterpreting and misapplying through the centuries, according to such special methods of interpretation. So said Guinness.

But it was the lofty decree of papal infallibility, issued by the Vatican Council of 1870, together with the fall of papal temporal power after a duration of over a thousand years, that was the immediate occasion of Guinness' writing his series of books spread over a quarter of a century. He maintained that God had given "infallible explanations" in the determinative

<sup>24</sup> On all these characters, see also *Prophetic Faith*, Vols. I and II.

<sup>25</sup> H. G. Guinness, *Approaching End of the Age*, p. 94.

portions of Daniel and the Apocalypse, which were "keys to unlock the meaning of the prophecies as a whole," as in Daniel 2, 7, 8, and in the Revelation concerning "Babylon" and the "Beast." The prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse are thus linked together by an inescapable series of events—the course of the five kingdoms of "Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and the eternal kingdom of God."<sup>36</sup> Time, or history, is thus the "chief interpreter of prophecy," for history is prophecy written in advance. "As the ages roll by history practically takes the place of prophecy, the foretold becoming the fulfillment."<sup>37</sup>

2. **THE HISTORICIST CONCEPTION OF PROPHECY.**—Guinness cites the fourfold prophecy of Daniel 7:7-27, Revelation 13:1-9, Revelation 17, and 2 Thessalonians 2 as the composite depiction of the prophesied Antichrist. It springs up in the designated territory of the fourth, or Roman, beast, the three hindering horns being the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Lombards. The name "Antichrist" does not signify an avowed antagonist of Christ, he says, but "one professing to be a *vice-Christ*, a *rival-Christ*, one who would assume the character, occupy the place, and fulfil the functions of Christ."<sup>38</sup> Its claims, its character, its devices, its persecutions, its domination, and finally its doom at the second advent are presented in detail. Every specification, he avers, is met. What was foretold has been fulfilled.<sup>39</sup>

But prophecy has a system, and times and seasons, as verily as nature. Empires flourish for a specified period. And time, he adds, is measured by revolutions and cycles of the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon. This was seen in the prophetic types of the sanctuary service—the week of *days* of the unleavened bread, of the Tabernacle, and the Sabbath; the week of *weeks* between Passover and Pentecost; the week of *months*, the first seven months for the feasts of the Lord; the week of *years*, for the rest for the land; and the week of *weeks of years* for the Jubilee. Then there were the 70 weeks of years, or 490 years,

<sup>36</sup> H. G. Guinness, *History Unveiling Prophecy*, p. viii-xi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>38</sup> H. G. Guinness, *Approaching End of the Age*, p. 178.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160-229.

the seven times of the Gentiles, and 7,000 years—all indicating a “septiform periodicity.”

Coming next to symbolic prophecies, he maintains that they are miniature representations of future events—every feature on a reduced scale, each symbol standing for another and larger period. Thus a “day” in time prophecy stands for a natural year in fulfillment, according to Ezekiel 4:4. All prophetic time periods, whether the 1260, 1290, 1335, or 2300, are on this scale or system. Seeking the possible placement of these great time periods, he suggests either 533-1793 or 606-1866, for the 1260 years.<sup>40</sup> And similarly with the 2300 years, to the cleansing of the sanctuary, he gives the alternates of 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844, or possibly 312 B.C. to A.D. 1919-20.<sup>41</sup> The 70 weeks are clearly from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34.<sup>42</sup> And Guinness likewise places the 391 years of Revelation 9:15, as from 1453 to 1844.<sup>43</sup>

3. **PROGRESSIVE ADVANCES IN INTERPRETATION.**—In *History Unveiling Prophecy*, Guinness divides the progressions and setbacks in the history of prophetic interpretation into ten periods or stages—Pre-Constantine or Martyr Church, Post-Constantine or Imperial Church, Medieval, Dawn of the Reformation, Reformation, Puritan, English Revolution, Eighteenth Century, French Revolution, and Present. The early church regarded the Apocalypse as a continuation of the prophecies of Daniel, particularly of the Roman fourth kingdom, and with the divine eternal kingdom destined to destroy and replace the kingdoms of this world.<sup>44</sup> To them the crowned rider upon the white horse, riding forth conquering and to conquer, was a representative of Christ and the early church going forth on its victorious mission. And Babylon represented Romanism, with Rome the fourth empire as the hindering power, and the first resurrection literal. But the view of the early church was necessarily circumscribed and foreshortened in concept.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 426, 606, 616, 618, 619, 660.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 433-440, 473, 540, 541, 588, 663.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 588, 596.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 540, 646, 663.

<sup>44</sup> H. G. Guinness, *History Unveiling Prophecy*, pp. 25, 26.