readers, the tone of warning is slightly  
struck by “*ye have overcome the wicked  
one:*” if indeed the whole form of assertion  
of an ideal state in each case do  
not of itself carry a delicate shade of  
warning. Hence the transition is easy to  
actual warning. And this in vv. 15—17  
begins by general dehortation from the  
love of the world as excluding the love of  
God, and now proceeds by caution against  
those in the world who would rob them of  
Him by whom alone walking in the light  
of God is made both possible and actual to  
us. The note of transition from the last  
verses is “*it is the last time*,” here taking  
up the term “*is passing away*.” The  
world is passing away: and those temptations  
and conflicts of which ye have heard  
as belonging to its last period, are now  
upon you: those adversaries who would  
endanger your abiding in Him and being  
found in Him at His coming.

**18.]**  
**Children** (as before, addressed not to any  
one class, but to all the readers)**, it is the  
last time** (what is exactly the Apostle’s  
meaning by these words? Clearly, *in  
some sense or other*, that it is the last  
period of the world. For we must at once  
repudiate such views as that of Bengel,  
who, strange to say, seems to understand  
it as “*the last part of John’s own life-  
time*,” and that of Steinhofer, who explains  
it to be John’s own time as the  
*close of the apostolic age:* and even more  
decidedly that of Œcumenius, that the  
*last* is to be interpreted the *worst*, as  
when we say, *the last degree of misery*,  
for all other reasons, and on account of  
the saying 2 Tim. iii, 1, “*In* **the last days***there shalt come* **grievous** *times*.”

These then being cleared away, we come  
to the view of Grotius and others ; that,  
when spoken of to Jews, *the last time* is  
that close upon the destruction of the  
Jewish polity; proceeding to interpret the  
*antichrists* to be the many false Christs  
who arose in that period, and *Antichrist*  
*himself* to be the chief of them, Barchochebas.  
But two sufficient replies may be  
given to this view. First, that thus these  
false Messiahs of the Jews must have gone  
forth **from us**, i.e. from the Christian  
Church, which they did not. Secondly,  
what would the approximation of the  
destruction of Jerusalem, viewed merely

as a Jewish event [which it must be, on  
the hypothesis here, as the word **last** would  
only be true as addressed to Jews], have  
to do with the subject of our Epistle ?

And thus we have arrived at the views of  
those who recognize here the last age of  
the world, but are anxious to get rid of  
the idea that the Apostle, in thus speak-  
ing, regarded the coming of the Lord as  
near at hand, and endeavour to give some  
meaning to the expression which shall preclude this  
[to them] objectionable notion.  
Among these may be mentioned Calvin,  
and many of the elder Commentators, who  
understand the *latter dispensation:* the  
time from Christ’s advent in the flesh to  
His coming to judgment. But, apart, from  
considerations of the unfitness of such an  
idea in the context, in which the term  
“*passing away*,” vv. 8, 17,—and our ver.  
28, shew that it is the coming of the Lord  
which is before the mind of the Apostle,—  
this objection is fatal to it: that manifestly  
not this whole period itself, but some time  
within its limits is meant, from the nature  
of the sign given below, *whence we know*,  
&c. If the whole Christian dispensation  
were intended by *the last time*, it would  
not be stated as a sign of its presence, that  
already there were many antichrists, but  
rather that already He was come who is  
to be the final revelation of the Father.  
The circumstance of there being already  
many antichrists, corresponds with a prophecy  
delivered by our Lord, not of the  
general character of the whole of the last  
dispensation, but of the particular character  
of the time preceding *the end*, to  
which prophecy and to which time the  
Apostle here beyond question alludes.

I believe that if we are to deal ingenuously  
both with words and with facts, we  
must understand the Apostle to be speaking,  
as any one in any subsequent age of  
the Church might have spoken, and as we  
may speak now, of his time as being the  
last time, seeing that the signs of the last  
time were rife in it. How long it may  
please God to prolong this *last time*, how  
long to permit the signs to continue which  
demonstrate each age of the church to  
have this character, is a question to which  
it was not given to him, and is not given  
to us, to reply. To him indeed many prophetic  
visions were given, and have been