recorded for us; but what is their plain  
and unmistakable import, will only then  
be known, when it becomes necessary for  
the churches to see clearly the signs of  
His coming): **and even as ye heard** (in  
our preaching when ye received the Gospel)  
**that antichrist cometh** (the present  
tense of ordained fixity: “*is to come*.”  
But who, and what, is *Antichrist?* As  
far as the meaning of the word is concerned,  
it may mean, either 1) one who  
stands *against* Christ, or 2) one who stands  
*instead of* Christ. The latter meaning is  
strenuously maintained here by Grotius,  
who holds that our Antichrist here has  
nothing to do with the *adversary* (*anti-  
keimenos*) of St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3: that  
being one who *professes himself an enemy  
to God*, whereas this is one who *makes  
himself Christ :* understanding this and  
what follows [see above] of the *false  
Christs* prophesied of by our Lord, Matt.  
xxiv. 5, 24. This he defends by analogy  
of words similarly compounded with anti-,  
which furnishes many examples of this  
sense of *substitution* for another. But,  
seeing that the other meaning, *the adversary  
of Christ*, is also upheld by abundant  
precedents of the same kind,—it is clear  
that we cannot solve the doubt by philology  
alone, but must take into account  
other considerations. And first among  
these comes the fact, that St. John, who  
was acquainted with the form *pseudo-  
christ*, using as he does *pseudo-prophet*,  
ch. iv. 1, never uses it, but always,—ch.  
iv. 3, 2 John 7,—this word *Antichrist*. Is  
it not hence probable that he intended to  
signify, not a *false* Christ, but an *anti-*christ? Next, we may fairly allege the  
ancient interpretations, as shewing how  
Greeks themselves understood the word.  
In these we do not find a vestige of the  
meaning “*a substitute for Christ*” being  
attached to the term, but every where  
they interpret *Antichrist* by *an enemy to  
Christ*.

Taking then *Antichrist* for  
Christ’s adversary, I would refer to the  
disquisition and summary of opinions in  
the Introduction on 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff., where  
the reasons which have induced me to  
expect a personal Antichrist are given in  
full: as are also the indications furnished  
by prophecy, and by the history of the  
church and the world, as to his probable  
character and work), **even now there have**  
**arisen many antichrists** (what are we to  
understand the Apostle as saying? Is this  
fact alleged as a presumption that the  
Antichrist is *near*, these *many antichrists*  
prefiguring and heralding him,—or as a  
proof that he is *come*, being in fact the  
aggregate of these? The question is an  
important one, as affecting that of a personal  
or collective antichrist. And the  
first thing to be noticed in answering it is,  
that these *many antichrists* are explained  
by the Apostle himself, ver. 22, f., to be  
deniers of the Father and the Son: i. e. of  
the Son: and even more explicitly, ch. iv.  
3, deniers that Jesus Christ is come in the  
flesh. Here, however, this latter point is  
not yet brought out: here it is as *liars*  
that we hear of them: as *deniers* of the  
truth, which Truth is Jesus Christ, the  
Son of God: as not having the Spirit  
which is truth and no lie, ver. 27. They  
are said to have gone forth from the  
Christian church, but not to have been  
*of us*, as their spirit *is not of God*, ch. iv.  
3. They are *antichrists;* their spirit is  
*the spirit of antichrist*, ch. iv. 3, of which  
the readers had heard that it should come,  
and it was in the world already. From  
much of this it might at first sight appear  
as if these *antichrists* in their aggregate  
formed **the Antichrist**. But a nearer inspection  
will convince us that this cannot  
be so. [*The*] *Christ* and [*the*] *Antichrist*  
stand over against one another, and analogy  
requires that if the one be personal, the  
other should be also. And in ch. iv. 3 we  
‘are not told that merely the spirit is of  
*Antichrist*, but [in the original] that it is  
of **the Antichrist**, the personal reference  
being still kept. Again, we have “*cometh*,”  
the present future of prophetic fixity, in  
both places, here and in ch. iv. 3, set  
against “*there have arisen*” and “*it is:*”  
and the verb itself, in its prophetic sense,  
one regularly used of Christ, as here of  
antichrist. So that our only refuge in  
order to consistent interpretation here, is  
to regard these *many Antichrists*, clothed  
with the attributes and having the spirit  
of *the Antichrist*, as being his forerunners  
in the sense of 2 Thess. ii, 7, “*for the  
mystery of iniquity already worketh:*”  
meaning, as I have explained at length in  
the summary referred to above, that the  
antichristian principle was then, as it is  
now, and will be in every age, working,