§v.J SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION. [ixtropecrtion.   
   
   
 thought of, in the times of primitive Christianity, Those who lived near   
 the date of the book itself had no idea that its groups of prophetic imagery   
 were intended merely to describe things then passing, and to be in a few   
 years completed®. ‘Lhe view is said to have been first promulgated in   
 any thing like completeness by the Jesuit Aleasar, in his “ Investigation   
 of the seeret sense in the Apocalypse,” published in 1614. Ife regarded   
 the prophecy as descriptive of the victory of the church first over the   
 synagogue, in chapters v.—xi., and then over heathen Rome, in chapters   
 xii,—xix,: on which follows the triumph, and rest, glorious close,   
 chapters x Very nearly the same plan was adopted by Grotius   
 in his Annotations, published in 1644: and by our own Hammond in his   
 Commentary, published in 1653: whom Le Clere, his Latin interpreter,   
 followed. The next name among this school of interpreters is that of   
 Bossuet, the great antagonist of Protestantism. His Commentary was   
 published in 1690, In the main, he agrees with the schemes of Alcasar   
 and Grotius',   
 4. The Preterist school of interpretation has however of late been   
 revived in Germany, and is that to which some of the most eminent   
 expositors of that nation belong’: limiting the view of the Seer to   
 matters within his own horizon, and believing the whole denunciations   
 of the book to regard nothing further than the destruction of Pagan   
 and persecuting Rome.   
 5. This view has also found exponents in our own language. It is   
 that of the very ample and laborious Commentary of Moses Stuart in   
 America, and of Dr. Davidson aud Mr. Desprez in England.   
 6. b. The continuous historical interpretation belongs almost of   
 necessity to these later days. In early times, the historic material   
 sinee the apostolic period was not copious enough to tempt men to fit   
 it on to the symbols of the prophetic visions, ‘The first approach to it   
 seems to have been made by Berengaud, not far ftom the beginning   
 of the twelfth century : who however carried the historic range of the   
 Apocalypse back to the creation of the world’, The historie view is   
 found in the fragmentary exposition of the Seals by Anselm of Havels-   
 burg (1145): in the important exposition by the Abbot Joachim (about   
 1200)‘,   
 7. From Joachim’s time we may date the rise of the continuous hi:   
 toric school of interpretation. From this time men’s minds, even within   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 9 Compare Methodius: “John speaks not of past events, but of those which were   
 then going on, or which were hereafter to happen.”   
 1 See Elliott, vol. iv. 480, and a very good description in Liicke, p. 540.   
 2 e.g. Ewald, Liicke, De Wette, Diisterdieck.   
 3 See Elliott, vol. iv. 862 ff.   
 4 Elliott, vol. pp. 876—410: where see also a tabular view of Joachim’s apo-   
 calyptic scheme.   
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