§v.J SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION. [intropucrion.   
   
 after another, the expositors who have lived to be thus refuted have   
 shifted their ground into the safer future.   
 31. It is not my intention to enter the lists on either side of the   
 vexed “year-day ” question. I have never seen it proved, or even made   
 probable, that we are to take a day for a year in apocalyptic prophecy :   
 on the other hand I have never seen it proved, or made probable, that   
 steh mystic periods are to be taken literally, a day fora day. Itisa   
 weighty argument against the year-day system, that a period of “a   
 thousand years” (xx. 6,7) docs oceur in the prophecy: it is hardly a   
 less strong one against literal aeceptation of days, that the principles of   
 interpretation given us by the Scer himself (xvii. 17) seem to require   
 for the reign of the beast a far longer period than this calculation wonld   
 allow. So that in the apparent failure of both systems, Iam driven to   
 believe that these periods are to be assigned by some clue, of whieh the   
 ae vit has not yet put the Church in possession,   
 2. Still less can I offer any satisfactory solution of the prophetic   
 matte of the Beast (xiii. 18). Even while I print my note in favour   
 of the Lateinos of Irenwus, I feel almost disposed to withdraw it. It is   
 beyond question the best solution that has been given: but that it is   
 not the solution, I have a persuasion amounting to certainty. It must   
 be considered merely as worthy to emerge from the thousand and one   
 failures strewed up and down in our books, and to be kept in sight till   
 the challenge “here is wisdom” is satisfactorily redeemed.   
 33. On one point I have ventured to speak strongly, because my cou-   
 vietion on it is strong, founded on the rules of fair and consistent inter-   
 pretation. I mean, the necessity of accepting literally the first resur-   
 rection, and the millennial reign. It seems to me that if in a sentenco   
 where two resurrections are spoken of with no mark of distinction   
 between them (it is otherwise in John v. 28, which is commonly alleged   
 for the view which I am combating),—in a sentence where, one resur-   
 rection having been related, ‘the rest of the dead” are afterwards   
 mentioned,—we are at liberty to understand the former one figuratively   
 and spiritually, and the latter literally and materially, then there is an   
 end of all definite meaning in plain words, and the Apocalypse, or any   
 other book, may mean any thing we please. It is a curions fact that   
 those who maintain this, studious as they generally are to uphold tho   
 primitive interpretation, are obliged, not only to wrest the plain sense   
 of words, but to desert the unanimous consent of the primitive Fathers,   
 some of whom lived early enough to have retained apostolic tradition   
 on this point. Not till millennial views had run into unspiritual   
 excesses, was this interpretation departed from®.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 $ The student who can read German will find a good account of the history of   
 opinions on this subject in Herzog’s Encyclopidie, art. Chiliasmus.   
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