

before his death. These words seem to foretell that serpents, or apostates, symbolized by the tribe of Dan, would, in the *last times*, incite the lower orders to rebel against their governors, and reject their authority; and when Jacob adds, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah*, it seems to be further indicated that this event will be followed by the great day of salvation. It was an ancient opinion that Antichrist would be an individual of the tribe of Dan, who, in the last times, to use the words of Irenæus, would leap like a lion upon the human race;\* an opinion probably derived from this prophecy, or from that of Moses delivered on a similar occasion, *Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan*;† and from the exclusion of that tribe from the number of those that were sealed, as recorded in the Apocalypse.‡ St. Paul, in his description of the man of sin, describes him as exalting himself above all that is *called God*, or that is *worshipped or venerated*.§ This has been interpreted as meaning *idols*, but in *Scripture* princes and rulers are *called Gods*, as when it is said, *Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor speak evil of the ruler of thy people*;|| whence it seems as if St. Paul meant to indicate a power that was to exalt itself above all authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Irenæus expected his personal Antichrist to reign three years and a half, interpreting the prophetic period of 1260 days literally;¶ but this period, if interpreted a year for a day, would only agree with a succession of individuals. The ancient opinion of a personal Antichrist, may be reconciled with the modern one of a succession of individuals entitled to that appellation, by considering St. John's prophecy of the two witnesses. They are to prophesy clothed in sackcloth 1260

\* Adv. Hæres. l. iii. c. 38.

‡ Rev. xvi. 5—8.

|| Exod. xxii. 28.

† Deut. xxxiii. 22.

§ Gr. *σεβασμα*. 2 Thess. ii. 4.

¶ Ubi supr. l. v. c. 25.