STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION



STEPHEN ALEXANDER HUNTER. PH.D.,LL.D.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Bible School Manual: Studies in the Book of Revelation

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: A Bible School Manual: Studies in the Book of Revelation

Author: Stephen Alexander Hunter

Release date: December 20, 2016 [eBook #53775]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/53775

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A BIBLE SCHOOL MANUAL: STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION ***

A Bible School Manual

Studies in the Book of Revelation

An Introduction, Analysis, and Notes

Containing a concise interpretation according to the symbolic view, numerous references to authorities, and general mention of other interpretations,

With the Text of the American

Revised Version Edited in Paragraphs,
for the use of Bible Students.

By

Stephen Alexander
Hunter, Ph.D., LL.D.

Pittsburgh Printing Company

Pittsburgh, Pa.

1921

Contents

Foreword
Master-Thoughts upon the Revelation
Preface
Introduction
    1. General Introduction.
    2. The Title.
    3. The Author.
    4. The Unity.

5. The Date.
6. The Place.
7. The Canonicity.
8. The Form.
9. The Theme.
10. The Occasion.
11. The Purpose.
12. The Interpretation.
13. The Outline Analysis.
14. The Literary Structure.
15. The Literature.
Scripture Text
Analysis And Notes
I The Prologue, Ch. 1:1-3:22
1 The Superscription, Ch. 1:1-3
2 The Salutation, Ch. 1:4-8
3 The Introductory Vision (The Glorified Son of Man), Ch. 1:9-20
(1) The Trumpet Voice, Ch. 1:9-11
(2) The Triumphant Son of Man, Ch. 1:12-13a
(3) The Gracious Apparel, Ch. 1:13b
(4) The Glorious Appearance, Ch. 1:14-15, and 16c
(5) The Seven Stars, Ch. 1:16a
(6) The Two-Edged Sword, Ch. 1:16b
(7) The Assuring Message, Ch. 1:17-20
4 The Seven Epistles, Ch. 2:1-3:22
(1) The Epistle to the Church in Ephesus, Ch. 2:1-7
(2) The Epistle to the Church in Smyrna, Ch. 2:8-11

(4) The Epistle to the Church in Thyatira, Ch. 2:18-29
(5) The Epistle to the Church in Sardis, Ch. 3:1-6
(6) The Epistle to the Church in Philadelphia, Ch. 3:7-13
(7) The Epistle to the Church in Laodicea, Ch. 3:14-22
II THE MAIN APOCALYPSE, Ch. 4:1-22:5
I The Vision of God on the Throne (A Vision of Sovereignty). Ch. 4:1-5:14
1 The Throne and the King, Ch. 4:1-3, 5a, and 6a
2 The Four and Twenty Elders, Ch. 4:4, 10 and 11
3 The Seven Lamps of Fire (or Torches), Ch. 4:5b
4 The Four Living Creatures, Ch. 4. 6b-9
5 The Sealed Book (or Scroll), Ch. 5:1-5
6 The Lamb, Ch. 5:6-8a
7 The Heavenly Worship, Ch. 5:8b-14
II The Vision of the Seven Seals (A Vision of Trial). Ch. 6:1-17, and 8:1
1 The Opening of the First Seal, Ch. 6:1, 2
2 The Opening of the Second Seal, Ch. 6:3, 4
3 The Opening of the Third Seal, Ch. 6:5, 6
4 The Opening of the Fourth Seal, Ch. 6:7, 8
5 The Opening of the Fifth Seal, Ch. 6:9-11

6 The Opening of the Sixth Seal, Ch. 6:12-17
7 The Opening of the Seventh Seal, Ch. 8:1
IIb The Episode of the Sealed Ones (A Vision of Salvation Assured). Ch. 7:1-17
A The Sealed of Israel, Ch. 7:1-8
1 The Angels Holding the Winds, Ch. 7:1-3
2 The Number of the Sealed, Ch. 7:4-8
B The Redeemed Out of All Nations, Ch. 7:9-17
1 The Innumerable Multitude, Ch. 7:9
2 The Cry of the Church Triumphant, Ch. 7:10-12
3 The Redeemed Before the Throne, Ch. 7:13-17
III The Vision of the Seven Trumpets (A Vision of Threatening). Ch. 8:2-9:21, and 11:14-19
A The Preparation for the Trumpets, Ch. 8:2-6
1 An Angel Offers Incense upon the Golden Altar, Ch. 8:3-5
2 The Seven Angels Prepare to Sound, Ch. 8:2, 6
B The Trumpets Sounded, Ch. 8:7-9:21; and 11:14-19
1 The Sounding of the First Trumpet, Ch. 8:7
2 The Sounding of the Second Trumpet, Ch. 8:8-9

3 The Sounding of the Third Trumpet, Ch. 8:10-11
4 The Sounding of the Fourth Trumpet, Ch. 8:12
(1) The Eagle and Its Message, Ch. 8:13
5 The Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet, Ch. 9:1-12
6 The Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet, Ch. 9:13-21, and 11:14
7 The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, Ch. 11:15-19
IIIb The Episode of the Angel with the Book; and of the Two Witnesses (A Vision of Divine Help). Ch. 10:1-11:13
A The Angel with the Little Open Book, Ch. 10:1-11
1 The Angel Foretells the End, Ch. 10:1-7
(1) The Thunder Voices, Ch. 10:3b and 4
2 The Book Delivered to John, Ch. 10:8-11
B The Two Witnesses, Ch. 11:1-13
1 The Measurement of the Temple, Ch. 11:1-2
2 The Two Witnesses and their Martyrdom, Ch. 11:3-13
IV The Vision of Conflict (A Vision of Warfare). Ch. 12:1-14:20
A The Woman and the Dragon,

Ch. 12:1-6, and 13-17
1 The Sun-Clothed Woman, Ch. 12:1-2, 5-6, and 13f.
2 The Great Red Dragon, Ch. 12:3-4, and 13f.
3 The All-Ruling Man-Child, Ch. 12:5
4 The Wilderness Refuge, Ch. 12:6a, and 14a
5 The Persecution of the Woman and her Seed, Ch. 12:4-6, and 13-17
B War in Heaven, Ch. 12:7-12
C The Two Beasts, Ch. 13:1-18
1 The First Beast—the Beast from the Sea, Ch. 13:1-10
(1) An Admonition to Patience, Ch. 13:9-10
2 The Second Beast,—the Beast from the Land, Ch. 13:11-18.
(1.) An Admonition to Wisdom, Ch. 13:18
D. The Lamb on Mount Zion, Ch. 14:1-20
1. The Redeemed with the Lamb, Ch. 14:1-5
2. The Three Angel Messages, Ch. 14:6-11
(1) The Message of the Eternal Gospel, Ch. 14:6-7
(2) The Message of Babylon's Fall, Ch. 14:8
(3) The Message of Doom for the Beast and

his Followers, Ch. 14:9-11
3. The Blessedness of the Holy Dead, Ch. 14:12-13
4. The Harvest of the Elect, Ch. 14:14-16
5. The Vintage of Wrath, Ch. 14:17-20
V. The Vision of the Seven Vials [or Bowls] (A Vision of Judgment). Ch. 15:1-16:12, and 16:17-21
A. The Preparation for the Vials, Ch. 15:1-8
1. The Angels with the Plagues, Ch. 15:1-2a
2. The Victors by the Sea, Ch. 15:2b
3. The Song of the Redeemed, Ch. 15:3-4
4. The Judgment Made Ready, Ch. 15:5-8
B. The Vials Poured Out, Ch. 16:1-12, and 17-21
(1.) The Command to Pour Out the Vials, Ch. 16:1
1 The Pouring Out of the First Vial, Ch. 16:2
2 The Pouring Out of the Second Vial, Ch. 16:3
3 The Pouring Out of the Third Vial, Ch. 16:4-7
4 The Pouring Out of the Fourth Vial, Ch. 16:8-9

5 The Pouring Out of the Fifth Vial, Ch. 16:10-11
6 The Pouring Out of the Sixth Vial, Ch. 16:12
7 The Pouring Out of the Seventh Vial, Ch. 16:17-21
Vb The Episode of the Frog-like Spirits (A Vision of Warning). Ch. 16:13-16
1 The Unclean Spirits of Evil, Ch. 16:13-14, and 16
2 John's Word of Warning, Ch. 16:15
VI The Vision of Victory (A Vision of Vindication). Ch. 17:1-20:15
A The Mystic Babylon and Her Fall, Ch. 17:1-18:24
1 The Harlot and the Interpretation, Ch. 17:1-18
(1) The Judgment of the Harlot Announced, Ch. 17:1-2
(2) The View of the Harlot, Ch. 17:3-6
(3) The Interpretation Given, Ch. 17:7-18
2 The Fall of the City Proclaimed, Ch. 18:1-24
(1) The Announcement of Her Overthrow, Ch. 18:1-3
(2) The Warning to God's People, Ch.

18:4-8
(3) The Lament of the Kings of the Earth over Her Doom, Ch. 18:9-10
(4) The Lament of the Merchants, Ch. 18:11-17a
(5) The Lament of the Seamen, Ch. 18. 17b-19
(6) A Call to Heaven and to the Church to Rejoice, Ch. 18:20
(7) The Symbol of Her Irretrievable Ruin, Ch. 18:21-24
B The Triumph of the Redeemed, Ch. 19:1-10
1 The Choral Song of Hallelujahs, Ch. 19:1-8
2 The Blessedness of the Marriage Supper, Ch. 19:9
3 Worship Refused by the Angel, Ch. 19:10
C The Last Things, Ch. 19:11-20:15
1 The End of the Holy War, Ch. 19:11-21
2 Satan Bound, Ch. 20:1-3a
3 The First Resurrection, Ch. 20:4-6
4 The Millennium, Ch. 20.: 2b, 3b, 4b, 5a, 6b and 7a
5 Satan Loosed Again and Overthrown, Ch. 20:3c, and 7-10
6 The Second Resurrection,

Ch. 20:11-12a, and 13a
7 The Last Judgment, Ch. 20:11-15
VII The Vision of the New Jerusalem (A Vision of Triumph). Ch. 21:1-22:5
1 The New Heaven and the New Earth, Ch. 21:1
2 The Holy City, Ch. 21:2-22:5
(1) The Tabernacle of God with Men, Ch. 21:3-4
(2) The Bride, the Lamb's Wife, Ch. 21:2, 9-10
(3) The City of New Things, Ch. 21:5-8
(4) The City of Glory, Ch. 21:11-21
(5) The City of Many Nations, Ch. 21:24, and 26
(6) The City of Exclusions, Ch. 21:1, 4, 22, 23, 25, 27; and 22:3, 5
(7) The City of Life, Ch. 22:1-2
(8) The City of God, Ch. 22:3-5
III THE EPILOGUE, Ch. 22:6-21
A The Final Words of the Angel, with the Promise of Christ, Ch. 22:6-16
1 The Message Reaffirmed, Ch. 22:6-9
(1) The Witness of the Angel, Ch. 22:6-7
(2) The Witness Confirmed by John, Ch. 22:8a
(3) Worship from John again Refused, Ch. 22:8b-9

2 The Book Not to be Sealed, Ch. 22:10-11
3 The Promise of Christ to the Victors, Ch. 22:12-16
B The Closing Testimony of John, Ch. 22:17-20
1 A Last Universal Invitation of Grace, Ch. 22:17
2 A Last Impressive Warning of Exhortation, Ch. 22:18-19
3 A Last Assuring Promise of Hope, Ch. 22:20a
4 A last Ecstatic Prayer of Yearning, Ch. 22:20b
C The Author's Benediction, Ch. 22:21
Appendix A: Some Fundamental Conceptions of the Apocalypse
Appendix B: Current Questions of Divided Opinion
Appendix C: Heptachords of Song and Blessing
Appendix D: The Formal Series of Sevens
Appendix E: The Symbolism of Numbers
Appendix F: The Literary Structure of the Apocalypse
Appendix G: The Apocalyptic Literature
Footnotes



Map of Proconsular Asia. Following Ramsay, in *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen.*

[pg 005]

Η ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ

The Text of Revelation given in this volume is that of the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright 1901 by Thomas Nelson & Sons, and is used by permission of the publishers.

TO
ALL MY CLASSMATES, FRIENDS,
AND
FELLOW PILGRIMS ON LIFE'S JOURNEY,

FOR WHOM THE BOOK OF REVELATION,
TINGED THOUGH IT IS WITH MYSTERY,
CONTAINS A MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE
IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION,
AND A VISION OF THE FAR GLORY IN THE WORLD BEYOND,

THIS VOLUME—

WRITTEN IN THE HOPE THAT THE INTERPRETATION OFFERED
MAY CONTRIBUTE IN SOME DEGREE TO A CLEARER APPREHENSION OF THE BOOK,
AND MAY HELP IN SOME MEASURE TO MAKE ITS MESSAGE RICH,
AND SWEET, AND ABIDING—

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

[pg 009]

Foreword

The manuscript of this Commentary was completed several years ago, but its publication was unfortunately deferred until the author's health no longer permitted him to see it through the press or even to be consulted in regard to modifications. For this latter reason no change of any kind has been made either in the language or the arrangement of the material. In the bibliography we have added the two recent monumental contributions to the literature on the Book of Revelation, commentaries by I. T. Beckwith and R. H. Charles. Had the author possessed the physical strength after their appearance, we feel sure that he would have

drawn upon these two extensive works which are intended for the use of technical scholars.

The significance of Dr. Hunter's “Studies in the Book of Revelation” lies in its clear and accurate presentation of the results of the investigation of modern scholars, in language which is comprehensible to the intelligent reader of the English Bible. The Revelation of St. John has been an enigma from the earliest Christian centuries. On the one hand, it has been shunned because of its mysteriousness; on the other, it has been discredited for sober-minded, intelligent Christians by the absurd vagaries of its interpreters. Too often the caprice or predilection of the commentator, rather than impartial study, has determined the meaning of the closing book of the New Testament canon. The removal of this reproach has been one of the signal achievements of the Biblical scholarship of the last twenty-five years. Such a notable result has been accomplished by the discovery and the interpretation of the Jewish Apocalyptic, a type of literature that flourished from 200 B. C. on for several centuries. The Revelation belongs to this type of literature. It is the expression of a Christian's faith in the triumph of his Lord's kingdom through the use of symbolism and imagery peculiar to Jewish Apocalyptic literature. Our author, in common with all modern scholars, has used this key for unlocking the mystery of the closing book of the Christian Scriptures. By its employment he has made clear the meaning of the

Revelation to the open-minded reader of the English Bible. On every page the work gives evidence of scholarship, wide in [pg 010] its range, and thorough in its grasp, as well as of sanity of judgment in the discussion of controversial questions. Because of these qualities, Dr. Hunter's treatise is worthy of wide circulation. It meets a special need at this time as it is especially adapted to counteract fantastic theories of interpretation and theology which are based on a misunderstanding of both the purpose and the symbolism of a New Testament book that ranks as an equal of the greatest pieces of imaginative literature.

The proofs have been read by Mr. Walter H. Millinger, of the senior class of the Seminary, and the publication of the book has been made possible only by the painstaking effort of a devoted friend and fellow-worker of Dr. Hunter, Mr. W. H. Wicks of the Pittsburgh Printing Company to whom both the author and the reader are deeply indebted.

JAMES A. KELSO.

The Western Theological Seminary,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

[pg 011]

Master-Thoughts upon the Revelation[1]

"**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**" (Rev. 22.13):—"This is the unifying thought of the whole book: nay of the whole Bible. *The Revelation of St. John is the meeting ground of the Old and New Testament*: what binds the long succession of books—by so many authors, of so many different ages—into a unity is expressed by the saying that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' The whole of prophetic literature yields its imaginative figures to adorn this final Revelation; all history is made one by the central thought of the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of Christ."—RICHARD G. MOULTON,—in *Literature of the Bible*.

"*The Book of Revelation is the sum of all prophecy*. It carries the devout reader to a height from which he can see the history of God's kingdom from its beginning to its consummation in glory. It is the sublimest book in the Bible, and its study awakens the

profoundest worship."—J. M. STIFLER,—in unpublished *Classroom Lectures*.

"*The Apocalypse constitutes the meridian of Hebrew poetry and art*, embracing in its individual forms the most diverse elements.... If the laws of its construction be but recognized, the obscure Book of Revelation will present itself to our eyes as a radiant constellation, a symmetrical cathedral built upon a plan of perfect clearness and transparency."—JOHN PETER LANGE,—in *Commentary on the Revelation*.

"*The book has an imperishable religious worth* because of the energy of faith that finds expression in it, and the splendid certainty of its conviction that God's cause remains always the best, and is one with the cause of Jesus Christ; but it is unreasonable to treat the detail of its phantasies as an authentic source for a history of the past or future."—A. JÜLICHER,—in *Introduction to the New Testament*.

"*In the Apocalypse the emphasis placed upon the omnipotence of God rises to a climax*. There only in the New Testament (except II Cor. 6.18) is the epithet Παντοκράτωρ [All-Ruler] ascribed to Him; and the [pg 012] whole purport of the book is the portrayal of the Divine guidance of history, and the very essence of its message that, despite all surface appearances, it is the hand of God that really directs all occurrences, and all things are hastening to the end of His determining.... It is the completeness of the Divine government

to which the world is subject by the Lord of lords and King of kings, the Ruler of the earth and King of the nations, whose control of all the occurrences of time is in accordance with His holy purposes, that it is the supreme object of this book to portray."—B. B. WARfiELD,—in art. "Predestination", Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*.

"*The Apocalypse is doctrinally the connecting link between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel.* It offers the characteristic thoughts of the Fourth Gospel in that form of development which belongs to the earliest apostolic age.... The points of connection between the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St. John are far more numerous than are suggested by a first general comparison. The main idea of both is the same. Both present a view of a supreme conflict between the powers of good and evil.... In both books alike Christ is the central figure. His victory is the end to which history and vision lead as their consummation. His Person and Work are the ground of triumph; and of triumph through apparent failure. Both present the abiding of God with man as the issue of Christ's work."—BP. WESTCOTT,—in *Introduction to John's Gospel, Bible Commentary*.

"*In Revelation*, as in John's Gospel and First Epistle, *the consciousness of a world-conflict, a world-process, and a world-triumph is manifest.* The return of Jesus is contemplated in relation to the enlarged environment in which Christianity stood. Revelation testifies to the existence of the hope with which Christianity

had begun; but also to the fact that into that hope had centered the fuller conception of Christ and His salvation which the apostles had taught, and the broadened vision of the purpose of God which history had made clear. Yet it was still the same hope, 'Behold He cometh,' and the prayer was still the same, 'Come Lord Jesus'."—GEORGE T. PURVES,—in *The Apostolic Age*.

"*The fundamental conception of the book is* neither human weakness upon the one hand nor divine power [pg 013] upon the other, but *divine power victorious through apparent human weakness, life triumphant over death*."—WILLIAM MILLIGAN,—in *Discussions on the Apocalypse*.

"However long the conflict, *this book assures us of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb*. That figure suggests Incarnation in order to Redemption; and the description of the New Jerusalem shows us Light and Life reigning eternally because the Lamb is 'the lamp thereof'."—MATTHEW B. RIDDLE,—in unpublished *Classroom Lectures*.

"St John knew himself to be a prophet, and his writing to be a prophecy; that he was commanded to consign his visions to a book was an assurance to him that their purpose would not be fulfilled in one generation or two. He sees the book going down to posterity, and like the Deuteronomist he endeavors to guard it against interpolation and excision. As he writes the last words upon the papyrus roll that lies upon his knee, the

conviction dawns upon him that *the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given for the warning and comfort of the whole church to the end of time*."—HENRY B. SWETE,—in *The Apocalypse of St. John*.

"*The author of this great book has bequeathed to mankind a* κτῆμα ἐς αεί, *an imperishable possession*, the worth of which lies in the splendid energy of its faith, in the unfaltering certainty that God's own cause is at issue now and here and must ultimately prevail, and that the cause of Jesus Christ is inseparably linked therewith, and the main aim of which, as is clear from every page, is to emphasize the overwhelming worth of things spiritual as contrasted with things material, and in the next place to glorify martyrdom, to encourage the faithful to face death with constancy, nay more, with rapturous joy."—R. H. CHARLES, —in *Studies in the Apocalypse*.

The closing book of the New Testament with its prophetic outlook and divine forecast, leaves us in the attitude of expectancy: —"**Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ**."—THE EPISTLE TO TITUS, Ch. 2:13.

[pg 014]

Preface

The purpose of this volume is to present in concise form the general thought and meaning of the Book of Revelation, to give an analytic view of its contents, and to summarize the results of critical study. It is intended both as an aid to interpretation, and as a guide to the use of the many valuable commentaries which are now accessible to the English reader. It is specially designed to meet the needs of the student in the theological seminary or the modern Bible school, the busy pastor in his field, the teacher of adult Bible classes, the Christian Association worker, and the general reader of the Bible. With this object in view it essays to provide in a direct and helpful form (1) the essential points of Introduction; (2) an Analytic Study of the book which aims to discover its meaning as a whole rather than to deal with it text by text; and (3) a brief statement in a series of Appendices of some of the underlying conceptions which give color to its thought and enter into its literary structure.

The increased impetus given to Biblical study

by advanced scholarship in late years has created a demand for a class of works that give the results attained by the masters of exegesis and critical research, without attempting to give the various steps by which these results have been reached. And it is one primary aim of this work, while attempting to give a fresh statement of the teachings of the book, and to present such thoughts as have come to the Author in the course of extended study, at the same time to give due consideration to the varying opinions of others, and for the most part to reproduce in the form which these have taken in his own mind the best and most satisfactory explanations of the many difficulties in the book which have hitherto been given by leading scholars and commentators. For the book has proved a fertile field for expositors that has been widely even if not always well worked in the past, while in the last half-century really substantial progress has been made toward the general interpretation; and it may be confidently assumed that any one who ignores these results has almost certainly nothing to contribute to the solution of the real difficulties that confront us. In response to extended popular inquiry some excellent commentaries and expository works on the [pg 015] Revelation have been prepared in late years for the general reader. And it is in order to further meet this requirement of intelligent Bible study, and to contribute in some measure to what is believed to be one of the most common needs of the general student of Scripture, *a comprehensive view of*

each book, that the publication of the present Studies in the Book of Revelation has been undertaken.

It is necessarily true that a work so largely poetical in its thought as the Apocalypse, and appealing so much to the imagination, does not lend itself easily to logical analysis. Every such division, if exhaustive, must be in a measure arbitrary. The main purpose in attempting it is to present the principal ideas of the book in what is conceived to be their proper relation. And in this we need not assume that the particular outline which we adopt was formally in the mind of the writer. It is quite enough if we can be assured that the formative ideas were conceived of in somewhat the same relation, and that the analysis we accept at least measurably represents the author's point of view. This form of statement enables us to grasp the contents of the book in their entirety and to retain them in memory.

The view presented in the Analysis and Notes of this volume is not intended to be controversial but interpretative. Hence other views of particular passages have often not been stated, or are given only in foot-notes, and no special effort has been made to support the view given by any extended discussions, as that would lead us too far afield for the purpose in mind. For those who wish a wider view, references are given to well-known authorities. Much that might have been said has been left out for the sake of brevity; for in this busy age few find time

for extended study, and the great works on the Revelation often lie unread on the shelves. To reach the man of this generation the message must be short, clear, and decisive. And with this in view the chief aim is to show that the general meaning of the Revelation can be clearly understood, whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the more difficult portions; and as a contribution toward this end to give in a direct form what the Author of the present work regards as the correct method of interpreting it. Other interpretations have been introduced where they serve to illustrate this main purpose, or have special force and afford additional light, or have been widely accepted and have affected the course of opinion. The outline interpretation [pg 016] given in this work, while it does not follow without deviation any particular view throughout or in every respect—for a blind acceptance of any one method of interpretation would often block the path to better knowledge, and perhaps cause us to miss the real meaning—yet it accepts the principles of the Symbolical or Spiritual School as affording in the main the best solution of the problems of interpretation. The authorities cited in connection with any passage, when not quoted, though they may differ somewhat in statement, will be found to hold in some form the view given in the analysis.

It is not without considerable hesitation, and a personal sense of the shortcomings of the

present work, that it is now given to the public. It necessarily contains much that is already familiar to the reader, and it should be regarded as an effort to present in concise form and in one's own way what has been gathered through many years of patient study, and by constant comparison with the works of the best commentators, together with such thoughts as have come to the Author in the course of his inquiry. And if thereby the reader should be in any measure led to a clearer understanding or a more careful study of this marvellously beautiful and strangely eloquent message of Christ to his church which is contained in the Book of Revelation —the meaning of which has been too often misunderstood by the Christian reader, or passed by as an insoluble mystery,—it will be to the Author an abundant reward for his effort and a cause for personal gratitude to Almighty God.

STEPHEN A. HUNTER,

Pittsburgh, Pa.

[pg 017]

Introduction

1. General Introduction.

The Revelation is the most difficult book to interpret of any in the New Testament canon. Its meaning is often involved in much obscurity, and the interpretation of eminent scholars has differed so widely in the past that we cannot always be sure, especially in the more difficult portions, that the particular view which appears to us the more satisfactory or convincing is certainly the correct one. This divergence of opinion has had the unfortunate effect of disparaging the worth of the Apocalypse as a part of the Word of God in the mind of many earnest students, who have come to regard its meaning as so obscure, and hidden in such hopeless perplexity, that any further attempt to interpret it is entirely fruitless. So much, too, has been written about the book which abounds in manifest vagaries that men of sober mind have often been thereby deterred from forming or expressing any definite opinion concerning its teaching. Indeed it is

difficult to say whether the Revelation has suffered more in the hands of expositors by means of fanciful and mistaken interpretation of its true contents, or by the interpolation of ideas wholly foreign to its thought. But, however brought about, we have reached this strangely incongruous result, that what was originally designed to be the *revelation* of mystery has become instead the *mystery* of Revelation.

There is evident necessity, therefore, of particular care in forming our views with regard to the meaning of many portions of the book, and also of often holding our opinions tentatively and subject to review, especially in our earlier studies, as probable rather than positive interpretations. We should avoid alike the mistake of dogmatically asserting that the Apocalypse cannot be understood at all, or of affirming that it can be fully understood.[2] And yet with this reservation in mind the book is still a rich mine of spiritual wealth, much of which lies upon the surface, while even its deeper mysteries abundantly reward our careful search. For we are not justified [pg 018] in casting aside any part of divine revelation upon the plea of apparent obscurity; and to do so is practically to deny that it is a revelation. On the contrary we are under manifest obligation to interpret the message of the Apocalypse so far as we can, for to fail of this is to neglect the sure word of prophecy. And even though the original meaning of the visions to John's mind, and the interpretation given them by those to

whom they were first made known, oftentimes cannot now be definitely determined,[3] yet the value of the book does not depend solely upon that, however helpful it would be. The matter of supreme importance for us is to apprehend aright the far-seeing and ulterior purpose in the mind of the Spirit in giving the Revelation. And in search for this we should not allow our zeal for the original interpretation to lead us to forget the significant lesson of the Old Testament, that the primary teaching of prophecy has often not voiced its deeper message, that God's thought has mostly proved wider than man's first apprehension; so that in our reading of the prophets we are not limited to the primary application, however important it may be, but should strive rather to grasp the broader sweep and deeper thought made plain by the fuller development of the divine purpose—the general meaning for the whole church in all time rather than the particular meaning for one age or generation. This consideration we will find of great value in dealing with the generic and flexile forms of imagery contained in the symbols of the Apocalypse, where in attending to a multiplicity of detail the deeper and broader thought may so easily be misapprehended or even entirely escape our notice.

The visions of the Apocalypse are generally conceded to belong to the latter part of the first century, and manifestly relate in main portion to the then future, whether near or

far, of the church of Christ in the world, for they pertain to a profoundly impressive prophetic experience. The divine path of God's people among the nations is beheld in symbol, type, and figure, ever leading on to victory through Jesus Christ his Son and our Lord; the church and the world are seen engaged in a multiform [pg 019] and deadly conflict, while the consummation is depicted in the fall of evil and the ruin of nature wrought by sin; and the triumph of the holy is set forth in a vision of complete restoration to the divine presence amid the beauty of a new world and the glories of the New Jerusalem—an outcome never once in doubt, for God rules through all and wins. And though in this ever changing picture the conditions of the early church and of the first century are constantly reflected in every part, yet the representative character of the whole may be clearly seen. Indeed one cannot but be impressed with the fine insight and spirit of reserve which is manifested by John throughout the book, in avoiding such explanations as might serve to narrow the visions to a purely local and temporary perspective, thereby evidencing that he had risen to a truly prophetic view, and that to his mind the visions belonged to a wider horizon as well as to the nearer limit of his own day. For whatever application or fulfilment these may have had, and surely *did* have, in the period in which they were given, has not exhausted their meaning. To the ear that is open to God's voice they have a lesson and significance that belong alike to the past, the

present, and the future, a perennial freshness that time can neither fade nor destroy, for they manifest the principles of the divine government which abide for all the ages.

In the light of modern criticism the primary question to be decided is whether we are dealing with an ordinary Jewish-Christian apocalypse of similar value with a multitude of others in the past, and with no essentially deeper meaning or diviner message; or whether we have not in the Apocalypse of John a true revelation, given in this literary form because of its particular suitability to the condition of the time, and its fitness for the needs of the generation that first received it. And the answer to this question must be sought in the contents of the book itself as vindicated by the Christian conscience—an answer that the church has never been slow to make, and that never can be changed so long as the needs of the human heart remain the same. We must therefore regard the fundamental question which lies back of that of interpretation, viz. the inspiration of the book itself, which alone can give it permanent value to the Christian mind, as definitely settled by the clear message which it contains for life, by the multitudinous voices [pg 020] of God which reverberate within it, and by the heaven-born solace which it ever affords to tried and tempted men in the midst of the conflict of life. And we shall find that the general meaning, so far from being hopelessly obscure, may be fairly understood by the attentive student and devout reader.

The obscurity of the Revelation arises both from its literary form and from the mystical character of its contents. The Apocalyptic form is so foreign to our way of thinking, and the mysticism is so peculiarly Oriental and Jewish, that these are apt to perplex rather than enlighten us. The Apocalyptist, deeply absorbed in the later prophecies of the Old Testament, especially those of Daniel and Ezekiel, and his mind steeped in the dreams and images of current Jewish apocalypses, found under the influence of the Spirit a fitting sphere for his prophetic fervor in a series of strange symbolic visions such as belonged to the fashion of his time. The chief symbolism throughout is that of the Old Testament, quickened and vivified by the thought of the New,—for it is everywhere assumed that the mysteries of the former dispensation find their only adequate solution in the supreme and final testimony of Jesus the Christ,[4]—but the atmosphere of the visions is that of Apocalyptic, which curiously enough has contrived to cast its own peculiar glow upon all the Old Testament teachings and thus create a new symbolism out of the old. And even when many of the symbols are assumed to be drawn in their present form from apocalypses then current in the Jewish world but which are no longer extant, and these to be derived in part from Babylonian and Persian sources, as held by one class of interpreters, they are yet found to have become so assimilated by the Jewish mind that they reflect the later development of Old Testament thought. These visions of the seer,

like shadows cast upon the foreground of the future, depict in outline great fundamental truths or pervasive principles of the divine government that are, and are to be, manifested in multiple facts in the progress of the ages. It is not the purpose of the visions to disclose the facts themselves, for that belongs to the development of history, but rather to furnish the means for interpreting the facts, when once they appear, by the exalted standard of the divine ideals. There are, [pg 021] indeed, a few cardinal facts of the future that are kept well in the foreground, such as the second coming of Christ, the triumph of God's kingdom, and the end of the present world; but these belong to the content of previous revelation as well, and are not new or peculiar to this book. The content of the visions is generic and not specific, and whenever we depart from broad generalization and attempt to enter into detail in our interpretation, we destroy the beauty and force of the lesson conveyed, and wander into the field of speculation concerning things that were never intended to be revealed, if the analogy of all other prophecy can be relied upon as a guide.[5] For though the Apocalypse undoubtedly contains an element of predictive prophecy, yet such prophecy is not history written before its time, but a divinely inspired and profoundly discriminative preview of certain dominant issues in the future that belong to the purpose of God, and are the resultant of well established principles of the divine government—issues that stand out to the prophet's illumined eye in bold relief

against the sky-line like the headlands of a continent amid the surrounding mists which envelop them.

Prophecy in this view is looked upon as much broader in its scope than the *fore*telling of things that are future. This element should be regarded as subordinate to the general purpose of prophecy, which is the *forth*telling of the mind of God.[6] And we should avoid that "dwarfed sense of the word prophecy in modern speech" which leads most readers (and even interpreters) to fasten upon a revelation of the secrets of the future. For it is evident that "Old Testament history and prophecy make prominent another kind of revelation—the unveiling of the ideal, as when the pattern of things sacred was unfolded to Moses in the mount".[7] In the true sense of prophecy it manifestly contains both these conceptions, viz. the Prophetico-predictive, and the Prophetico-ideal, which enter in varying proportion into the great messages of old. But it is believed by many of our best authorities, and it will be found in a careful study of the [pg 022] book of Revelation, that the prophetic element is not chiefly predictive in the strict sense, and can for the most part be best interpreted as the unveiling of the divine ideal which is being inwrought in the sphere of human life, or the manifestation of the divine purpose which is discovered as interpenetrating all the moral struggle and apparent contradictions of earthly experience, and which is leading up to the final victory; and only such glimpses of

the future are given as serve to assure a better comprehension of this main idea.[8]

The two most obvious principles that pervade the book of Revelation and underlie its ever changing scenes, are, *first*, God's method of government in the world by the trial of his people and the judgment of the wicked; and, *second*, God's method of developing character in moral agents by moral conflict. Accepting these as in a measure interpretative of the ways of God with men, the Apocalypse approaches the standpoint of the divine perspective, and traces the great lines of the divine purpose as they traverse the entire field of human history. It makes Christ's relation to his people both in time and in eternity the ground of an exhaustive inquiry into the mysteries of earthly life, which aims not only to discover God in the trend of history but also to interpret God through history wrought out to its end. It affords glimpses of God's far reaching plan in the process of redemption, leading up to the final salvation of unnumbered multitudes; it finds the key to earth's long-drawn-out story of sin and suffering, of conflict and of death, in wider victory at larger cost; and it teaches us to look calmly out beyond the ebb and flow of tides and noons to the shoreless, timeless life that ever abides in the presence of God. To the heart of faith it speaks of an unwavering trust when days are dark and storms fill the sky; like a clear voice out of the night it tells of the coming day; and with persuasive force its visions bring man face to face with God,

his Creator, Redeemer, and Eternal Friend.

2. The Title.

The Title used in the Authorized Version of our English Scriptures, and retained by the English Revisers, [pg 023] is “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” a name given to the book by the early church, though many of the older manuscripts omit “the Divine”. Our American Revisers read, “The Revelation of John;” but the more correct title is the one that is commonly used, and that is printed in the upper margin of the text, simply “The Revelation,” i. e. the unveiling, or uncovering [viz. of the mystery of the divine purpose and method in human life and history]—the opening words of the book itself—or, if preferred, the original Greek name, “The Apocalypse”,[9] which perhaps should have been retained without translation as in the Douay Version, but of which “The Revelation” is the exact equivalent. The phrase “of St. John”, or “of John”, may properly be omitted because of its ambiguity; for the book is declared in its opening sentence to be “the Revelation of Jesus Christ”, i. e. a revelation of or from Jesus Christ, and it is only in a secondary sense “the Revelation of John”, i. e. a revelation made to and recorded by John.

The occasion for the use of this title, “The Revelation of St. John”, in the first centuries was in order to distinguish the canonical Apocalypse from many others then in circulation, but this necessity has long since ceased to exist. For us it stands alone, it is *the* Apocalypse, the Revelation.

3. The Author.

That the Author of the Revelation was named John we have no reason to doubt, if we believe the statements of the book itself, for this is distinctly affirmed three different times.[10] He is also further described in one form of the title as “the Divine,” i. e. the one who discoursed about God, or the theologian. This latter designation, though of uncertain origin and date, and omitted by the American Revisers as without sufficient support, is yet undoubtedly as old as the latter part of the third century[11] while it may be much older, and has therefore some [pg 024] claim to traditional authority. The title, however, in any form is subsequent to the book itself. The statements of the Author concerning himself and his relations to the church in Asia, appear to the general reader to be decisive, and to indicate with sufficient clearness that the writer was none other than John the son of

Zebedee, the apostle whom Jesus loved, though this is not the view of the majority of the later critics. Some consider it to be the work of another John known to tradition as the Presbyter;[12] others attribute it to an unknown author of that name, or to some one writing under that name. But notwithstanding the frequency and positiveness with which the Apostolic Authorship and the Unity of the Book have been called in question during the last half century, the entire results of critical research may with some confidence be said not to have discredited either of them.[13]

The considerations which support the Apostolic Authorship are chiefly the following:—(1) the evidence of early Christian tradition imbedded in history is practically unanimous in its favor, and the book was accepted as the Apostle's without question by the church in Asia where it originated: (2) the internal evidence is to most minds convincing and even decisive, viz. (a) the Author declares himself to be John, and addresses the churches in Asia as their "brother, and partaker in tribulation," and there is no satisfactory historical evidence of any other John in Asia, except the Apostle, of sufficient standing and influence to have spoken to the churches with the authority of a prophet;[14] (b) there is a deep and essential similarity of thought, diction, and doctrine in the Apocalypse and in John's Gospel and Epistles which outweighs all differences of language, grammar, and style that appear upon the surface; (c) there is an undercurrent

[pg 025] “tragic tone” found in the Apocalypse, such as is manifest in all of John's writings, especially when he deals with the sad and terrible phases of human life and character, and this serves to point toward the Apostle as the author.

The grounds upon which the Apostolic Authorship is denied are:—(1) the general inconclusiveness of tradition, even though in this case the evidence is admitted to be particularly strong: (2) the pseudonymity of all other apocalypses, with the apparent exception of “The Shepherd of Hermas”, and hence the probability that this in a similar way may have been written under the assumed name of John in order to give it acceptance:[15] (3) the marked differences observable between the Apocalypse and John's Gospel and Epistles, viz. (a) the Greek of the Apocalypse is full of striking peculiarities, of solecisms, and of Hebraisms, quite at variance with the purer style of the other Johannine writings;[16] (b) the spirit of the Apocalypse as revealed in its ideas, terms, tone, and temper, differs widely from that of the Gospel and Epistles. These differences, however, it should be noted, were recognized and their force as objections to a common authorship was felt as early as the time of Dionysius (circ. A. D. 260), for they are apparent to every careful student of the Greek text; but they may be accounted for in a good degree by the difference of occasion, purpose, and theme, as well as of form and structure incident to the choice of a literary style that

has definite and necessary limitations. The differences have also been further accounted for on the part of some by accepting the earlier date of the Apocalypse, which in that case is assigned to the period just preceding the fall of Jerusalem. The peculiarities of language are in this view attributable to an imperfect knowledge of Greek, which was later overcome by John's long residence in Ephesus, while the apocalyptic form and general contents are held to indicate an earlier stage of Christian thought.[17] On the other hand [pg 026] it has been efficiently maintained, favoring the later date, that the differences are mainly due to psychological effects wrought by old age in the mind of John, whose mental activities reverted to the familiar thought-forms and apocalyptic conceptions of his youth, the Greek he used being simply a modified translation of Hebrew thought, while the Christological conceptions of the Apocalypse are manifestly among the most advanced in the New Testament.[18] In any case it will be seen that the reasons given under (1) and (2) have little force apart from the question of internal evidence, and are at most only inferences, while upon the other hand the divergent qualities given under (3), forceful as they are, cannot be assumed as without parallel in the history of literature. It has been pointed out that the difference in style between Carlyle's earlier and later productions, as well as those found in the works of Milton, Watts, Burke, and Wordsworth, written at different periods in their lives, is quite as marked as that of the

writings in question.[19] And we must not leave out of view the possibility that John, if at an advanced age, may have used one of his disciples as a collaborator, which would necessarily modify both the language and style of the work produced. So that after all has been said, it may be accepted as the concurrent judgment of the majority of interpreters,—the advanced critics being excepted,—that as great or greater difficulties are met in denying the Apostolic Authorship as in accepting it. For notwithstanding the confident assertion of most of the later critics that the Apocalypse was not written by the Apostle, yet indications are not lacking in some quarters now, influenced perhaps by the really cogent arguments so well stated by the decadent school of Baur, of a return in opinion to the recognition of the Johannine authorship as in some sense at least undeniable, though foreign elements are conceived to enter into it.[20] It has indeed, not infrequently been held, among those who deny that the Apostle was the author of the Fourth Gospel, that he wrote the Apocalypse; but still more commonly it is accepted that the work belongs to the "so-called Johannine writings", and originated in the same circle at Ephesus to which these [pg 027] writings are now attributed by advanced critics,[21] leaving the personal authorship more or less indefinite. The question of authorship, however, is a subordinate one, for the book maintains its own message, and it should be dealt with purely as a subject of historical inquiry and not one of dogmatic importance,

in the interest of correctness rather than of traditional opinion.

4. The Unity.

The question of Unity is one of modern literary criticism. The view now generally accepted that Jewish apocalypses, as we find them, are often of composite origin, representing an original writing to which various additions have been subsequently made by editors and redactors,[22] has had its influence upon the judgment formed by critics concerning the Apocalypse of John. The present tendency of critical investigation is to consider the book as a composite structure, and to direct its effort toward searching out the various sources from which it is supposed to be derived, and determining what parts of the book are original, as well as in pointing out various minor passages that are regarded as drawn from other sources, or are the work of a later hand. This tendency has been carried to such an extreme that the results are largely theoretical and inconclusive, depending upon the personal taste of the critic and having little force for other minds. The grounds upon which the unity of the book has been disputed are:—(1) Frequent breaks in continuity which make it difficult or

impossible to trace the connection of thought: (2) a lack of harmony in its various conceptions that is more or less incongruous, and that is apparently inconsistent with its being the work of one author: (3) an apparent indication in various parts of the book of different dates of writing—see remarks in the section on Date. All of these reasons, however, if taken together, and it be granted that they are well-founded, are yet insufficient to establish a diversity of authorship. The most that can be said is that they suggest it. For it should be remembered that logical sequence is not a quality of Apocalyptic thought; and also that there is not even an approximate agreement, as yet, among advanced scholars as to the character or extent of the material regarded as drawn from other sources.

[pg 028]
In favor of its Unity we find:—(1) a uniformity of style throughout which is scarcely possible in the combined product of different authors without such redaction as is equivalent to authorship: (2) an elaborate literary structure quite incompatible with the existence of more than one author—see section on Structure: (3) an essential Unity, whatever the extent to which elements of Jewish apocalyptic may have been made use of in its composition, which appeals to the literary judgment in a way that is both forcible and convincing, for the personality of the author is interwoven in every fibre of its frame. Though the present trend of critical

opinion is largely against the Unity of the book in the general sense of the term, yet its essential unity is so manifest that it is commonly conceded—"its inner unity is the foundation of all more recent works on the Apocalypse".[23] This is accounted for on the part of those who accept a composite origin by attributing its unification to the final editor, redactor, or author, a judgment that fails to carry conviction with it for those who approach the question from the broader standpoint of literary composition in general, instead of the narrower one of the apocalyptic writings. The later critical views have, however, not yet reached a conclusive stage, and indeed in the face of so great diversity of judgment, can scarcely be said to have assumed a consistent form; though it may be confidently predicated that no hypothesis of composite origin is ever likely to command general assent in the case of a book marked by such a definite unity of style and plan. The effort to discover in it an original Jewish apocalypse which has been wrought over by Christian editors into its present form,[24] or to reconstruct the various sources, Jewish or Christian, from which it has been derived,[25] may well be said to have been "thoroughly worked out", and to have apparently failed, though the labors of the critics have added largely to our knowledge of Apocalyptic, and contributed not a little to a better understanding of the book. The view now in the ascendant admits one author, but attributes various portions of greater or less extent to a common stock of Jewish, or

Jewish-Christian, apocalyptic fragments, current [pg 029] at that time, which have been appropriated from and used in its composition.[26] This, to the more conservative Christian mind, involves an apparent denial of its true unity, and proceeds upon a theory of its origin that is scarcely consistent with its effective inspiration. But it fails to be conclusive on other grounds, for upon careful examination it must become more and more apparent to the thoughtful student of Scripture and apocalyptic that this view does not accord with the author's use of his materials, so far as we have any knowledge of their source. For although he draws largely from the thought and figures of the prophets, and uses freely the general form of imagery found in extant Jewish apocalypses, yet everything has been transmuted in the crucible of his own vivid imagination into new combinations, and there is not a single instance in which he interpolates an entire passage from any known author—indeed there are no quotations at all, in the strict sense, found in the Apocalypse, but only allusions, reminiscences, and echoes, literary devices which reflect the thought without reproducing the form—and it is certainly an exceptional assumption that he interpolates only from authors whose works are now lost, or from sources furnished solely by tradition.[27] The impressions of unity are entirely too strong to be dissipated by visionary and purely theoretical views.

A modified form of the Apocalyptic-

Traditional view, advanced by some late writers,[28] indicates a healthful reaction from the piecemeal theories of the earlier source-criticism, and affords valuable suggestion for further study—whether, indeed, we can follow them or not in finding evidence of the introduction of a limited number of fragments of earlier origin,—viz. that the author drew freely from a mass of apocalyptic ideas and forms, or "apocalyptic conventions" as they have been called, which were widely current in Jewish circles, and with which his own mind was richly stored; and that this suggestive material was wrought over in his mental processes and used like that from the Old Testament, with which it was closely allied, as a framework for expressing the new and higher Christian thought peculiar to his message, the old form [pg 030] being constantly adapted to new meanings. The origin or source of these forms is chiefly a matter of theory; but the probability of their use is the more practical side of the problem. It will be seen that this view would account for all that the theory of diverse origin does without doing violence to the real unity of the book;[29] and it does not affect the question of the inspiration or reality of the visions, for the thought of the seer necessarily took form from his own mental furnishing, and his imagination, though quickened by the prophetic ecstasy, was not essentially altered in its mode of operation. But, with it all, let us not fail to apprehend that these questions pertaining to the method used in the composition of the Apocalypse, and to the

introduction of foreign elements into its literary structure, which so largely occupy the minds of critical scholars in the present day, are, after all, mainly secondary to the larger question. In it has God spoken? And if so, what are the spiritual lessons of the book for the devout Christian mind and heart?

5. The Date.

Two different Dates of authorship have been commonly maintained by different authorities, viz. either about A. D. 69 under one of Nero's immediate successors, Galba or Vespasian; or about A. D. 96 under Domitian. Many modern critics have accepted the earlier date, though the majority of commentators favor the later and traditional one. The evidence cannot be considered as decisive for either, but the preponderance seems to be in favor of the later date.[30] The earlier date, though accepted by the majority of critics a score and more years ago, is not now in such favor. The influence of present criticism, which is chiefly taken up with discussion of the sources from which the book is assumed to be derived, has produced a marked drift in opinion toward the acceptance of a date near the close of the first century (the traditional view) as the time of composition, or at least

the period of final editing.[31] This view, though accepting in a sense one author, yet holds that the contents of the book indicate different dates of writing, and that it is made up of [pg 031] visions of different origin, and composed at different times, which have been subsequently formed into one consistent whole[32]—a conclusion that would require something more than a theory to sustain it. The exact date, however, is not of any great importance, as the difference does not materially affect the interpretation, especially if we accept the symbolic view of the purpose and teaching of the book; for though the date fixed upon does affect somewhat the historical situation, and hence the immediate reference, it does not affect the larger meaning which belongs to all time.

The indications of the Earlier Date that usually obtain are:—(1) the linguistic peculiarities already referred to under the head of Unity, which are considered by many to indicate an earlier period in John's life and thought when he was still Hebraistic in method: (2) the historical allusions in the book that seem to favor the earlier date, and which some have thought are even decisive, viz. (a) the condition of the churches in Asia as set forth in the Seven Epistles, which fairly accords with what is known of the period of Nero's reign and shortly thereafter; (b) the references to persecution, war, earthquake, famine, and pestilence, which find a ready explanation in current events of the earlier date;[33] (c) the measurement of the temple

directed in ch. 11:1f., which appears to indicate that it was still standing; (d) the apparently veiled allusions to Nero found in the description of the Wild Beast in chs. 13 and 17, which, according to a widely accepted interpretation, point to a period shortly after his death, when he was still a prominent figure in the public mind.

For the Later Date the chief considerations are:—(1) the early and uniform tradition concerning the origin of the book, viz. that it was written by the Apostle John near the end of the reign of Domitian (see the section on Canonicity): (2) the historical situation described and implied, which as a whole is considered by most authorities as more suitable to and more fully met by the later than the earlier date, viz. (a) the churches in Asia, as indicated in the Seven Epistles, are in a more highly developed condition than is likely to have been attained at so early a period as the close of the sixth decade of the [pg 032] Christian era, and the omission of any reference to the Apostle Paul as their founder within a quarter-century of their establishment would be entirely unaccountable; (b) the indications of persecution are better suited to the time of Domitian than that of Nero,[34] while the references to war, famine, and pestilence are equally applicable to all the latter part of the first century; (c) the advanced stage of the conflict between Christianity and the state religion of Rome, shown in the worship of the Beast and the antagonism of Babylon, is a

strong indication of the later date;[35] (d) the assumed allusions to Nero, and to the temple as still standing, depend in each case upon a particular interpretation, and rest upon no certain foundation,—or admitting an earlier date for this section, it is regarded as having been inserted later,[36] which is a critical guess of uncertain value. This seems to leave the balance of evidence upon the side of the later date, though the best authorities have formerly been nearly equally divided.

6. The Place.

The Revelation was given in Patmos, one of the group of the Sporades, a small, rocky, and irregularly shaped island, some ten miles long by five miles wide, lying in the Ægean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor, about sixty miles from Ephesus and thirty-five miles from Miletus,[37] to which John was banished "for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus". According to tradition offenders of rank were banished to this island under the Roman Empire to work in the mines and marble quarries; and the Apostle John perhaps shared in this harsh lot during his imprisonment, as asserted by Victorinus in his commentary, the earliest work on the Apocalypse, written [pg 033] toward the close of the third century.

The chief feature of the modern island is the Monastery of St. John, founded in A. D. 1088, which lies a mile and a half south of La Scala, the landing place; while halfway up the hillside a grotto, known as the cave of the Apocalypse, is pointed out as the traditional place where the visions of the book were seen. The natural scenery of the island is rugged and the view of the sea and of the neighboring islands very fine, which may have contributed somewhat to the imagery of the book, as has been suggested by different travelers.[38] The content of the visions was doubtless committed to writing soon afterward, and probably while John was still a prisoner in Patmos, though the general work of authorship may have been done later at Ephesus.[39]

7. The Canonicity.

The right of the Book of Revelation to a place in the New Testament Canon is well attested both historically and by internal evidence. The historical evidence is especially complete, and is regarded by some as stronger than that of any other book in the New Testament:[40] the objections have all arisen from the internal evidence, which has been differently estimated by different minds.

The Historical Evidence covers the question both of authorship and of canonicity,—for these cannot well be separated, since the apostolic authorship carried with it for the early church the canonicity also—and it may be briefly stated as follows, viz:—

(1) Papias (circ. A. D. 130). Bishop of Hierapolis, “the hearer of John”, and “the companion of Polycarp”, regarded it as authoritative, and is the first to attest it, though he does not affirm its apostolicity. We are indebted for his testimony to Andreas of Cappadocia (about the end of the fifth century), who refers to Papias along with Irenæus and others, and quotes from a work by Papias his comment on Rev. 12:7-9. In this early witness of its canonicity we can scarcely conceive of [pg 034] Papias being mistaken, and his testimony is of great value.

(2) Justin Martyr (circ. A. D. 140) says it was written by “a certain man whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ”. This testimony is within fifty years of the later date assigned to the book, and seventy-five years of the earlier one, and is therefore of special importance; and there is no hesitancy in affirming that the author was “one of the apostles of Christ”.

(3) According to Eusebius, Melito, Bp. of Sardis (circ. A. D. 170), wrote a lost work on “the Revelation of John”; also two other bishops, Theophilus of Antioch, and Appolonius of Ephesus (both before the close of the second century), cited from it in their

writings.

(4) In a letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne (circ. A. D. 177) the Revelation is cited, and is described as “sacred Scripture”.

(5) Irenæus (circ. A. D. 180) defends its apostolic authority, and asserts frequently and positively that the Apocalypse was written by “John, a disciple of the Lord”.

(6) Clement of Alexandria (circ. A. D. 200) refers to the four and twenty elders with an explanatory clause, “as John says in the Apocalypse”.

(7) Tertullian (circ. A. D. 200) cites it frequently, ascribing it to John the Apostle, and attests its recognition in Africa.

(8) The Canon of Muratori (circ. 200) includes it without question, and says, “John in the Apocalypse, though he writes to the Seven Churches, yet says to all, &c,” and the context shows that the reference is to the Apostle.

(9) Hippolytus (circ. A. D. 210) wrote on “the Gospel and Apocalypse of John”; and he also cites the Apocalypse as a Scripture authority against Caius. After this time its canonicity was regarded as established by the Western Church.

(10) Origen (circ. A. D. 250), the pupil of Clement of Alexandria, and the first textual critic of the New Testament, whose

knowledge of the opinion and usage in different parts of the church was very wide, knows of no doubts concerning the Apocalypse, but quotes it as the recognized composition of the Apostle and Evangelist.

[pg 035]
The authority of the Apocalypse was not, however, destined to remain unquestioned, though its apostolic authorship and canonical right were practically unchallenged until toward the end of the second century—and in fact it was generally received by the church until the middle of the third century—but subsequently both of these were questioned, viz:—

(1) Marcion, the so-called "Heretic" (circ. A. D. 150), rejected it in forming his Canon because of its apparently Jewish character, and not because he did not regard it as genuine. This, however, did not represent a church view, and had little influence on opinion outside of his own sect.

(2) Dionysius of Alexandria (circ. A. D. 247) argues that it is not by the Apostle, though he does not reject the book. With him the question is mainly one of authorship, and not of canonicity.

(3) Eusebius (circ. A. D. 270) follows the opinion of Dionysius and may be regarded as "wavering", for he cites much in its favor. After Eusebius, however, opposition to it became general in the Syro-Palestinian Church, and it does not appear in the Peshito

Version, though St Ephraim Syrus, the chief father of the Syrian Church, cites it and ascribes it to the Apostle John.

(4) Cyril of Jerusalem (circ. A. D. 386) omits the Apocalypse from his list of the canonical books of the New Testament.

(5) In the Eastern Church the book was questioned on dogmatic grounds connected with the Millenarian controversy, and it was omitted from the Canon by the Council of Laodicea (circ. A. D. 360).

(6) Finally, however, in deference to the strong testimony of the Western Church, and influenced somewhat, no doubt, by the internal evidence of the book itself, it was authoritatively accepted and universally recognized by the church at large.

The Internal Evidence for the canonicity of the book, apart from the difficulties discussed under the head of Unity, is quite clear and satisfying and is practically irrefutable, for the disputed questions of authorship and date are not of such character as to affect its canonicity. This evidence may be briefly stated as follows, viz:—

(1) The historical situation and references correspond to the time in which the book claims to have been [pg 036] written, the latter half of the first century, and are fully sustained by contemporaneous history.

(2) The literary form and diction are each

suitable to the period and authorship to which the book is ascribed.

(3) The doctrinal teachings are fully and distinctively Christian, and are such as we would expect in a work of the period, written by inspiration for the whole church, viz:—(a) the Christianity it bears witness to has escaped from the particularism of Jewish thought into the broad catholicity of the Pauline Epistles; (b) Christ is presented as the divine atoning Lamb seated in the midst of the throne, co-equal with the Father; (c) the personality of the Holy Spirit is recognized, and his illuminative work illustrated; (d) the chief duties of the Christian life are those presented in the Gospels, faith, witness, and purity, while the reward of overcoming is set forth in terms of apostolic hope; and (e) the entire contents of the book, so widely different from the non-canonical literature, appeal to the instincts of the Christian heart now as in the first generation, and verify themselves afresh to the Christian consciousness in such a forceful and convincing way that this goes far to overcome any apparent objections to its canonical authority based upon subjective judgments of another class. In fact the impartial verdict of careful investigation serves to confirm the opinion that the Apocalypse is rightfully received on ample and concurrent testimony both of Historical and Internal Evidence as a part of sacred Scripture by the whole church throughout the world.

8. The Form.

The Book consists of a series of strange and impressive symbolic visions which contrast present and historic conditions of trial and suffering in the church and in the world with future and prophetic conditions of triumph and reward for the holy and of wrath and punishment for the sinful. It is an interpretative view of the divine path and plan of the centuries that is evidently given for the comfort and help of God's children in the midst of trial and distress. Its Literary Form is marked and significant, and belongs to that highly figurative style of late Jewish and early Christian writings which is known [pg 037] as the Apocalyptic Literature.[41] And though John must often have felt himself hampered and impeded by the fanciful and more or less unreal character of this literary form, yet it doubtless met more fully than any other the conditions of the time, and afforded an adequate method of reaching the devout Christian mind of that generation. This literature is distinguished both by its peculiar style and by the exceptional range of its thought, and may be described as consisting of all of that particular class of the Apocryphal writings which are couched in mystic symbols and figures, and which attempt to give an account of hidden things miraculously disclosed, especially those

pertaining to the other world and to the closing events of human history. The word Apocalyptic in its present sense belongs to recent usage, being introduced by the modern critical school as a generic term to designate these writings as a distinct department of the Apocryphal books, and also to denote the literary style or art-form in which they are cast. The use of the word Apocalypse to designate the writings or books now known by that name (as the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and others) is undoubtedly very old, though it did not apparently begin before the end of the first century, and seems to have taken rise from the common use of the title "The Apocalypse of John" in Christian circles to designate the Revelation, from which the word came to be applied to all writings of a similar class. Every Apocalypse is thus an example of Apocalyptic; but, owing to the late introduction of the latter term as now used, most dictionaries do not give an adequate definition.[42]

The unique symbolism of these writings constitutes their most striking and characteristic feature; and it is this uniform use of cryptic symbols instead of ordinary figures of speech that invests the Apocalypse of John with its peculiar charm, and at the same time creates the special problems of its interpretation. A symbol may be defined as a conventional objective form chosen to represent something else, often not otherwise capable of portraiture, because of some real or fancied resemblance [pg 038] that appeals

to the mind; an ideal representation couched in sensuous form that embodies one or more of the prominent features of its subject, and that comes to represent a fixed conception in the world of fancy, a lower and material sign being used to represent a higher and abstract idea. The use of symbols of some sort is instinctive and universal, and grows out of a natural effort of the mind to clothe its ideas in forms that give free scope to the imagination. But the peculiar nature of the symbols and the profusion of their use in the Apocalyptic literature, serve to mark it as separate from all other literary forms. Oriental symbols, too, are so unfamiliar and oftentimes so incongruous to our minds, such as the Dragon, the Scarlet Beast, the Two-horned Beast, and even the Cherubim, that we perhaps fail to realize how much they meant to people of a primitive civilization who were possessed of a vivid imagination without scientific precision of thought. This difference in the instinctive appreciation of the nature and value of symbols, together with the wide possibilities of meaning that are apparently inherent in the symbols used in the Apocalypse, has always given room for the fertile fancy of interpreters. But the later study of the Apocalyptic writings as a class has made it plain that this effort was largely misspent, and has led to more discriminating views of the meaning and use of symbols as there found, and to their limitation by established usage, where such is known to have existed. For while the growth of recognized symbols is necessarily slow, and

their origin often impossible to trace yet when they have once been formed, and have come to possess an established meaning in the public mind, they exhibit a remarkable persistence; and though their meaning may be somewhat modified by subsequent use and by particular application, yet it can scarcely suffer sudden and radical change. And let us remember that the symbols, metaphors, and other figures found in the Revelation are not purely literary: they have had a history and have acquired a recognized and conventional meaning. We have, therefore, an available guide to the interpretation of the symbols in the book furnished by their use not only in the Old Testament, in which by former interpreters they were mainly sought, but especially in Jewish apocalypses, which give the current meaning of many of them at the time when this book was written, a sense which [pg 039] could not well have been departed from to any great extent without making their meaning wholly unintelligible. And the more clearly we apprehend this fact, the more constantly we apply it in our interpretation, the more likely are we to arrive at the meaning intended.[43] For while the Western mind revolts against the oftime obscurity of Apocalyptic symbols, yet we not infrequently recur to the same method of illustration. For instance, a good example of the present day use of symbols, aided by illustrative skill, is found in such a cartoon as “The Modern Juggernaut” that appeared a few years ago, in which the wheeled car of India was transformed into a huge wine bottle

full of intoxicating drink that rolls along its way, crushing out the lives of thousands of miserable victims, while the fierce dogs of War, Famine, and Pestilence have under its malign influence slipped their leash and go forth to prey upon men.[44] This symbolism in some measure parallels that of the Scarlet Beast in the Revelation, and shows how a great destructive force operating in the world may be presented to many minds in an objective form much more effectively than by any abstract verbal statement. Like a parable an apocalypse flings a great truth across our path, instinct with the touch of spiritual life.

The revelation made to John doubtless took the Apocalyptic form because it was the prevailing literary method of that time for the treatment of the theme dealt with by his prophecy, and its constructive symbolism already filled and colored his thought. But notwithstanding that it is cast in a Jewish mould, the Christian thought everywhere triumphs over the Jewish form. The line of thought is limited to the peculiar range of Apocalyptic subjects, and is found to be closely related to that of our Lord's discourse upon the last things (the so-called “little apocalypse” of our Lord in Mat. 24), though it should not be regarded as formally an amplification of that discourse, or as chiefly or wholly determined in content by [pg 040] it.[45] The prophetic mood is manifest in every part of the book, and the exalted mental state of the writer is sustained throughout after the manner of a rhapsody, in the structure and

movement of which all literary forms are in a measure fused together.[46] Indeed by a deeper study of this unique work we come to feel as though in it "we touch the living soul of Asiatic Christendom".

It remains to be said that while we class the Apocalypse of John with Jewish apocalypses as to literary form, yet it so manifestly rises above its class both in method and content that it is universally accorded the first place among Apocalyptic writings, and fully establishes its claim to a place among the inspired books of Scripture by reason of the penetrative prophetic insight which it everywhere displays in dealing with the greatest, the most central, and the most mysterious theme in the whole sphere of Christian thought.

9. The Theme.

The Theme of the Revelation, stated in its broadest terms, is Christ and the Church through Time to Eternity; the mystery of God in human life and history made manifest through the disclosure of the divine redemptive plan becoming effective and triumphant.[47] The theme we assign to the Revelation will, of course, be determined

largely by our view of its contents. Many interpret it to be Jerusalem, Rome, and the End, limiting its outlook to the horizon of the early church; others make it the Course of History, or the Future Path of the Church in the World; still others affirm it to be the Last Things, or the Second Coming of Christ. But the wider view is the truer one, which includes many phases of the kingdom, and the theme is properly interpreted as Christ and the Church here and hereafter, or Redemption in its present and future relation to Human Life. This theme is wrought out in prophetic vision by an evolving drama that moves forward in multiple and progressive cycles of trial and triumph, of conflict and victory, ever advancing toward the [pg 041] complete and final consummation, when righteousness shall win, sin be punished, and the redeemed be restored to the immediate presence of God; and whereby the divine plan shall be abundantly vindicated notwithstanding all apparent anomalies, and seeming contradictions, and temporary reverses, for it is confidently affirmed that the night of sin shall ultimately pass away, and the day dawn at last in which “the glory of God and of the Lamb shall be the light thereof”; and “He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them ... that come out of great tribulation”. Thus the book gives answer to the deep call of the soul for some sign concerning the future that shall point the path of faith and cheer the heart for service; and the answer is abundantly satisfying, for those who interpret the theme aright. Occupied

with such a subject of thought it finds its proper place at the end of the inspired volume; it forms a fitting close for the entire line of prophetic voices; and it binds the long succession of books into an unbroken unity.[48] With illimitable sweep its visions look backward through time and forward into eternity, downward on earth's struggles and upward upon heaven's victory, inward to the soul's conflicts and outward to God's eternal peace, while through it all there rings out the one transcendent note, Christ reigns but to triumph.

10. The Occasion.

The conditions which gave Occasion for this sole Apocalyptic book of the New Testament have left their impress on its form and thought, viz. persecution from without, and trial and distress within the church. These conditions which are subsumed throughout must be clearly recognized in order to interpret the message aright, and to estimate its proper value for the age which first received it. For, whether we accept the earlier or later date of writing, the deadly power of the Roman Empire was being put forth to repress and destroy the church. At the later date the worship of the Emperor was being

made the test of obedience to law, and at either time many Christians in the face of persecution were weak and wavering. The immediate outlook was increasingly dark, and the future prospect full of gloom. The failure of the Messiah to reappear and of the church to triumph; the [pg 042] bitter experience of persecution already endured, and the certainty of greater suffering yet to follow; in a word, the apparent reversal of the brightest hopes of early Christianity, all of these called for some divine message of cheer that would inspirit the discouraged, throw light upon the path of sorrow and shame, and make their lot endurable because of the assuredly glorious outcome of the future. And there was no kind of message so well suited to meet such a crisis as the form of Apocalyptic, which grew out of similar conditions, and had a tone and temper peculiarly adapted to infuse a triumphant hope in the midst of growing religious despair.[49] But let us not fail to perceive that though the Apocalypse was specially designed to meet a great crisis in the life of the early church, its effectiveness does not end there. Its lessons are for us and for all time; it has the course and end of world-history in view, and this is an ever-living theme for the church of Christ in every age.

11. The Purpose.

The Purpose of the Apocalypse, as indicated by its introductory words “The Revelation”, is the revealing or unveiling of mystery. In the Christian sense a mystery is a former secret of divine truth that has now been at least partially revealed (Eph. 3:1-11), while an apocalypse is the process of revealing it, and also the revelation itself containing the truth made known. The comprehensive design of the book is to unfold and interpret the divine purpose and method in human history, especially in relation to the redemptive process, by portraying in scenic outline the present and future course of the church of Christ through conflict to victory, for the vindication of God's righteousness in the final issue, and for the comfort and encouragement of tried and persecuted Christians in the midst of the pathway of life.[50] The more immediate purpose was to strengthen the church in the strain of present distress, while the ultimate aim is to be found not in the disclosure of history itself, but in the establishment of the moral order of the world, in illustrating the fact that history is a divinely guided “moral process toward a goal”, as the substantial ground of a true philosophy of life, and [pg 043] as a permanent defense against false and partial views. And this purpose is so wrought out by the portrayal of the world as an ideal battlefield full of opposing forces, with alternating scenes of triumph and danger, that the whole becomes a fervent and powerful appeal to the heroic in Christian life and character, and a clear call to new faith and courage. For whatever else may be its lessons,

we must not leave out of view this practical purpose of divine monition to the world of men, which has so deeply impressed itself upon every generation of Christians. Its message of warning is inwrought with and reënforced by its prophetic scenes of terror and reward: for the Apocalypse is the book of the future as well as of the past and present, and that future is ever near in prophetic vision, however far it may be in historic relation, and to John's eye is always filled with the figure of the returning Christ who comes to judgment and to victory. The message, however, viewed in its entirety, while it contains a sympathetic element of encouragement for the saints, and a monitory element of exhortation and warning for all men, is yet fundamentally a philosophic interpretation of the divine method in history for all who would see God in the story of man's life on the earth—a theodicy based upon prophecy. And any view which assumes for the author a narrow field of vision, such as that he merely grouped together the current apocalyptic conceptions of his time in order to fling them in fierce polemic against the Roman Empire and to foreshadow its defeat and fall,[51] rests upon a manifestly imperfect judgment that fails in religious depth, missing the spiritual significance of the message, and lacks in literary insight, denying the evident marks of originality, genius, and inspiration in the most wonderful and unique composition of its kind that has ever been produced.

12. The Interpretation.

There are two essentially different methods of Interpretation that have been followed in attempting to arrive at the meaning of this manifestly difficult book, which are founded upon different conceptions of its didactic purpose, and proceed upon different lines of inquiry, viz. the Historical, and the Symbolical.

The Historical Interpretation regards the book as a *prophetic review and forecast of history* veiled in symbol, [pg 044] and seeks the meaning and fulfilment of the visions in certain specific historical events which either have occurred, are occurring, or will occur within the sphere of human life and experience. There are three different forms of this method of interpretation, all of which specialize the prophecy but differ as to the time and nature of the fulfilment, viz. (1) the *Preterist* view (also called the Contemporaneous-Historical), which regards that the visions relate mainly to events in the history of the early church, and that they have been already fulfilled in the far past; (2) the *Futurist* view (also called the Future-Historical), that the visions relate mainly to events which shall occur in the last days, and that the fulfilment is to be looked for chiefly in the more or less remote future; and (3) the *Progressivist* view (also called the Continuous- or Church-Historical), that the several visions constitute a continuous and progressive series,

covering the whole period of the church's history from the time of John to the last judgment, and that their fulfilment is therefore to be found in a successive line of historical events, part of which lie in the past and part in the future.

The Symbolical Interpretation, upon the other hand, regards the book as a *prophetic idealization of history*, dealing with the general course and outcome of man's life upon the earth, and disclosing under the form of symbols the spiritual and moral forces which give to history its deeper meaning; and seeks the significance and fulfilment of the visions not, therefore, in particular events, but rather in classes of events, not solely at one definite time, but at many different times, finding the revelation mainly illustrative of general principles of the divine government rather than predictive of particular facts of history, a view of various phases rather than of historic stages of the church's experience,[52] and interpreting its symbols in the genuine spirit of Apocalyptic as pictorial representations of the prevailing fortunes of the church in the world as she moves forward to the final consummation.[53] This method of interpretation, which is commonly known as [pg 045] the *Symbolist* view (also called the Spiritual), presents no such marked difference of form as the Historical, but with a wider outlook regards that the visions relate to all such like events in every age as specially manifest God's rule in the world sending forth judgment unto victory, and such as

particularly exhibit the progressive development of good and evil in human life, together with their constant conflict and their final reward and punishment.

All the current interpretations may be classified under one or other of the above heads, yet in the hands of individual interpreters they are often modified and blend into each other in their application—a manifest recognition of the fact that there is an element of truth underlying each view, which we may perhaps say has been unduly emphasized, for all agree that the interpretation is somehow and somewhere to be found in human life and history.

What might be called still another method of interpretation is the Apocalyptic-Traditional (or Tradition-Historical) view of late critical writers on the Apocalypse already referred to, which approaches the question from the viewpoint of literary origin, and attributes certain portions of the book to the introduction of traditional Jewish or Jewish-Christian Apocalyptic fragments that have been utilized by the author and applied to the historical conditions of his time, adapting them to a new meaning. This, however, is not so much a separate method of interpretation as it is a corollary of the present Literary-Critical method of dealing with the book, which regards it as an early Christian work in successive editions that has taken into itself certain Jewish elements. With this origin assumed the interpretation does not differ materially from the Preterist view except,

perhaps, that it is less rigorous in its application to current events, and recognizes more fully the idealism of the author; for the historical outlook has measurably lost its value except as an indication of the date of writing, and for most who hold this view the book has no longer any distinctive prophetic message for the church; it has become chiefly a fantastic dream, a pious dream it is true, but only a dream of the far past.

The principal question of interpretation, as will be seen by a consideration of the current views, relates not only to the view-point, but also to the aim or design of the [pg 046] Revelation. The Historical method centers the chief aim of the book in a *predictive*-prophetic element which it finds throughout and regards as pointing to specific events in particular periods of history that are designed to teach important spiritual lessons. With this idea of the didactic purpose, it yet presents the widest variation of opinion concerning the viewpoint of the book, and includes upon the one hand the extreme rationalist who considers it a purely human writing, a Jewish apocalypse that has been revamped to include Christian ideas, which blends history with prediction and reflects only the horizon of the first century; and on the other hand the devout mystic who accepts its message as chiefly predictive prophecy of the far future, and interprets it well nigh literally as a prophetic account of the world's ending amid terror and blood. The Symbolist method, with a quite different conception, centers the aim

of the book in an *interpretative*-prophetic element which it finds in every part, and regards as setting forth the principles of the divine government, and pointing to their exemplification in multiple events occurring in different periods of history that are working together toward the final consummation. According to this method of interpretation the viewpoint is idealistic, universal, and timeless, and the scope of the visions correspondingly wide.

The latter view, which is the one presented in the following outline, affords a fairly satisfactory interpretation that has been steadily gaining ground during the last half-century, and to the present author seems destined in some form to attain general though perhaps not universal acceptance. The views of the leaders in the symbolical school present no material divergence in general interpretation,[54] and the principles of this interpretation seem likely to prevail throughout the Christian church of the future, though the form and application may be somewhat modified. The objection that "this system of interpretation is out of keeping with the general purpose of Apocalyptic literature",[55] loses its force if we grant that the book is inspired, and realize that the literary form was chosen because of its adaptability for the treatment of the topics dealt with in the Apocalypse; for once, the Apocalyptic form becomes the vehicle of a divine revelation, it thereby escapes some of the main limitations of its class, one [pg 047]

of which was “the consciousness of no new message from God for the generation to which it was addressed”; and accordingly it should here be regarded as only the literary setting in which the message continually overtops the form, the art-form in which the art is lost sight of through the beauty and power of the truth which it presents. This view, although not without difficulties, is yet believed by a good proportion of eminent scholars to be based upon sound and temperate exegesis, to be best suited to the character of the book, and to give relative value to all the elements of truth contained in other views. The importance of the historical situation of John's time and of the lessons for that age is fully recognized, the eschatological element throughout is given due consideration, and the application of the prophecy to the entire trend and events of history is made apparent, while the precise time-relation of the visions is for the most part eliminated, and thus the field of prophetic prospective is maintained in its true breadth, and not narrowed as in the historical interpretation to a particular age or series of events. And the interpretation as a whole rests for its validity upon the scope and tenor of the book throughout, and can therefore be maintained without determining the full or specific meaning of every part. The Revelation thus understood ceases to be either a political diatribe of the first century, or the terrored story of the End; it rises above an epitome of history whether near or far, and takes rank as a true prophetic book in Apocalyptic form, dealing with the all-

embracing plan of God for the ages, and the munificent purpose of redemption; and it is thereby rescued from many conjectural and contradictory interpretations which have obscured its meaning, and becomes a living prophecy of value to the church in every age.

The tendency toward wiser methods in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, and the growing spirit of unanimity concerning its larger lessons, provide good ground for encouragement to the troubled reader. And while, no doubt, the influence of the individual type of mind will continue to be felt in the interpretation, the rationalistic emphasizing the preterist application, the mystic the futurist, and the practical mind the symbolic and universal reference, yet it should always be kept in view that the chief importance of the book for the church at large [pg 048] transcends any question of theoretical interpretation, and lies in its practical worth in providing a rich source of religious inspiration, an invigorating aid to imperfect faith, and an abiding stimulus to the Christian imagination, in enabling the ordinary mind to realize the spiritual in the midst of and transcending the natural, and in making the deep conflict of life with its divine superintendence an ever present fact to the human soul. Indeed the book was evidently written for common use in the early church in public worship (ch. 1:3), which indicates an appreciation of its value in striking contrast with the modern indifference that passes it by as unintelligible. The Apocalypse has also a

historical value, quite apart from its general meaning and use, that we should not overlook, for it throws important light upon the political and social conditions as well as the inner thought and development of the Christian church in the latter part of the first century. It reflects throughout the faith and temper in which the early church faced its growing conflict with the world. And it serves to show that at the close of the apostolic age there was a Christianity which was free from the law and universal, and yet continued to adhere to Jewish modes of expression.[56]

13. The Outline Analysis.

I THE PROLOGUE (OR INTRODUCTION): Ch. 1:1-3:22
1 The Superscription: Ch. 1:1-3
2 The Salutation: Ch. 1:4-8
3 The Introductory Vision: Ch. 1:9-20
4 The Seven Epistles: Ch. 2:1-3:22

II THE MAIN APOCALYPSE (OR REVELATION PROPER): Ch. 4:1-22:5
1 The Vision of God on the Throne: Ch. 4:1-5:14
2 The Vision of the Seven Seals: Ch. 6:1-17, and 8:1
2b The Episode of the Sealed Ones: Ch. 7:1-17

3 The Vision of the Seven Trumpets: Ch. 8:2-9:21, and 11:14-19
3b The Episode of the Angel with the Book, and of the Two Witnesses: Ch. 10:1-11:13
4 The Vision of Conflict: Ch. 12:1-14:20
[pg 049]
5 The Vision of the Seven Vials: Ch. 15:1-16:12, and 16:17-21
5b The Episode of the Frog-like Spirits: Ch. 16:13-16
6 The Vision of Victory: Ch. 17:1-20:15
7 The Vision of the New Jerusalem: Ch. 21:1-22:5

III THE EPILOGUE (OR CONCLUSION): Ch. 22:6-21
1 The Final Words of the Angel, with the Promise of Christ: Ch. 22:6-16
2 The Closing Testimony of John: Ch. 22:17-20
3 The Author's Benediction: Ch. 22:21

14. The Literary Structure.

The elaborate and artistic Literary Structure of the Apocalypse, the numerical symmetry of its parts, the parallelism of its visions, and the recurrent climaxes in its development, together unite to give it a unique place among the writings of Scripture; and a clear

perception of these relations becomes a distinct aid to the better understanding of its message, for these belong to it as the outer robes which enfold its inner thought. The predominance of the number seven in the arrangement of its subject-matter throughout, especially the recurrence of formal series of sevens in the Epistles, Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, has commonly led to the conclusion that the book is somehow capable of division into seven parts fundamental to its structure. And although the failure of commentators to agree generally upon any lines of division yet proposed scarcely seems to support this opinion, yet the possible correctness and the general helpfulness of such a division is fully recognized. Any such division which we may make, however, is chiefly one of analysis, for the visions are continuous and develop without any distinctive break of prophetic view. The outline analysis given above divides the Visions, or main portion of the book, into seven parts, the Episodes being made parenthetical and subordinate, as their contents and connection serve to indicate; while the four subdivisions of the Introduction and three of the Conclusion taken together, form another seven. This general division, which is not an uncommon one, agrees in the main, though not in statement or in full detail, with that in the *Pulpit Commentary*,[57] and is one of [pg 050] the most natural as well as the most helpful in bringing out the chief thought of the book. The carefully wrought out and remarkably suggestive division and subdivision into

complete series of sevens, given in the *Modern Reader's Bible*,[58] after the same manner as the Prophecy of Ezekiel, and the Rhapsody of Joel, is worthy of attentive consideration, though it may well be doubted whether such an extensive subdivision found place in the Apocalyptist's thought.[59] With discriminative literary insight the author of that work says, concerning the general outline of the book, "The seven visions of St. John's Revelation seem in the line of their succession to trace the figure of an arch, the keystone of the arch being the master-thought of the prophecy;... On either side of it [in the arrangement of the visions] III is closely parallel with V, and II with VI ... while I and VII are separate from the rest.... As always, literary form is here pointing to the deepest spiritual meaning". The theme of the central vision according to this view, is "Salvation: the Kingdom of this World becoming the Kingdom of Christ", which puts the purpose of the Christian warfare to the front, and has much to commend it; for the warfare is in order that the redemptive purpose of God may become effective and triumphant. There are reasons, however, in the scheme of the book which seem to place the main emphasis upon the warfare itself as leading to salvation, and that view has been accepted in this work. Following the fertile suggestion given above, though with a somewhat different conception of the theme of the several visions, we arrive at the following outline of the thought and plan of the chief part of the book,[60] viz:—

IV
III V
II VI
I VII

[Transcriber's Note: In the book, the above table had the following text for each of the seven sections; they are laid out here to make it look correct with modern readers.]

IV—A Vision of Warfare—the Church-Historic World-Conflict of the Evil against the Just. (Ch. 12:1-14:20)

III—A Vision of Threatening—the World's Punishment Threatened. (Ch. 8:2-9:21, and 11:14-19)

V—A Vision of Judgment—the World's Judgment Executed. (Ch. 15:1-16:12, and 16:17-21)

II—A Vision of Trial—the Church's Trial Foreshown. (Ch. 6:1-17, and 8:1)

VI—A Vision of Vindication—the Church's Vindication Manifested. (Ch. 17:1-20:15)

I—A Vision of Sovereignty—the Throne during Conflict. (Ch. 4:1-5:14)

VII—A Vision of Triumph—the Throne after Victory. (Ch. 21:1-22:5)

[pg 051]
If we follow the natural order of the visions from I to VII, we find it to be one of *progression*, viz. from Sovereignty to Trial,

then to Threatening, and on through Warfare, Judgment, and Vindication to Triumph, each being a separate step in advance: if we compare I with VII, II with VI, and III with V, we find the order to be marked by *parallelism*, viz. Sovereignty corresponding to Triumph, Trial to Vindication, and Threatening to Judgment, vision IV, that of Warfare, holding the balance between them: while if we regard the central vision in relation to the rest, we find the arrangement to be one of *climax*, vision IV forming the connecting link between I and VII, II and VI, and III and V, the visions preceding and following it forming an ascending and descending scale to and from the center, viz. that of Sovereignty leading through Warfare to Triumph, that of Trial through Warfare to Vindication, and that of Threatening through Warfare to Judgment. The movement of thought is thereby indicated to be from the throne challenged to the throne triumphant, from the church tried to the church vindicated, from the world threatened to the world judged, through a world-conflict which forms the acme of the dramatic purpose, and discloses the entire sweep of redemptive history as buttressed upon the eternal throne. The seven visions, according to this view, are not bound together by any temporal succession, but each displays a world-process complete in itself, and they are so arranged that the climax is reached at the center instead of the end, after the analogy of Hebrew poetry, the central vision furnishing the key to the interpretation of the whole.[61] The value of such an analytic

interpretation, when sustained by the contents of the book, lies not alone in the help which it affords in penetrating the deeper purpose of the writer, and of the revelation made through him, but in the illuminative effect which, in a case like this, it throws upon the disputed question of unity; for if any such clearly marked and continuous current of thought can be shown to thread its way throughout the entire book, despite all by-currents and eddies, then the various theories of diverse or composite authorship cease to be credible except to pure theorists.

[pg 052]

15. The Literature.

The Literature relating to this difficult book is very extensive, more works, strange to say, having been written on the Apocalypse which has been so imperfectly understood than upon any other part of Scripture, though many of them are now rightly regarded as of little value. A careful study of one or more of the leading authorities representing each of the current methods of interpretation will give a

fair view of the whole field, and will serve to show that in many points there is essential agreement among all schools of thought, though for advanced work one's reading must necessarily cover a wider range, for the student should then know all the best that has been said upon the problems of the book. The most important qualification, however, for this difficult study is to approach the whole subject with an open mind and a fresh spirit of inquiry, resolved to be quite untrammelled by traditional interpretations, to investigate with scrupulous care the various points of view, and to apply with fearless courage all the *well-established* results of investigation, especially those of the later fruitful studies in Apocalyptic literature, which enable us to approach more nearly the viewpoint of the earliest readers of the book, but which yet remain to be duly correlated with our previous knowledge, being confidently assured that there is “light yet to break” for the earnest soul upon the deep things of the Apocalypse.

It is not likely that any one commentary will prove entirely satisfactory to the thoughtful reader, owing to the wide variation of opinion upon many minor points among those holding the same general view. Milligan is very suggestive though not always convincing, for he is oftentimes too indefinite in interpretation to be satisfying to the reader, telling us that “no detail of historic events need be looked for”. His discussion of principles, however, is always illuminative,

even when his application is not quite so clear; and not infrequently his work is of more value in showing the inconclusiveness of other views than in establishing his own. We are indebted to him, through the general circulation of his works, perhaps more than to any other writer, for the present prevalence of the symbolic view in the English speaking world, and his *Lectures*, and one or other of his *Commentaries*, should be read by every student. Plummer, in the *Pulpit* [pg 053]*Commentary*, will be found more satisfactory by the general reader, especially if he inclines to the symbolic interpretation, and there is, in fact, no better commentary for common use, though we may not agree with all his conclusions. To his wise and discriminative judgment the present author wishes to express a deep indebtedness. The short introduction to that volume, with its scholarly notes on manuscripts, versions, &c, will also be found very helpful to the busy student. Farrar, supporting the preterist view, gives the historical conditions of the Neronic period in a striking way, many of which are equally applicable to the whole latter part of the first century. Lee is especially valuable for the condensed *résumé* of opinions concerning many obscure passages throughout the book, though the great diversity of views at times presented is apt to be confusing. Faussett is excellent from his point of view, ranking among the best premillennial interpreters. Seiss is also a popular authority with those who share the premillennial expectation, but his exegesis is often faulty, and his

interpretation fanciful. Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible* vol. John, is indispensable for its literary analysis and aid in gaining the general perspective, and should be in the library of every student. The Introduction to Revelation in the *New Century Bible*, by C. A. Scott, gives an admirable and concise statement of the present status of opinion concerning the problems of the book, and the notes of the same volume are especially valuable for their references to Jewish Apocalyptic. This is the best small book for the use of the student who wishes to get an outline of the modern view concerning the incorporation of Jewish apocalypses. For those who are acquainted with the Greek text, Alford, Stuart, and Düsterdieck will be found quite helpful, even though they belong to a former generation, for each has a special excellency; but the late work of Swete, the *Apocalypse of St. John* (1906), which is both thorough and scholarly, is indispensable for the critical use of the student in that it meets more fully the questions of modern inquiry and present discussion, and maintains a moderate view of the opinions now to the fore concerning the origin of the book. On the other hand Briggs' *Messiah of the Gospels*, and Moffatt's *Historical New Testament* give a good account of late theories of composite authorship and deserve attention. Also the able work of Moffatt on Revelation in the final volume of the *Expositor's Greek Testament* [pg 054] has been issued (1910), and deserves careful notice. The author adopts the modern critical view, that portions of the

book have been incorporated from current apocalypses, and devotes considerable attention to source-criticism as an aid to interpretation, but too much time is given to pointing out what he regards as parallel thought in Greek, Roman, and Jewish writings, and this often has little interpretative value. The work is adapted to the ripe scholar rather than the earlier student, and though rejecting extreme views, it will not be found altogether satisfying to those of more conservative mind who believe that the Apocalypse is entitled to a primary rather than a secondary place among the books of Scripture. Another work awaited with much interest is the volume on Revelation in the *International Critical Commentary* which is in course of preparation by Charles, the eminent authority upon Apocalyptic.[62] This volume when issued will no doubt add much of value to the modern point of view, and serve to throw additional light upon the relations of Apocalyptic literature to this its greatest masterpiece. His *Studies in the Apocalypse* (1913) serves to indicate the general line of interpretation to be expected, and it must be said that this is somewhat disappointing to the conservative reader, for it is highly critical. One naturally hesitates to disagree so widely with such an eminent scholar and distinguished apocalyptist as has been found necessary to do in the following pages; but it should be remembered that all Scripture is written for the world of men, and that the opinion of no one scholar or number of scholars can

authoritatively determine the meaning of any part of it, but that rather the interpretation must be arrived at by a general consensus of opinion among men of learning and piety throughout the world. That this opinion, though now veering toward the critical view, will not be eventually sustained by more thorough research is the confirmed judgment of many scholars. But with it all there are many points of interpretation formerly in dispute that may now be regarded as already settled, their essential meaning in any case being substantially the same, and thus the book so long aglow with mysteries has virtually become every man's book in the light of intelligent interpretation.

Finally, with special emphasis it should be said, that it is of prime importance for those who would understand [pg 055] the Apocalypse in its proper relations to Biblical thought, that a careful study should be made of the prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Amos, Joel, and Habakkuk, together with the Book of Psalms, in connection with the Revelation, in order to catch the inner thought of the book; also of some portion of the Apocalyptic literature, particularly the *Book of Enoch*,[63] the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, for these will furnish the atmosphere of Jewish thought in which the Apocalypse was conceived, and will provide substantial aid in understanding the peculiarities of its literary form and the general spirit of the work, as well as in freeing the mind from the trammels

of traditional interpretation. But, above all, we should not forget that the book of Revelation is a properly recognized part of canonical Scripture in practically the universal judgment of the entire Christian world, and that notwithstanding its many and persistent difficulties of interpretation, it is yet entitled to our earnest study and attentive thought as containing a living and abiding message from Almighty God, through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord to John the last of the apostles, and through him to the sin-burdened souls of men the world over.

A few authorities are named below, which will be found sufficient to give most that is of value in interpretation for the general reader; others are referred to in the foot-notes. For a fuller list, especially of the older books, consult the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopaedia*, or Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. “Revelation”; while for the later literature see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*.

FOR THE ENGLISH READER.

Preterist View:—

Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*;

Maurice, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*.

Futurist View:—

Faussett, in *Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown's Commentary*.

Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*.

[pg 056]
Progressivist View:—

Wordsworth, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*;

Barnes, *Notes on the Book of Revelation*.

Symbolist View:—

Milligan, in *Expositor's Bible*, and in *Popular (International) Commentary*;

Plummer, in *Pulpit Commentary*;

Lee, in *Bible (Speakers') Commentary*.

FOR CRITICAL STUDY.

Preterist View:—

Düsterdieck, in *Meyer's Commentary*;

Stuart, in *Commentary on the Apocalypse*.

Preterist View—Modern Critical:—

Moffatt, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*;

Swete, *Apocalypse of St. John.*

Progressivist View—Modified Historical:—

Simcox, in *Cambridge Greek Testament.*

Futurist View—Modified Historical:—

Alford, in *Greek Testament.*

FOR RECENT CRITICAL VIEWS.

Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*;

Scott's “Revelation”, in *New Century Bible*;

Dean's *Book of Revelation*;

Alexander Ramsay's “Revelation and Johannine Epistles”, in *Westminister New Test.*;

Briggs' *Messiah of the Apostles*;

Barton, art. “The Apocalypse and Recent Criticism”, in *Amer. Journ. of Theol.*, Apr. 1884;

Porter, art. “Revelation”, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*;

Bousset, art. “Apocalypse”, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*.

Moffatt, art. “Wellhausen and Others on the Apocalypse”, in the *Expositor*, Mar. 1909;

Charles, *Studies in the Apocalypse*;

Charles, *Revelation of St. John (I. C. C.)*;

Beckwith, *Apocalypse of John*.

[pg 057]
FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Fairbairn, *On Prophecy*;

Bleek, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*;

Vaughan, *Lectures on the Revelation of St. John*;

Milligan, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*; and *Discussions on the Apocalypse*;

Scott, “Book of Revelation”, in the *Practical Commentary*;

Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, Part VI;

Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*;

Introductions to the New Testament by Salmon, Dods, Bacon, Jülicher, and others;

Introductions to Revelation in the leading *Commentaries*, and in the *Modern Reader's Bible*, the *New Century Bible*, the *Temple Bible*, and the *Modern American Bible*; and the text of

Revelation in the *New Translation of the New Testament*, by Moffatt.

[pg 058]
The Text here given is that of the *American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible*, copyright 1901 by Thomas Nelson & Sons, which is used by permission of the publishers.

The arrangement of the text belongs to the present volume, and is offered as a contribution to the correct interpretation. This in itself is of the nature of a commentary, though no changes have been introduced into the body of the text. The paragraphs, however, have been changed, and many new paragraphs made, in order to emphasize the thought of the text.

[pg 059]

Scripture Text

[pg 060]
THE REVELATION
[OF JOHN]

I The Prologue

1 The Superscription

Chapter 1.

The
Book
Described

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave[64] him to show unto his servants[65], *even* the things which must shortly come to pass:

and he sent and signified *it*[66] by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw.

A
Blessing
Pronounced

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

2 The Salutation

The
Address
and
Greeting

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come[67]; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed[68] us from our sins by[69] his blood; 6 and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests

unto his God and Father[70]; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever[71]. Amen.

The Coming Christ

(7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

The Responsive Message

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who[72] is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.)

3 The Introductory Vision

The Trumpet Voice

9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience[73] *which are* in Jesus, was in the isle that is

called Patmos, for the [pg 061] word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The Glorious King-Priest

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks[74]; 13 and in the midst of the candlesticks[75] one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

A Message of

Reassurance

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was[76] dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore[77], and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in[78] my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks[79]. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks[80] are seven churches:—

4 The Seven Epistles

Chapter 2.

1 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

The Epistle to Ephesus

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks[81]: 2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience[82],

and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; 3 and thou hast patience[83] and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary. 4 But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. 5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick[84] out of its place, except thou repent. 6 But [pg 062] this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise[85] of God.

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

The Epistle to Smyrna

These things saith the first and the last, who was[86] dead, and lived *again*: 9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy[87] of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have[88]

tribulation ten days[89]. Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

The Epistle to Pergamum

These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword: 13 I know where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness[90], my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. 16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white

stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

The Epistle to Thyatira

These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass: 19 I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience[91], and that thy last [pg 063] works are more than the first. 20 But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel[92], who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants[93] to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. 22 Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her[94] works. 23 And I will kill her children with death[95]; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works. 24 But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of

Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. 25 Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations[96]: 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken[97] to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Chapter 3.

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

The Epistle to Sardis

1 These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. 2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine[98] perfected before my God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep *it*, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and

they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

[pg 064]

The Epistle to Philadelphia

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth: 8 I know thy works (behold, I have set[99] before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name. 9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship[100] before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou didst keep the word of my patience[101], I also will keep thee from the hour of trial[102], that *hour* which is to come upon the whole world[103], to try[104] them that dwell upon the earth. 11 I come quickly: hold

fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. 12 He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple[105] of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Epistle to Laodicea

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest

see. 19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath [pg 065] an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

II The Main Apocalypse

1 The Vision of God on the Throne (The Throne During Conflict)

Chapter 4.

A Door Opened in Heaven

1 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass[106] hereafter.

The Throne and the King

2 Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; 3 and he that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon.

The Four and Twenty Elders

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold.

The Seven Lamps of Fire

5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

The Four Living Creatures

6 And before the throne, as it were a sea of glass[107] like unto crystal; and in the midst[108] of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying,

> Holy, holy, holy, *is* the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come[109].

The Creation Chorus

9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever[110], 10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship[111] him that liveth

for ever and ever[112], and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

> 11 Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

[pg 066]
Chapter 5.

The Sealed Book

1 And I saw in[113] the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: 5 and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof.

The Lamb

6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders[114], a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven[115] Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

The Book Taken and Worship Rendered

7 And he came, and he taketh[116] *it* out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sing a new song, saying,

> Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them to *be* unto our God a kingdom and priests;

and they reign upon the earth.

The Redemption Chorus

11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice,

> Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,

> Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever[117].

14 And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped[118].

[pg 067]

2 The Vision of the Seven Seals (The Church's Trial Foreshown)

Chapter 6.

The First Seal

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come[119]. 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

The Second Seal

3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And another *horse* came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth[120], and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The Third Seal

5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat[121] for a shilling[122], and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

The Fourth Seal

7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death[123], and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The Fifth Seal

9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw

underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled[124] *their course*.

The Sixth Seal

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became [pg 068] black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains[125], and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great

day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

2b The Episode of the Sealed Ones (An Intervening Vision of Salvation Assured)

(A) The Sealed of Israel

Chapter 7.

The Angels Holding the Winds

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants[126] of our God on their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

The
Number
Sealed
from
the
Tribes

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were*
sealed twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Reuben twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Gad twelve
thousand;

6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve
thousand;

7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Levi twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Issachar twelve
thousand;

8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Joseph twelve
thousand;
Of the tribe of Benjamin *were*
sealed twelve thousand.

[pg 069]

(B) The Redeemed Out of All Nations

The Countless Multitude

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And they cry with a great voice, saying,

> Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

The Salvation Chorus

11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped[127] God, 12 saying,

> Amen: Blessing, and glory[128], and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be*unto our God for ever and ever[129]. Amen.

The Great Reward

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say[130] unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple[131]: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of[132] the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Chapter 8.

The Seventh Seal

1 And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

3 The Vision of the Seven Trumpets (The

World's Judgment Proclaimed)

(A) The Preparation for the Trumpets

Seven Angels Given Seven Trumpets

2 And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

The Angel with the Incense

3 And another angel came and stood over[133] the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add[134] it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with[135] the prayers of the saints, went up before God [pg 070] out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh[136] the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon[137] the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an

earthquake.

The Trumpets Made Ready to Sound

6 And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

(B) The Trumpets Sounded

The First Trumpet

7 And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The Second Trumpet

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was

cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, *even* they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

The
Third
Trumpet

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

The
Fourth
Trumpet

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

The

Eagle-Cry

(13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle[138], flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.)

Chapter 9.

The Fifth Trumpet

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. 2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And [pg 071] it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. 6 And in

those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. 7 And the shapes[139] of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. 11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name Apollyon[140].

The First Woe Ended

(12 The first Woe is past: behold there come yet two Woes hereafter.)

The Sixth Trumpet

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice[141] from the horns of the golden altar

which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates *as* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. 20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons[142], and the idols [pg 072] of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

3b The Episode of the Angel with the Book and of the Two Witnesses (An Intervening Vision of Divine Help Attained)

(A) The Angel with the Little Open Book

Chapter 10.

The Angel Coming Down Out of Heaven

1 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth:

The Thunder-Voices

And when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered *their voices*, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

The

Mystery of God to End

5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever[143], who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein[144], that there shall be delay[145] no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants[146] the prophets.

The Book Eaten

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard it* again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto

me, Thou must prophesy again over[147] many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

[pg 073]

(B) The Two Witnesses

Chapter 11.

The Temple Measured

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said[148], Rise, and measure the temple[149] of God, and the altar, and them that worship[150] therein. 2 And the court which is without the temple[151] leave without[152], and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations[153]: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

The Two Witnesses with Power

3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4

These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks[154], standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire.

Their Testimony Finished

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies[155] *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do *men* look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.

Their Resurrection and Ascension

11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons[156]: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The Second Woe Ended

(14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.)

[pg 074]

The Seventh Trumpet

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there

followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

> The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom*of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever[157].

The Victory Chorus

16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped[158] God, 17 saying,

> We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants[159] the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

Tokens of

Judgment

19 And there was opened the temple[160] of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple[161] the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

4 The Vision of Conflict (The Church-Historic World-Conflict of the Evil against the Just)

(A) The Woman and the Dragon

Chapter 12.

The Woman's Glory and the Dragon's Power

1 And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of

heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child.

The All-Ruling Man-Child

5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations[162] with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne.

The Woman's Escape

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

[pg 075]

(B) War in Heaven

Michael

Warring with the Dragon

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world[163]; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

Satan's Downfall Proclaimed

10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ[164]: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell[165] in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Persecution of the Woman and Her Seed

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man *child*. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

Chapter 13.

1 and he stood[166] upon the sand of the sea.

(C) The Two Beasts

First Beast —the

Beast from the Sea

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. 3 And [pg 076] *I saw* one of his heads as though it had been smitten[167] unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped[168] the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped[169] the beast saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue[170] forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, *even* them that dwell[171] in the heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints[172], and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. 8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship[173] him, *every one* whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that

hath been slain[174].

An Admonition to Patience

(9 If any man hath an ear, let him hear. 10 If any man[175] *is* for captivity[176], into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience[177] and the faith of the saints.)

The Second Beast —the Beast from the Land

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship[178] the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. 13 And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to

do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given *unto him* to give breath to it, *even* to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not[179] worship[180] the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right [pg 077] hand, or upon their forehead; 17 and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name.

An Admonition to Wisdom

(18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six[181].)

(D) The Lamb on Mount Zion

Chapter 14.

The Lamb and His Company

1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.

The Incommunicable Chorus

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was* as *the voice* of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out of the earth.

The Purity of the Redeemed

4 These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they

that follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

The Message of the Eternal Gospel

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings[182] to proclaim unto them that dwell[183] on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship[184] him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

The Message of Babylon's Fall

8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The Message of Doom for the Beast and His Followers

9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth[185] the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared[186] unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented [pg 078] with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever[187]; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship[188] the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.

The Test of Patience

(12 Here is the patience[189] of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.)

The Blessedness

of the Holy Dead

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth[190]: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

The Harvest of the Elect

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I *saw* one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out from the temple[191], crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe[192]. 16 And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

The Vintage of Wrath

17 And another angel came out from the

temple[193] which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage[194] of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great *winepress*, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

5 The Vision of the Seven Vials (The World's Judgment Executed)

(A) The Preparation for the Vials

Chapter 15.

The Angels with the Plagues

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, *which are* the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

The Victors by the Sea

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass[195] mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the [pg 079] beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by[196] the sea of glass[197], having harps of God.

The Chorus of Moses and the Lamb

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant[198] of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

> Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages[199]. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship[200] before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

The Temple in Heaven Opened

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple[201] of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple[202] the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with *precious* stone[203], pure *and* bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever[204]. 8 And the temple[205] was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple[206], till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

(B) The Vials Poured Out

Chapter 16.

The Command to Pour Out the Vials

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple[207], saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

The First Vial

2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became[208] a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped[209] his image.

The Second Vial

3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul[210] died, *even* the things that were in the sea.

The Third Vial

4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became[211] blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art

and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets[212], and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

[pg 080]

The Fourth Vial

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it[213] to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

The Fifth Vial

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

The

Sixth Vial

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the *river* Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that *come* from the sunrising.

5b The Episode of the Frog-like Spirits (An Intervening Vision of Warning to the Redeemed)

The Three Unclean Spirits

13 And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto[214] the kings of the whole world[215], to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

The Warning Voice

15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he

that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame).

The Gathering at Har-Magedon 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon[216].

The Seventh Vial

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple[217], from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men[218] upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations[219] fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, *every stone* about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

[pg 081]

6 The Vision of Victory (The Church's Vindication Manifested)

(A) The Mystical Babylon and Her Fall

Chapter 17.

The Judgment of the Great Harlot

1 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication.

Babylon the Harlot City

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy[220], having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in

purple and scarlet, and decked[221] with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things[222] of her fornication, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT[223], THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs[224] of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast is Told

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go[225] into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose name hath not been written in[226] the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come[227].

The Kings that War against the Lamb

9 Here is the mind[228] that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: 10 and they are[229] seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but [pg 082] they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. 13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast. 14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they *also shall overcome* that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.

The Harlot Made Desolate

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and

tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. 17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. 18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings[230] of the earth.

Chapter 18.

The Fall of the Great City Proclaimed

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold[231] of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For by the wine[232] of[233] the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness[234].

God's People Called Out of Her

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached[235] even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton[236], so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord[237] God who judged her.

[pg 083]

The Lament of the Kings of the Earth over Her Doom

9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly[238] with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

The Lament of the Merchants of the Earth

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise[239] any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice[240], and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and slaves[241]; and souls[242] of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and *men* shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning;

16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked[243] with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate.

The Lament of the Seamen from Afar

And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea[244], stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like the great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

The Holy Bidden to Rejoice

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.

The Ruin Complete

21 And a[245] strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and [pg 084] no craftsman, of whatsoever craft[246], shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

(B) The Triumph of the Redeemed

Chapter 19.

The Voice of a Great Multitude

1 After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

> Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants[247] at her hand.

The Hallelujah Chorus

3 And a second time they say[248], Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever[249]. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped[250] God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah. 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying,

> Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying,

Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

The Array of the Bride

8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The Blessedness of the Marriage Supper

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God.

Worship Refused by the Angel

10 And I fell down before his feet to worship[251] him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship[252] God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

[pg 085]

(C) The Last Things

The Conqueror on the White Horse (The Beginning of the End)

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called[253] Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he *is* arrayed in a garment sprinkled with[254] blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white *and* pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp

sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness[255] of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The Call to the Birds of Mid Heaven

17 And I saw an[256] angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains[257], and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

The Beast and the False Prophet Taken

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the

earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped[258] his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Chapter 20.

Satan Bound

1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in[259] his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years [pg 086] should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

The First Resurrection and

the Millennial Reign

> 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped[260] not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection.

The Blessedness of the Millennial Period

> (6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power[261]; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a[262] thousand years.)

Satan Loosed Again and Overthrown (The War of

Gog
and
Magog)

7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out[263] of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever[264].

The
Second
Resurrection
and
the
Final
Judgment

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book*

of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even* the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

[pg 087]

7 The Vision of the New Jerusalem (The Throne after Victory)

Chapter 21.

The New Creation

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

The Holy City

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven[265] from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

A Great Voice Out of the Throne

3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell[266] with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God[267]: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

All Things Made New

5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true[268]. 6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of

life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

The City the Bride of Christ

9 And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem from Afar

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God:

her light[269] was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: 12 having a wall great and high; having twelve gates[270], and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and [pg 088] on the south three gates[271]; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The Measure of the City

15 And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

The Materials of Her Building

18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire[272]; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth[273]; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass[274].

The Glory Within

22 And I saw no temple[275] therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple[276] thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb[277]. 24 And the nations shall walk amidst[278] the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean[279], or he that maketh[280] an abomination and a lie: but only they that are

written in the Lamb's book of life.

Chapter 22.

The River and Tree of Life

1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the midst of the street thereof[281]. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree[282] of life, bearing twelve *manner* of fruits[283], yielding [pg 089] its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The Beatific Vision

3 And there shall be no curse[284] any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants[285] shall serve him; 4 and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* on their foreheads. 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever[286].

III The Epilogue

1 The Final Words of the Angel with the Promise of Christ

The Message Reaffirmed

6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. 7 And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

Worship Again Refused by the Angel

8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship[287] before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. 9 And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship[288] God.

The Book Not to Be Sealed

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still[289]: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still.

Christ's Promise to the Victors

12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward[290] is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right[291] *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates[292] into the city. 15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolators, and every one that loveth and maketh[293] a lie.

[pg 090]

Christ the

Morning Star

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for[294] the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

2 The Closing Testimony of John

A Universal Invitation

17 And[295] the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

John's Witness and Warning

18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto[296] them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are

written[297] in this book.

A Last Promise of Hope and Prayer of Yearning

20 He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

3 The Author's Benediction

The Blessing on the Saints

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus[298] be with the[299] saints. Amen.

[pg 091]

Analysis And Notes

The Book of Revelation bears the inherent marks of a thoroughly wrought out and carefully finished literary production, showing evident traces of design and arrangement throughout, which constitute a studied setting for the remarkable series of visions that contain its chief message to the church. Behind the outer form lies the deep experience of the author who received a fresh revelation of divine truth. To him God spoke in strange visions and in a marvellous way about the divine purpose concerning his people and the great world of men: for couched though it is in the strange figures of Apocalyptic, a method of religious thought belonging to that time, it yet bears to the Christian mind indisputable marks of divine inspiration. Moved by the visions which it records, John wrote to the churches in Asia a message not only for them but for all believers in all time; for its lessons lie not alone in the events of that age, but in the wider and permanent relations of the church and the world throughout the centuries, and

they appeal to us with new force as the varying conditions continue to change with the revolving years. The lessons of the book are for us in our day no less than they have been for others in the past, and as they will be for still others in the advancing future; and though these lessons are not always easy to grasp or lightly to be understood, they are yet eminently worthy of our attentive study and patient consideration. The synthetic analysis which is here given, attempts to set forth the main thought of the Revelation as it has been interpreted by many eminent commentators, and it is presented in as concise a form as is consistent with clearness for the benefit of the general reader, for the chief purpose of the present work is to make plain the symbolic view as it has taken form in the mind of the writer. No extended discussion of the more difficult portions of the book has been attempted, for a satisfactory conclusion is more often reached by careful thought than by elaborate argument, though it has seemed best to reinforce the view presented by constant reference to well-known authorities, and also to provide a brief comparison of different opinions on the main points of disagreement for those who desire further study.

[pg 092]
The book is found upon examination to consist of three principal parts, which are those common to every finished composition, viz:—

I THE PROLOGUE, OR INTRODUCTION, Ch.

1:1-3:23;
II The Main Apocalypse, or Revelation Proper, Ch. 4:1-22:5; and
III The Epilogue, or Conclusion, Ch. 22:6-21.

This division is one generally accepted by those who have studied the book, for it is to most minds both natural and obvious, though some make the Introduction end with the first chapter, and include the Epistles to the Churches in the second part. As these, however, are not so markedly Apocalyptic in form as the chapters that follow, and do not enter into the chief message of the book, but rather serve to prepare the way for it, they are more properly regarded as part of the Introduction.

I The Prologue, Ch. 1:1-3:22

The introductory and epistolary portions of the book which occupy the first three chapters, consist of four parts, viz. the superscription, the salutation, a vision of the exalted Redeemer, and messages to the seven churches in Asia. These give the source and authority of the Revelation, convey a greeting to the seven churches that are named, set forth the present activity of Christ in his

redemptive work with the certainty of his personal return, and then present particular messages to each of the churches in Asia, which through their general condition afford a perspective view of the continuous and varied experience of the whole church in the process of redemption. These preliminary parts of the book, also, serve to introduce the great theme which is to occupy the subsequent revelation, viz. Christ and the Church through Time to Eternity. The style is at once that of Apocalyptic, though the form is less characteristic in the second and third chapters than in the first and subsequent ones; the literary construction is marked by obvious and sustained artistic skill; and the subject-matter shows a profound inner connection of thought with the visions that follow, affording a clear indication of the unity of the whole work that should not be overlooked in our study of the book.[300]

[pg 093]

1 The Superscription, Ch. 1:1-3

In the superscription the book is described, its history and contents are given (v. 1-2), and a blessing is pronounced (v. 3) upon those who read it, i. e. aloud before the congregation (ἀναγινώσκων), and those who hear and keep the things written therein, an indication

that they were expected to be understood. This blessing is the first of seven beatitudes found in the book (see App'x C), and serves to show that the office of public reader in the primitive church was established in the first century, evidently because of a general lack of education among the early converts. The book is declared to be the Revelation or Apocalypse of things about to happen,—not a revelation which has Jesus Christ for its subject,[301] but "the things which must shortly come to pass", a phrase that is best interpreted as a prophetic formula for the uncertain future which is always near with God (cf. Lu. 18:8), and not to be taken in the stricter sense of limiting the prophecy to the immediate future,[302]—to have been given of God (v. 1), and to have been made of, i. e. through or by, Jesus Christ as the communicating witness,[303] to have been sent by the instrument of an angel, and to have been testified to by John, who witnessed concerning the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ[304] which he received through the visions that are herein recorded. These introductory verses (v. 1-3) are usually regarded as an integral part of the book, though they are thought by some to have been added afterward as an introduction and authorization by the church, probably by the elders at Ephesus.[305]

2 The Salutation, Ch. 1:4-8

The salutation is an address and greeting of grace and peace to the seven churches in Asia from John, in the [pg 094] name of each person of the triune God, viz:—(1) in the name of the Father, who is designated as "him who is and who was and who is to come",[306] i. e. whose existence is alike present, past, and future, the Eternal One, and expansion of the sacred name Jehovah, the I AM, or the I WILL BE, of Hebrew historic faith (cf. Ex. 3:14, Am. R. V., marg.); (2) in the name of the Holy Spirit, who is typified by "the seven Spirits that are before his throne" as being seven-fold in his operation, i. e. complete and perfect (cf. Isa. 11:2);[307] and (3) in the name of Jesus Christ, who is presented as "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth", whose redemptive work is declared in a doxology of praise (v. 5b and 6) which is rendered unto him as the one "that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood",[308] and whose coming again is notably heralded—a pivotal thought throughout the book.[309] The descriptive phrase "the firstborn of the dead" is an evident recognition of Christ as the first to conquer death by resurrection. The closing part of the salutation (v. 7-8) is exclamatory and parenthetical, and forms a kind of prelude to all that follows, affirming the certainty of the second advent as if already present, and introducing at this point the divine witness, which is generally attributed to Christ who speaks as God, affirming himself to be the source and end of all things, the Eternal and All-Ruler, whose word stands

as surety for the fulfilment of the visions. The fact of God as All-Ruler (Παντοκράτωρ, “the Almighty”),[310] and the realization of that fact in history, “constitutes the deep undertone which pervades every part of the Apocalypse, and rises here and there into its loftiest [pg 095] strains”. Terms like this, never applied to any but God in the Old Testament, and well understood as belonging only to the Divine Being, are freely used of Christ in the Revelation, showing how fully his divine nature was realized in that stage of the church's experience. The connection of the eighth verse may properly be considered as the answering voice of Christ to the cry of John in the seventh, “Behold he cometh”!

3 The Introductory Vision (The Glorified Son of Man), Ch. 1:9-20

This vision presents a transcendent Christophany, unfolding the source of the Revelation, and introductory to all that follows throughout the book; a view of the glorified Son of Man in his exalted relation to the church as King-Priest, manifesting his dignity and authority in bold and striking imagery through a seven-fold vision.

(1) The Trumpet Voice, Ch. 1:9-11

A great voice is heard, making a special revelation to John as he partook with the saints in the tribulation of Jesus[311] in the isle of Patmos, off the coast of Asia Minor,[312] where he was banished for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, when he was in the Spirit, i. e. in the ecstatic state peculiar to the prophets, on the Lord's day;[313] speaking behind him, i. e. while the speaker was yet unseen, in a voice as of a trumpet, commanding him to write the things which he saw in a book (v. 11), and to send it to the seven churches which are then named, the chief churches in Asia, to whom the message of the Revelation is addressed as the typical representatives of all the churches throughout the world. The human name Jesus is here found twice in one verse (v. 9), and occurs in the Revelation nine (or ten) times, whereas it is seldom used by Paul and never by Peter in the Epistles. This seems to point toward the Johannine authorship, for the name that belonged to the earthly life of our Lord was not likely to be used by one who had not known Jesus in familiar fellowship.[314]

[pg 096]

(2) The Triumphant Son of Man, Ch. 1:12-13a

The divine Savior at this point appears in the vision as “one like unto a son of man”, i. e. human though transfigured, standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, or lampstands, which represent in symbol the seven churches of Asia bearing light on the earth, and in a wider sense the whole church in its completeness witnessing for the truth, for seven is the number of universality—a scene recalling the temple, and indicating Christ's triumphant and continual presence in the midst of his people.[315]

(3) The Gracious Apparel, Ch. 1:13b

The Divine One is clothed with a garment down to the foot, the mark of dignity, and is girded about with a golden girdle at the breasts as for reigning or priestly intercession, not about the loins as for toil or conflict, indicating the nature of Christ's present and continuous work on behalf of his church.

(4) The Glorious Appearance, Ch. 1:14-15, and 16c

The revealed Son of Man is majestic in form and mien, and wondrous in appearance, like the Ancient of Days in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7.9f), his head and hair like wool in purity

and majesty, his eyes penetrating and enkindling as a flame of fire, his feet awe-striking and destructive like molten brass glowing in a furnace, his voice sounding like the roar of cataracts, and his countenance like to the unclouded sun—symbols all of these of his exalted state, and perhaps intended to present a reminiscence of the transfiguration. The Greek word Χαλκολίβανος (v. 15), translated "burnished brass" by the Revisers, is of unknown origin, and occurs only here and in ch. 2:18. It is thought to have been a technical term in local use among the metal workers of Ephesus, and to apply to some alloy of copper or brass.[316] The literal interpretation of the word is "incense-brass", which suggests a metal used for making utensils in which to burn incense, evidently precious, and having a glow in the furnace, or like a furnace.

(5) The Seven Stars, Ch. 1:16a

The Glorious One has in his right hand seven stars, which, we are told (v. 20), are the angels, or heavenly [pg 097] representatives of the seven churches, i. e. Christ holds the churches in his right hand, for the stars and the angels are declared to be identical.[317] It will be seen that the seven angels, which stand as the ideal representatives of the churches throughout the first part of the Revelation, are here presented under another

symbol, as seven stars which are upheld in the hand of Christ “like a chain of glittering jewels”, thereby showing his sustaining care of the churches. The angels of the churches that are symbolized by the stars, are not to be regarded as true angelic beings any more than the stars are real stars, but are the churches themselves personified by angelic forms after the manner of the Apocalyptic. The figure is not properly applicable to the bishops, pastors, or leaders of the churches, though often so interpreted, for these are leaders upon earth, whereas the angels like the stars belong in heaven.[318]

(6) The Two-Edged Sword, Ch. 1:16b

Out of the mouth of the Conquering Christ proceeds a sharp two-edged sword,[319] the emblem of the Word of God in its penetrating power (cf. Eph. 6:17b, and Heb. 4:12) which is designed both to reprove and punish, and which serves to show that the divine Christ speaks with supreme authority.

(7) The Assuring Message, Ch. 1:17-20

The Gracious Savior reassures John, who fell at his feet as one who was dead, both by his touch and by his words as of old on the holy

mount (Mat. 17:7); declaring that he, the Son of Man, is the first cause, and final arbiter of destiny, the ever living one though once dead; affirming that he has the keys of death and of Hades,[320] i. e. through his own resurrection has forever gained the power over death, holding the key of its control, and has also the key of Hades, the invisible spirit-world, which is commonly associated with death in the New Testament [pg 098] as the general habitation of the dead during the intermediate state (not "hell", as in the Authorized Version); and reaffirming the command to John to write therefore the things which he saw in a book, viz. "the things which are", i. e. which now exist, looked at from the divine point of view as beheld in the vision, and "the things which shall come to pass hereafter", i. e. which shall be made manifest in history, those things that belong to the mystery[321] of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks, or to the mysterious and hidden future of the church of Christ in the world which the seven churches represent in its ideal unity.

The change of symbols in this vision is apt to be confusing unless we catch the distinctive meaning of each. Three different symbols are here used to represent the churches, each presenting a different point of view, viz:—(1) the angels, who represent the churches in their individual and organic life, engaged in active service for God; (2) the stars, which represent the churches in their relation to Christ, receiving and reflecting light from him

and upheld by his hand; and (3) the candlesticks, which represent the churches in their relation to the world, bearing light to men upon the earth. If these distinctions are kept in mind the interpretation will be greatly simplified. At this point it may also be well to note that the view which regards the visions in the Revelation as purely literary in origin, fails to satisfy the circumstantial account of John. On the contrary we find it is more in accord with the spirit of the record to regard them not as literary inventions in which the message is clothed, but as true visions divinely given which were, nevertheless, essentially adapted to and conditioned by the previous mental training and habits of the writer—the product of an ethical and not a magical inspiration. In fact the reality of the visions is in some sense coming now to be recognized upon psychological grounds as the natural view.[322] And it should also be seen that the studied literary setting of the visions, indicating arrangement and design upon [pg 099] the part of the seer in his record of them, does not militate against the view that the visions were real and the experience recorded an actual one. But, “even were the supposition correct that the seer had only certain truths divinely impressed upon his mind, which his poetic fancy led him to clothe in the shapes before us, it would in no degree modify either the extent of his inspiration or the value of his teaching”.[323]

4 The Seven Epistles, Ch. 2:1-3:22

The seven epistles are Christ's messages of encouragement and warning, of praise and blame, which were given to John in vision, and which are addressed to the seven churches of proconsular Asia,[324] the scene of John's later ministry, and through them to the church at large, for each epistle contains not only a message to the particular church, but "what the Spirit saith to [all] the churches". The form of epistles or letters in an apocalypse was foreign to the Jewish method of writing, but was doubtless introduced by John because the use of such letters or epistles had already become established in the church as a characteristic expression of the Christian mind.[325] These seven churches were not the only ones then existing in Asia,[326] but were evidently chosen to represent them all, and were intended through their individual experience "to exemplify the experience of the whole church in the field of history"; not, however, in numerically successive and historic stages, but the general experience of the church universal throughout all time, for seven is the symbol of universality, and the seven churches are here intended to symbolize the universal church. Each of the seven churches named occupied a strategic point of special opportunity for gospel dispersion, and they were doubtless addressed for that reason, though the message imparted was divinely intended for the whole church in all the ages. The number seven occurs so

often in the Revelation that it necessarily attracts our attention, and the book itself has not inaptly been styled “the Book of Sevens”. [pg 100] In each case, too, as here, the number has a symbolic reference, a fact that should not escape our observation, for it points the way to a general principle of interpretation, viz. that *every number used throughout the book, without exception, has an acquired symbolical meaning*,[327] i. e. its ordinary arithmetical value is ignored, or becomes subordinate, and it represents a different idea that has in some way become associated with it as a number; and this important consideration often furnishes a key to the correct interpretation. The origin of this symbolism is very early, antedating history—seven, for example, was a sacred number with the Accadian predecessors of the Semites in the remote dawn of Babylonian civilization.[328] This use probably had its rise from observations of the heavenly bodies, such as the phases of the moon lasting seven days, the seven planets of ancient astronomy, and the Pleiades, together with the occurrence of seven as a factor in gestation and in other well known phenomena, all of which served to impress upon the Eastern mind that the number was somehow inwrought in the order of nature and must therefore have a special significance. In a similar way the number ten probably had its origin as a symbol in the fact that it represented the complete number of digits on a man's hands, and formed the norm of mathematical reckoning. Other numbers, also, from some real or fancied relation to

things, became ready symbols for the Oriental mind. In the Apocalypse numbers are often introduced first in their ordinary significance, as the seven churches, and then pass easily and naturally to their symbolic meaning which is usually apparent. But it should be seen that a number does not thereby cease to have a quantitative value when it becomes symbolical, e. g. the seven churches represent a number still, though it is the number of all the churches, the whole church, and not seven units as before. It is the definite numerical value only that is lost in the symbolism, and not the entire idea of number or quantity; and the failure to recognize this fact may lead us astray in the interpretation, as for instance, in that of the thousand years in chapter twenty, where a great and complete number of years seems to be meant, and not the completeness of Satan's [pg 101] binding apart from any period of time, as held by some commentators.[329]

Each epistle is addressed to the angel of the individual church which is named, i. e. to its heavenly representative, the church personified in the form of an angel according to the prevailing symbolism of the book, a poetic form of addressing the church itself; and the message is given by authority of Christ himself,[330] who is described in veiled terms that are drawn mainly from the imagery of the preceding vision, where the exalted Redeemer is so vividly set forth; and the terms are aptly chosen to suit the particular needs of the church to which it is

sent. It has been suggested, also, that these epistles to the churches contain numerous historical allusions to events connected with the cities in which the churches were located, as for example Sardis, whose fortress had been twice captured while its people slept, is exhorted to be watchful.[331] The epistles are addressed first to the individual and historic churches named, and then through them are addressed to the whole church throughout the world, of which the number seven is representative. Each of the epistles contains seven component parts, viz:—(1) the address to the individual church, i. e. to the angel of the church who represents the church itself; (2) the command of Christ to the seer to write; (3) the title of Christ, usually taken from the vision of the glorified Redeemer in the opening chapter; (4) the praise or blame for good or ill, given to the church for the conduct of the past; (5) the divine charge or warning against special forms of sin; (6) the promise of blessing to the victors; and (7) the call to each individual Christian to hear and heed. The order in which the churches are addressed is that of a geographical circuit beginning at Ephesus, the first city of Asia, and going northward, which seems also to have been the order of their importance from the chief city downward. The literary form of this section may be regarded as a reflection or echo of the manner of the opening [pg 102] part of the rhapsody of Amos where recurrent formulæ of doom on seven nations are given (Amos ch. 1-2).[332]

(1) The Epistle to the Church in Ephesus, Ch. 2:1-7

The epistle to the church in Ephesus is Christ's message to a *declining* church, a church which had left its first love:—"Remember ... and repent". In this epistle Christ is "he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks", and "he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand", i. e. he who is continually present among the churches, and who upholds them by his power. The candlesticks are objective representations of the seven churches bearing light upon the earth, as in the prophecy of Zechariah (ch. 4:1-10) a seven-branched candlestick stands for the Jewish nation as the representative of the kingdom of God; while the seven stars, the counterpart of the candlesticks, represent the churches held in the hand of Christ shining in heaven. In this symbolism it will be seen that the stars represent the churches in their relation to Christ, while the candlesticks are intended to exhibit their relation to the world. To move the "candlestick out of its place" is a threatening of extinction to the particular church unless it repent. Those "who call themselves apostles and they are not", were probably well known pretenders of the closing part of the first century. The Nicolaitans here condemned, were an early obscure sect concerning which little is known, but who are reputed to have been libertines and seem to have denied the obligation of the moral law. The epistle is declared to contain, as we find the other epistles are also, "what

the Spirit saith to the churches", a clear indication of a wider message than to the individual community of the separate church.[333] "To eat of the tree of life" as the reward of overcoming, is a reference to the story of Eden (Gen. 3:22), and then by anticipation to the joys of the New Jerusalem which are the inheritance of the redeemed soul (cf. ch. 22:2; and *Bk. of Enoch*, 25:4-5). Paradise, a word rarely used in the New Testament and probably of Persian origin, is here employed to describe the future abiding place of the redeemed.[334] The church of Ephesus, to which [pg 103] this epistle is addressed, is the chief of the seven churches to whom John was instructed to write, though it has long since ceased to exist. The city of Ephesus, which was some sixty miles northeast of Patmos and was then a large and wealthy metropolis, has experienced more vicissitudes in its history than any other city of the Roman province of Asia. At that time it ranked first among all the cities of the province, and shortly after it became the capital; but it subsequently fell into decay, and it is now only a squalid heap of ruins.

(2) The Epistle to the Church in Smyrna, Ch. 2:8-11

The epistle to the church in Smyrna is Christ's message to a *suffering* church, a church which had endured tribulation, poverty, and the

blasphemy of the Jews:—"Fear not.... Be thou faithful". Christ is here described as "the first and the last, who was dead and lived again", a thought of special consolation for those who were about to be cast into prison in the coming persecution, and many of whom would suffer death—like Christ they would live again. There is, also, a possible allusion in this to the popular myth concerning the death and resurrection of Dionysius, the favorite deity of Smyrna,[335] with which the death and resurrection of Christ, the notable facts of the gospel, are placed in marked contrast. The recognized poverty of the church in such a rich city is remarkable, and it has been suggested that it may have been partly at least the result of pillage by a mob;[336] though more likely the feeling against the gospel in the midst of wealth like that of Smyrna was so strong as to make its message unacceptable to any but the very poor. It will be seen that the church receives no blame in this epistle, but only counsel and encouragement. The ten days of tribulation represent a period that is short but complete in itself, i. e. it has a fixed limit, for ten is the number of completeness. The crown of life promised to the victors is not the royal diadem but the victor's crown, which is the symbol of life eternal, and is the antithesis of the second death, i. e. of the soul in hell (cf. ch. 20:14; and 21:8). John may have here had in mind the crown often laid upon the head of the dead body of an earthly victor in his funeral procession—a crown of death with which the crown of life is placed in apposition. The second death by which "he

[pg 104] that overcometh shall not be hurt", is the death of the soul—not ceasing to be, but dying to the best in life—the final condemnation which sinners undergo at the judgment. Smyrna is located some forty miles north, and somewhat west, of Ephesus, and was one of the most wealthy, important, and beautiful cities of Asia Minor. It has an unbroken record from the dawn of history to the present day, and now has a population of some two hundred and fifty thousand, and is both rich and prosperous.

(3) The Epistle to the Church in Pergamus[337], Ch. 2:12-17

The epistle to the church in Pergamus is Christ's message to an *impure* church, a church which had some that held the teaching of Balaam, and others the teaching of the Nicolaitans:—"Repent ... or else I come with the sword". To this church Christ is "he that hath the sharp two-edged sword", i. e. who wields the instrument of rebuke and punishment. The location of Satan's throne in Pergamus denotes that the city was under his dominion, and may refer to the newly introduced worship of the Emperor in which that city was recognized as an important center;[338] while the death of Antipas, an otherwise unknown martyr, called "my witness, my faithful one", and also the presence of those holding the teaching of Balaam,[339] the symbolic name for a doctrine akin to the Nicolaitans, serve to show that it

was truly a place “where Satan dwelleth”. The aptness of the name lies in the similarity of Balaam's method of seducing the Israelites by licentiousness, and that of the false teachers who were introducing Antinomianism (cf. Num. 25:1-2; and 31:16). The hidden manna represents the true bread of life, and is doubtless an allusion to the pot of manna laid up before the Lord in the hidden recesses of the holy place in the tabernacle (Ex. 16:33f.). There may also be a reference to the Jewish tradition that Jeremiah [pg 105] had hidden the ark with its contents in a cave of Sinai until the advent of the Messiah (*II Macc.* 2.1), when it was be restored. The white stone is probably the jade, which has been held in high esteem in the East from the earliest times,[340] although some think it refers to the diamond. White stands as the emblem of purity, but the exact symbolism of the stone in this connection is obscure, though clear enough to the first readers of the epistle. The figure may possibly have been drawn from the Jewish sacred use of precious stones, especially of the mysterious Urim and Thummim kept in the pouch of the breastplate of the high priest, which according to Jewish tradition were inscribed with a name known only to the priest himself.[341] The gift would then imply the conferring of high-priestly privileges on those who overcome. Some, however, find in it a reference to the white pebble of acquittal used in courts of justice, or in casting the lot; others a reference to the *tessera*, or ticket, which admitted the victor in the Olympic

games to the public tables, and entitled him to the awards of his city; still others a reference to the common use of amulets and charms with a secret name or pass-word on them, in that case the white stone conferring the real power which the charm was assumed to have.[342] But more probably the reference is to a stone engraved as a seal, with the name of Christ upon it, the gift of which like the signet of a king (Gen. 41:42 and Est. 8:2f.) is regarded as bestowing something of the royal authority of Christ upon the recipient. Precious stones of different shapes were commonly used for seals, and were often unmounted and hung by a cord about the neck; and the name of the owner and of the deity whom he specially worshipped were engraved upon them.[343] Every man of rank and wealth in the East from time immemorial [pg 106] had his own seal; and among the Babylonians so constant and imperative were its uses that it was generally placed with his body in his coffin.[344] In all these interpretations the gift carries with it special privilege or advantage, though the chief virtue of the stone apparently lies in the name written upon it. The “new name” is not probably a new designation for the believer, but the new name of Christ (ch. 3:12) which is expressive of the new and more perfect revelation of him in heaven that only the redeemed can know (ch. 14:1). Many, however, regard the new name as the heavenly name of the individual Christian,[345] and this would be quite as appropriate for a seal as the name of Christ. Pergamus was

about a hundred miles north of Ephesus, and less than fifteen from the sea. It was at that time the official capital of the Province of Asia, and the seat of official authority. It ranked with Ephesus and Smyrna as one of the great cities of proconsular Asia, and though it is now chiefly "a city of magnificent ruins", it still continues to exist under the name of Bergama at the present day.

(4) The Epistle to the Church in Thyatira, Ch. 2:18-29

The epistle to the church in Thyatira is Christ's message to a *struggling* church, a church which had shown love and faith, ministry and patience:—"Hold fast till I come". Christ is called "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished [or molten] brass", i. e. he who is divine, and whose all-searching sight and destroying footstep will surely recompense the evil (cf. Dan. 10:6). It is interesting to note that the title "Son of God" which is here used is not found elsewhere in the book, though the divine personality of Christ is so evident throughout. Jezebel, the self-styled prophetess that the church had tolerated, but who with her children is about to be punished with death, is probably the symbolic name of a class or leader in the church, [pg 107] seducing it to sin.[346] The angel of the church is regarded as the weak

Ahab who allows himself to be the tool of this new Jezebel.[347] "The deep things of Satan" designate the mysteries of the false doctrine here condemned.[348] "The morning star" to be given to those who overcome,[349] is such a revelation of Christ himself (ch. 22:16b) made to the redeemed when the night of earth is over as will usher in the morning of eternal day—the beginning of the future and ever progressive revelation of God. The titles applied to Christ in this epistle, "Son of God", and "morning star", have suggested a possible contrast in thought with Apollo, the sun-god worshipped at Thyatira, though such an allusion is quite uncertain. The epistle to this church is the central one of the seven, and is the longest as well as in some respects the most solemn of all the epistles. Thyatira lay about forty miles southeast from Pergamus, and was an important and wealthy city in the northern part of Lydia, though it never became a leading city of Asia. The modern name of the town is Ak-Hissar, "the white castle".

(5) The Epistle to the Church in Sardis, Ch. 3:1-6

The epistle to the church in Sardis is Christ's message to a *dying* church, a church which had a name as living and yet in a sense was dead:—"Establish the things that remain". Christ is designated as "he that hath the seven

Spirits of God, and the seven stars", i. e. he that hath the Holy Spirit, whom the seven Spirits represent in his sevenfold or multiple activity, and—as seems to be implied by connecting the seven Spirits with the seven stars or angels of the churches—imparts the Spirit to the churches, upon which their life so fully depends. This church receives only rebuke, but the rebuke given is for [pg 108] lack of spiritual life rather than for any special form of sin. It is declared to have no works fulfilled before God—"before my God", a Johannean phrase—and is exhorted to "remember ... and repent", for Christ "will come as a thief";[350] but the "few names [or persons] in Sardis that did not defile their garments" are promised that they shall walk with Christ "in white". The white garments here promised to the victors are emblems of the perfect purity and heavenly state of the glorified (cf. *Bk. of Enoch*, 90:31);[351] while to blot one's name out of the book of life,[352] a fate from which those who overcome are declared to be exempt, is to cease to have any part in the life eternal—a figure drawn from the custom of striking out the names of the dead from the list of citizens. Not only shall the name of him that overcometh be found in the register of the living, but it shall also be acknowledged before God and the angels. The command to "Watch" was a fitting exhortation for a city that was a well-nigh impregnable fortress, and yet had twice been seized by its enemies because of neglect within its walls.[353] The exhortation to "hear what the Spirit saith to the churches", in the

last four of the epistles, it will be seen, follows instead of precedes the promise to the victors. This does not, however, imply that a distinction is thereby intended between the churches, dividing them into two groups, the first consisting of three and the second of four, the former faithful and the latter faithless, a view held by some.[354] The difference is conceded to be chiefly one of "tone ... which it is easier to feel than to describe",[355] and it must be said that for most minds it does not exist. The church in Philadelphia, among the last four, is a steadfast church, while the church at Pergamus, among the first three, is an impure church in the view of many careful interpreters; and Ephesus has evidently gone back, while Thyatira has gone forward. The city of Sardis, to which this letter was addressed, lay about thirty miles south-east of Thyatira, and was anciently one of the most [pg 109] famous cities of Asia; but even in John's time it was "a town of the past ... decayed from its former estate ... and it is now only a ruin, with a tiny village called Sart, while the town is Saliki, about five miles east".[356]

(6) The Epistle to the Church in Philadelphia, Ch. 3:7-13

The epistle to the church in Philadelphia is Christ's message to a *steadfast* church, a

church which had kept his word and had not denied his name:—"Hold fast ... that no one take thy crown". Christ is set forth as "he that is holy, he that is true", i. e. he who possesses these attributes which are recognized as divine; and "he that hath the key of David", i. e. he who has full control in the kingdom of God, of which the kingdom of David was the enduring type (cf. Isa. 22:22), he who grants or withholds according to his will. These titles of Christ, it will be seen, are not taken from the introductory vision, like most of those in the seven epistles, but from the Old Testament, probably, as has been suggested, because of the number of Jewish Christians in the Philadelphian church. The "door opened" is one of opportunity for service afforded by the position of Philadelphia on the borders of Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia.[357] Those "that say they are Jews and they are not", are men untrue to their Judaism in rejecting the promised Messiah; for to John's mind it was evident that only such Jews as believe in Jesus could belong to the real people of God. "The hour of trial" (Gr. τοῦ πειρασμοῦ—of *the* trial), "that hour which is to come upon the whole world", seems to be here equivalent to "the great tribulation" spoken of by our Lord (Matt. 24:21), and serves to introduce that element of shadow which ever hung in the background of Apocalyptic perspective. But the crisis at hand is not necessarily the end; the general tenor of the Revelation would rather show that it is only one of many crises that constantly progress toward the end.[358] The reward of overcoming is to be

made “a pillar in the temple of God”, i. e. in the ναὸς or inner sanctuary of [pg 110] the heavenly temple where God dwells, not so much for support as for glory and for beauty, like the pillars of brass in Solomon's temple (I K. 7:15f.), though perhaps with the additional idea of permanence and strength (cf. *II Esdra.* 2.15).

The pillar was not only a prominent part of ancient temples, but was often sculptured in human shape[359]—a beautiful conception of man's relation to religion. Also the name of God, of the city of God, and of the Son of God, Christ's own new name known only to himself, are to be written upon the victors in token of absolute divine ownership—three, the sign of the spiritual, being perhaps also in mind in the use of three names. Philadelphia, which lay about twenty-eight miles southeast from Sardis, receives unmixed praise, and the city remains almost unchanged unto this day, though it has been transformed into the Mohammedan town of Ala-Sheker, “the reddish city”, a name derived from the speckled, red brown hills around. It is renowned as having had the most glorious history of all the cities of Asia Minor in the long struggle against the Turks;[360] and it is a remarkable fact that the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, the two which receive no censure in these epistles, both continue to exist unto the present time.

(7) The Epistle to the Church in Laodicea, Ch. 3:14-22

The epistle to the church in Laodicea is Christ's message to a *self-deceived* church, a church which had grown lukewarm and was neither cold nor hot:—"Be zealous ... and repent". In this final letter Christ is called "the Amen [cf. Isa. 65:16, R. V. marg.], the faithful and true witness",[361] as a sure guaranty of the fulfilment of the promises; and he is also declared to be "the beginning of the creation of God", i. e. not, indeed, the first whom God created, for Christ is not a creature, but rather he is the primal source and causative agent in divine creation,[362] the One who began the creation of God, whether the material creation that waxeth old or the new creation that endureth [pg 111] forever. The church is openly rebuked for a tepid Christianity that is nauseous to Christ, a religion that is "neither cold nor hot". Laodicea was a city of trade and enterprise, but John regarded the church as "devoid of initiative" in Christian work. The phrase "thou sayest I am rich ... and have need of nothing", perhaps reflects the boast of the city which, proud of its wealth, had lately refused help from the liberality of the Emperor after being destroyed by an earthquake (A. D. 60); and the exhortation "I counsel thee to buy of me gold", is perhaps a reference to the heavenly riches as far surpassing the earthly which the people of the city possessed. The "white garments", the type of a pure life, may be here intended to be put in contrast with those produced from

the glossy black wool of the sheep for which the place was noted; and the "eye-salve" to be contrasted with the noted eye-powder of the neighboring temple of Asklepios, as the restorer of spiritual vision.[363] Laodicea during the Roman period attained great prosperity, and was the meeting place of the Council of Laodicea in A. D. 361, but has long since been ruined and deserted. It lay some sixty miles southeast of Philadelphia, and east of Ephesus, in the valley of the Lycus, and was the leading bishopric of Phrygia throughout the Christian period.[364] In this closing epistle of the seven the climax of promise is reached in the assurance that "he that overcometh" shall sit with Christ in his Messiah throne (v. 21), i. e. shall share with him in the glory and rule of the church triumphant. This promise seems to take a forward glance to the vision of the next two chapters, especially to the view of the Lamb in the midst of the throne. A preparation is thus made for the sudden transition from the introduction and epistles to the chief visions of the book, after the closing words of this epistle have been written. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," is a final voice of admonition and warning to the church in Laodicea, to each of the seven churches in Asia, and then through them to the whole church throughout the world in all time, exhorting them to hear and obey the message given in each and all of the seven epistles.

[pg 112]

II THE MAIN APOCALYPSE, Ch. 4:1-22:5

The Revelation Proper, which occupies the chief portion of the book, is a symbolic view of the great spiritual conflict of the ages, reviewing the whole course and outcome of the far-reaching struggle between the church and the world, with the multiple and diverse forces that are engaged in it, and setting forth the absolute decisiveness of the final issue. It consists of a series of seven visions which undertake to solve the apparent anomalies of God's present rule among men by affording recurrent glimpses of the working out of a great, comprehensive, underlying plan,—a providential and moral order in the world that is divine and sovereign, interpenetrated with a concurrent redemptive purpose that is gracious and elective,—which leads on through progressive stages of trial and warfare, of threatening and judgment, to the complete and final overthrow and punishment of all the wicked and to the full and glorious vindication and triumph of all the holy. The seven visions, when carefully examined, will be seen to be progressive in their revelation;

for while they do not follow any line of temporal succession, they yet show a progress of thought and movement throughout. Beginning with the vision of God on the throne, a vision of sovereignty, they advance in manifest order through the vision of the seven seals, a vision of trial, and the vision of the seven trumpets, a vision of threatening, to the vision of conflict, a vision of warfare, which is central to all and furnishes a key to the general interpretation of the book. Then by a scale of descending climax they pass on to the vision of the seven vials, a vision of judgment, followed by the vision of victory, a vision of vindication, and this again by the vision of the New Jerusalem, a vision of triumph, which reveals the final goal of Christian hope in the immediate presence of God.[365] The purpose of the Apocalypse is thus disclosed to be interpretative of God's plan of the ages, an unfolding of the drama of destiny, in which, notwithstanding all apparent contradictions and present reverses, he is yet ever leading on to full and final victory in the end—through all the conflict he is winning, even against appearances, and will triumph at last,—a view full of encouragement for tried and disheartened Christians of the first and each succeeding century. Why God permitted [pg 113] this struggle to be begun and then let it continue throughout the centuries, why he ever allowed sin to find a place among his moral creatures, is a topic nowhere entered upon or discussed throughout the book. It is evidently recognized as belonging to the unrevealed

mysteries of God which lie outside the sphere of the present Revelation. But that he overrules all the apparently inapt and sinful conditions of this world for the ultimate good of his kingdom, and that he will victoriously triumph at last, is the assuring witness of the whole series of visions. The Apocalyptic form, we find, becomes more marked and definite in this main portion of the book, and the difficulties of interpretation are correspondingly increased; for they are no longer chiefly those of grammatical exegesis and historical allusion, but rather the elucidation of a body of mysterious symbols. The purpose and limits of the present volume forbid the discussion of many of the exegetical difficulties, and serve to confine attention mainly to the meaning of the symbolism as the chief subject concerning which there is wide difference of opinion. Questions of grammatical, or grammatico-historical, exegesis will be found more fully considered in the various commentaries to which the reader is referred in the footnotes. The visions and episodes into which the main part of the book is properly divisible, are given separately in the following analysis, i. e. the seven seals, trumpets, and vials are each considered in order consecutively, and the episodes which intervene are taken up after each sevenfold vision is complete, in order that they may be better understood. This preserves the connection of the seven in the series, and emphasizes by itself the lesson of the episodes which are interjected into the natural order.

I The Vision of God on the Throne (A Vision of Sovereignty). Ch. 4:1-5:14

The opening vision of the seven chief visions in the Revelation is a Theophany, revealing the majesty of the divine glory and the might of the sovereign rule of God as the abiding source of the church's confidence in the midst of trial and distress, and as the unfailing ground of faith in the fulfilment of the revelation that follows. This vision of the fifth and sixth chapters is preparatory to those that deal with the present and future prospects of the church upon earth, and with this in view it sets forth [pg 114] the causal and higher relations upon which the history of the church depends, viz. God's sovereignty in creation and in redemption; for it is only in relation to these two great abiding facts of the divine activity that the passing events of time have their true meaning. We look first upon the stability of the eternal throne, and upon the person of the divine atoning Lamb, and then we are better prepared to understand the drama of history, and to view with equanimity the dread scenes of crisis and conflict which belong to the lot of the church upon earth. The scene described in the fourth and fifth chapters, of the eternal throne with those who are attendant upon it, and of the Lamb in the midst of it, constitutes a proem to the succeeding visions, and may be thought of as continuing throughout and forming the background for all that follows, in the light of which it must be viewed and its meaning

interpreted. In the fifth chapter the action proper to the Revelation begins with the taking of the sealed book, though some regard the action as beginning with the sixth chapter in the opening of the seals. The present vision is introduced with the phrase “after these things” (v. 1), which does not indicate an interval of time but rather a succession of events, and always marks a break in the connection and a new phase of the revelation.

1 The Throne and the King, Ch. 4:1-3, 5a, and 6a

A door is opened in heaven that the seer may look in, and the trumpet voice of ch. 1:10 is heard again, saying, “Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter”, the further announcement of a prophetic vision, the sign not only that eternal verities are to be revealed, but that earthly things are to be seen from the heavenly point of view. And we are told that straightway John “was in the Spirit”, i. e. he became conscious of an additional impulse of divine rapture, for he was already in the Spirit (ch. 1:10); and then the throne of God, the seat of the divine government, is seen in the eternal splendor of repose, the reflection of the divine sovereignty, surrounded by a rainbow of emerald green arching above it, the emblem of God's covenant mercy (Gen. 9:13), and sending forth lightnings, thunders,

and voices, the tokens of divine power, majesty, and judgment. The divine Person is presented as enthroned, but is not named, and is described only by comparison, [pg 115] a touch of reverent reserve as consonant with religion as it is true to art. His appearance is glorious like jasper and sardius, the last and first of the precious stones on the breastplate of the highpriest, and part of the foundation stones of the heavenly city.[366] The pure jasper and the red sardius are the apparent symbols of purity and justice (cf. Ezek. 1:26, and 10:1; Dan. 7:9; *Bk of Enoch* 14:18f.). Before the throne, we are told, there is "as it were, a sea of glass[367] like unto crystal", the symbol of the calm and fulness of life in God's completed kingdom in contrast with the stormy sea of earthly nations, the calm of the heavenly life in antithesis with the turmoil of the earthly. This seems to be the more natural interpretation of the passage, yet the symbolism of the sea in the Revelation has been interpreted with a good deal of freedom, and there is wide difference of opinion concerning its meaning. It is regarded by many as the symbol of purification the antitype of the laver before the tabernacle, while others find in it a type of the eternal fulness of joy in the presence of God. Some think the sea is placed before the throne as a symbol of the former trial and conflict of the earthly life through which the saints have passed to reach the presence of God, and that it has now become a perpetual memorial of victory, for the sea is glassy and quiet as the sign that the conflict is over.[368] Other late

writers connect the sea with early Hebrew ideas of the waters before the firmament (Gen. 1:7), traces of which continue to appear in Apocalyptic literature, and hold that this conception underlies the symbolism of the molten sea in Solomon's temple and forms the basis of the present description.[369] With figures so flexible as these it is quite possible that different thoughts have been included, for the sea was closely interwoven with the early stage of Israel's history, and may have become a symbol covering a wide range of correlative ideas. But however we may interpret the meaning of the symbolism, the presence of the sea in the vision undoubtedly serves to enhance the [pg 116] majesty and splendor of the scene, and may have been introduced partly for that purpose, though the sea undoubtedly had a permanent place in Hebrew thought.

2 The Four and Twenty Elders, Ch. 4:4, 10 and 11

The vision presents the worship of heaven in the forms of earth for our apprehension. The elders (Gr. “presbyters”) are the ideal representatives of the redeemed church,[370] who are clothed in white raiment and placed round about the throne wearing golden crowns and sitting on lesser thrones reigning with Christ, the fitting tokens of royal dignity and authority, and of their triumphant victory

through him who is their Saviour. They are ever active in service, casting their crowns before the throne and him that sitteth thereon as they worship, and joining in every chorus of adoration.[371] Their number is that of the twelve patriarchs and apostles combined, indicating that they represent the church of both dispensations, the saints of the Old and New Testaments. They are not, however, the twelve patriarchs and apostles themselves enthroned, as suggested by some, but ideal beings who have a representative character. Their number, twice twelve, i. e. twice the national number of Israel, aptly symbolizes the glorified church of all the ages.[372] Some find in these elders a group of angelic beings who are attendants of the divine glory and whose presence in the heavenly temple was a part of ancient Jewish tradition, as in the *Judgment of Peter*, where it is said, "For there are four and twenty elders, twelve upon the right hand and twelve upon the left."[373] There is no reason to infer, however, that the Greek term "presbyters", or "elders", with its definite meaning in the New Testament church, is otherwise used in the Apocalypse, even though the elders are here the representatives of a class. It is quite possible that the earlier use of the four and twenty elders in Apocalyptic literature may have been the occasion of their introduction here, but there was nothing in the usage of the past to prevent its modified application in a Christian sense so natural as this in the first century; on the contrary it is quite in accord with the [pg 117] gradually progressive

method of Apocalyptic thought that they should be introduced here to represent the church enlarged by New Testament accessions. It is certainly quite beside the mark to affirm that this idea of the church as a combination of the Old and New Testament saints is "medieval";[374] when it is found so clearly in the Epistles of Paul.

3 The Seven Lamps of Fire (or Torches), Ch. 4:5b

These lamps are seen burning before the throne which they serve to illumine, recalling the seven-branched candlestick in the tabernacle, and they are seven in number, doubtless, to indicate their fulness or completeness. We are told that the lamps "are [i. e. are the symbol of] the seven Spirits of God"; they are, therefore, evidently designed to represent the Holy Spirit throughout the Revelation, the seven Spirits that are before the throne (ch. 1:4) and that serve to denote the fulness of the Spirit's operation, his manifold energy in contradistinction to the unity of his person. The fitness of fire, or a flaming torch, to symbolize the illuminative influence of the Spirit is quite evident, throwing light upon the throne and revealing God to men, but the use of seven torches, like that of seven Spirits, is peculiar to the Revelation, and is introduced, one is constrained to think, for a special purpose.

That the Holy Spirit is indicated by this symbol throughout is shown by the context (cf. chs. 1:4 and 3:1), but it is evidently used here to set forth the Spirit from a particular point of view, i. e. to represent in a concrete form the divine perfection of the Spirit as displayed in his multiple activities. It seems to be an echo from the vision of Zechariah (ch. 3:9, and 4:10) where the divine pervasive insight is represented by the "seven eyes of the Lord", (cf. also Rev. 5:6, "the seven eyes of the Lamb").

4 The Four Living Creatures, Ch. 4. 6b-9

The four living creatures (cf. Ezek. 1:5f.),—which are not to be thought of as "beasts" even in a good sense, as in the Authorized Version, but rather as in the Greek, "the living ones", which gives a better idea,—are seen "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne", evidently indicating their function in the heavenly court, to wait upon the divine Person, though their exact arrangement [pg 118] in the vision is not so clear.[375] These are composite creature-forms that are manifestly to be identified with the cherubim of the Old Testament. Each creature consists of four representative forms of animal life combined in one, viz. that of the lion, the ox, the eagle, and man, together producing a strange, anomalous figure which is generally thought to personify wild animals, domestic

animals, birds, and man, as possessing a common physical life, or created life in its entirety represented by its higher and more notable forms. In the Revelation each has a different face, according to the animal form which is made prominent, and not four faces as in Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:5-14), the individual life being thereby made more manifest. These living ones are ideal symbols of the physical creation, especially of all created life, and represent in the vision the entire earthly creation as sharing in the benefits of redemption,[376] manifesting the divine glory, and waiting upon God. They are used in the Old Testament as impressive symbols of the divine presence, and Jehovah is known as “he that dwelleth between the cherubim”, (Am. R. V. “sitteth above”—marg. “is enthroned”, i. e. upon the cherubim),[377] a reflection of the thought embodied in the arrangement of the ark of the covenant, where the mercy seat with the shekinah flame was placed between the cherubim. In John's vision the living creatures are seen in closest proximity to the throne, and they lead the heavenly choir in an unceasing song of praise (the Creation Chorus, v. 8-11), the closing verse of the song indicating their function in the heavenly court to glorify God, as also the part they subsequently have in the song of the redeemed (the Redemption Chorus, ch. 5:13) reflects the nature of their worship. They are full of eyes, the sign of their all-seeing watchfulness; they have three pairs of wings, the symbol of their spiritual ministry, for three is the sign of the spiritual as the wings

are of activity; and they are four in number while each is fourfold to indicate their relation to the organic world, for four is always the earth number. Also, they rest not day and night, showing the characteristic of life in its fullest energy and ceaseless activity, [pg 119] saying “Holy, holy, holy,” i. e. “holy” thrice repeated,—three a symbol of the divine,—corresponding to the Trisagion of Isaiah's prophecy (ch. 6:3), declaring the holiness of God, the All-Ruler, as especially revealed in creation, all created beings ministering to the manifestation of the divine glory. The identity of the living creatures with the cherubim of the Old Testament is generally recognized, but the origin of the idea of the cherubim in connection with the worship of Jehovah is as obscure as the actual form is indefinite, though probably derived from a primitive stage of religious thought among the Semitic people, and early incorporated as a symbol in the religion of Israel. Apparently the form and conception varied somewhat through time, as will be seen by comparing Ezekiel's description with that which is given here, though the general idea remained the same. Some think the cherubim to have been originally the storm-clouds personified, regarded as supporting the divine throne and surrounding the divine Person, while the seraphim represented the lightning-flash revealing God to men. Others regard them as unidentified nature-forces idealized in forms of life, and traditionally associated with the throne of God. But whatever their origin, their meaning in

Scripture is plain, viz. the physical creation waiting upon God.[378]

5 The Sealed Book (or Scroll), Ch. 5:1-5

A new phase of the vision now begins with chapter five, indicated by the words “And I saw”, setting forth the glory and honor of the exalted Redeemer, and indicating the divine purpose through him to throw light upon the plan of God for the ages. A sealed book or scroll, the sign that its contents are hidden, and written within and without, i. e. upon both sides, or within and also on the back,—filled to its very margins like the roll in Ezekiel (ch. 2:9-10),—indicating the exceeding fulness of its contents and the completeness of the divine plan, is seen lying “in [or upon] the right hand of him that sat on the throne”. This book, which at first no one can be found to [pg 120] open, apparently contains God's multitudinous and unrevealed purposes concerning the future course of the church in the world,—as is afterward more fully indicated by the nature of the things portrayed when the seals are broken,—for it evidently pertains to the mysteries of the kingdom of God on earth, part of which are about to be disclosed to John.[379] The book is closed by seven seals, a perfect number, the symbol implying that it is perfectly sealed or fully closed,[380] a roll apparently sealed in sections, perhaps with

the end of the parchment fastened down by the seals to its staff so that it cannot be opened except by one having authority to break the seals.[381] The book itself, it should be noted, is never read at any period of the vision, showing that what it contains is not fully disclosed, but as the seals are broken the general nature of the contents of each section is symbolically portrayed in the form set forth in the succeeding vision of the seals.

6 The Lamb, Ch. 5:6-8a

At this point in the vision the divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, appears in order to open the seals, portrayed as the Lamb of God, the recognized atoner for sin, a symbol of striking power to every one familiar with the Old Testament system of sacrifices. The importance of opening the seals had been already indicated in the vision (ch. 5:2f.) by the appearance of a strong or mighty angel, the sign of high rank and great power, proclaiming with a great voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?” And when no one was found “in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth”, i. e. in the place of the spirits of the dead—a phrase equivalent to saying that no one could be found in all the universe—the prophet wept much, showing his deep interest and bitter disappointment when his expectation seemed [pg 121] about to fail.

But one of the elders, a representative of the redeemed church, points out to John him who is able to open the book because he “hath overcome”, indicating the glorified Redeemer as the source of help.[382] He is described by the elder as “the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah” (Gen. 49:9), and “the Root of David” (Isa. 11:1), indicating his kingly[383] and prophetic relations to Israel; but when he appears to John's wondering view it is in sacrificial form as the Lamb of God,[384] the sign of his priestly relation to his people, bearing marks as though he had been slain, but now standing in living power in the midst of the throne, the center of all attention and the glorified object of all worship, alike the agent of redemption and the consummation of sacrifice. The words “in the midst of the throne” may mean in the center of the throne and encircled by it, or between the throne and those surrounding it. Some regard the throne as a semi-circle in the open side of which the Lamb stands, and within which are placed two of the living creatures, with the other two at the back, while the elders surround the throne, and the many angels form the outer circle,[385] a view that is helpful to those who wish detail in such matters, for the chief thought in the symbolism is sufficiently plain. It may also be worth while to note how clearly this symbolism implies that the redeemed church, represented by the elders, stands nearer to the throne of God than even the angels.[386] The seven horns of the Lamb symbolize the fulness of his power, for the horn is the Hebrew emblem of power

as seven is of fulness or completeness of quality; and his seven eyes represent the perfection of his vision and knowledge, seeing with the omniscient eyes of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:10) who proceedeth alike from the Father [pg 122] and the Son.[387] He takes the book out of the right hand of God as a token of his rightful authority, an act full of meaning, for he alone has prevailed and has power to open the book and to reveal God's purposes because he has redeemed the church and himself directs the path of her history. In this sublime vision of the Lamb in the midst of the throne we may be truly said to have reached "the point of highest dramatic interest in the whole book".

7 The Heavenly Worship, Ch. 5:8b-14

The taking of the book is followed by an act of profound worship; the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, the instrument of praise, and a golden bowl full of incense, representing the prayers of the saints, which they offer before God. Then they voice their thought in a new song, the song of the redeemed (the Redemption Chorus), which is rendered unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, declaring him worthy that hath been slain to take the book and to open the seals, and "to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might,

and honor, and glory, and blessing",—a sevenfold or complete ascription of praise—who hath redeemed his people with his blood out "of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation",—a fourfold or world-wide redemption for all peoples[388]—"and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth", even now in the midst of trials, in a spiritual sense which though imperfect foreshadows and assures their complete spiritual reign in the new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. This song is sung by the four living creatures as the representatives of the whole creation who unitedly rejoice in the work of redemption together with man, and by the four and twenty elders who represent [pg 123] the church of all time, the personal subjects of redemption; and it is chorused by an innumerable company of angels, God's sinless creation, who are described as consisting of "ten thousand times ten thousand", i. e. the square of a myriad, a hundred millions in number (or, as the words may mean, "myriads of myriads" i. e. hundreds of millions), and in addition "thousand of thousands", i. e. millions more, —a symbolical expression for a numberless host; and it is echoed by "every created thing which is in the heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea", i. e. it is re-echoed from every created being throughout the universe. Thus the Chorus of Creation, wonderful as it was, is surpassed by the Chorus of Redemption: and the four living creatures who represent creation said in full

accord, “Amen”, while the four and twenty elders “fell down and worshipped” him that liveth forever and ever. The opening of the seals then follows, and because of its widely different bearing from that which precedes, is usually considered as forming a separate vision, though the transition is not otherwise marked than by a change of action and progress of thought.

II The Vision of the Seven Seals (A Vision of Trial). Ch. 6:1-17, and 8:1

The vision of the seven seals is a prophetic delineation of the trials and triumphs of the church of Christ throughout all her history, especially from the days of John to the end of the world, depicted in the symbols of Apocalyptic. These trials fall upon all men in common, and from another point of view are also judgments upon the sinful world, but they are regarded here chiefly as involving the church in suffering, and as preparing the way for the triumph of the kingdom of God, the coming of our Lord, and the final consummation of all things. The opening of the seals by Christ indicates his purpose of revealing the hidden contents of the book which he had taken from the right hand of God (ch. 5:7), and the number of the seals (seven) shows the completeness of the series.

The order of the seals is progressive, but they have no definite or categorical time-relation; they regard only the ceaseless swing of the ages ever sweeping on toward the final consummation. The underlying divine purpose of testing men by moral struggle is apparent [pg 124] throughout; the trials set forth are disciplinary to those who believe, but punitive to those who resist. The form of trials in the vision is that of an illustrative symbolism which should not be limited in interpretation to the few particular kinds of trouble that are described, but should be taken as representative of the whole round of sorrows endured by God's people throughout all time, a prophetic forecast which, though receiving an immediate fulfilment in the experience of the early church, has yet had and will have a further and wider fulfilment throughout the course of the ages. The subordinate element of judgment upon the wicked in the vision is implied rather than stated, except under the sixth seal; nevertheless upon further reflection it may be clearly seen, for the advancing conquest of Christ includes the overthrow of the wicked, while the sorrows of war, famine, and death fall upon them without any consolation like the recompense of the righteous, the avenging of the martyrs is foretold as eventually to be visited upon them, and amidst the terrors of the final judgment they find no availing refuge, but cry to the mountains and to the rocks to fall upon them to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. This bearing of

the trials of the seals, revealing judgment upon the world, should not be overlooked in our interpretation, though we should not lay special stress upon it, for it is not the foremost thought in mind.

In entering upon the more obscure portions of the book it may be well to remind the reader that the interpretation will be much simplified, and many of the difficulties will disappear, if we regard all the mysterious action in these visions as in the broadest sense symbolical, and not requiring detailed application. And although an effort may well be made to recover what has been called the "ground-view" of the Apostle, i. e. the natural application of the prophecy that lay in the immediate horizon of history and belonged to the conditions of his time, yet this cannot be regarded as absolutely essential to the correct interpretation for us and for all ages. We should not forget that we are dealing with what is really a great creative poem in prose, containing idealized conceptions of widely pervasive principles, and therefore its true interpretation lies in facts of universal experience rather than in the special circumstances which helped [pg 125] to give it form in the mind of the writer, but beyond which he passed with poetic freedom to grasp the larger ideal—for to deny that John had any such ideal in mind is to do injustice both to his prophetic and poetic insight. And if in our anxiety to reproduce the author's native horizon, we allow the basis of historical fact to become the chief matter of concern, we are

sure to lose in literary insight in the interpretation of the book far more than we gain through clearness of local perspective. For it is always to be reckoned “amongst the impediments to the study of literature ... that the personality of the author, and the circumstances of actual life, are forever being allowed to interpose between a creative poem and the mind of the reader”,[389] to the constant hindrance of any free following of the author's constructive idealization. And it is only by avoiding this narrowing influence of realism that we are at all likely to reach the heart of the Apocalypse.

1 The Opening of the First Seal, Ch. 6:1, 2

The Lamb as the ruler and revealer of destiny opens the seals. At the call of one of the four living creatures, “come”,[390] a white horse and his rider, who bears a bow, the sign of warfare, and receives a crown, the token of victory, appear in view, representing Christ going forth conquering and to conquer,[391] a vision depicting the beginning and trend of the gospel age: the symbol of the victory of Christ's cause attained through conflict, Christianity triumphing in the earth,—for the progress of the life of the church is viewed like that of the national life of Israel as marked by constant conflict. The assurance of victory is made to precede the revelation of trial as a ground of comfort and confidence

throughout the succeeding seals. We may properly regard the contents of this seal as a present view of the onward course of the [pg 126] church, the details of which are to be imagined rather than described, a suggestive picture which stamps itself upon the mind, for the figure of the crowned and conquering Christ once distinctly seen can never be effaced but marks all our after-thought of him. This vision was realized in some measure in the splendid growth of the church in the first and following centuries, but the full realization of its promise lies in the fulness of the ages (ch. 19:11-21)—Christ is ever moving on through the years to final victory.

Many historical interpreters find in this rider the symbol of conquest, especially of judgment on the Roman Empire by the Parthians, indicated by the bow, their usual weapon, and premonitory of the end.[392] In that case the first seal, like the succeeding ones, would indicate a form of trial to the church. Others see in the rider the sign of Roman conquest, and in the subsequent seals precursors of the destruction of Jerusalem, assuming the earlier date of the book. These views, however, fail to recognize the close similarity and apparent identity of the rider in this vision with the one on the white horse in chapter nineteen (v. 11) who is evidently divine;[393] nor do they agree with the above view as to the scope of the seals, but limit them to the first century, while in the interpretation given in this work they reach forward throughout the history of the church

to the end of time. We must be duly careful, according to the symbolic view, not to limit the prophecy to too narrow a scope in its complete fulfilment, and especially not to exclude the world-wide and universal reference, even though it be regarded as the secondary meaning, since to many minds this is the essential and larger thought in the vision. For we should not forget that while the visions of the Apocalypse, like the voices of prophecy and the parables and teachings of our Lord, had their immediate occasion and purpose, yet this becomes in turn the ground and instrument of a wider and permanent divine message to all mankind, and that this is the message which is our chief concern.

[pg 127]

2 The Opening of the Second Seal, Ch. 6:3, 4

At the call of the second living creature, “Come”, a red horse and his rider appear, to whom is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth: the symbol of war, and of consequent trial to the church. The blood-red horse with his armed rider betokens the carnage of battle, and suggests all the horrors of bloodshed with its accompanying train of suffering. It is a prediction not of any particular war or wars, but of war in general, as the “wars and rumors of wars” in our Saviour's discourse (Mt. 24:6). And it was

only as it was “given unto him” (v. 4), we are told, that the rider could accomplish his mission, thereby indicating the divine authority, limitation, and restraint. The sword is the same as the sacrificial knife, and the term used for slaying in the passage is the Greek term for killing the sacrificial victim, which may be intended to imply that the slaughter of the saints is to be included with others.[394] The contents of this seal were realized to some extent in the Jewish war connected with the fall of Jerusalem, and in the subsequent wars of the Roman Empire which entailed great suffering upon the church as well as upon the world. The form of the prophecy, however, does not preclude reference to the then past as well as to present and to future events; it points to the experience of God's children in every age, to the Jewish as well as the Christian church, though doubtless with the future specially in view. These sorrows have been repeated again and again in the numberless wars of history, and may be repeated afresh in the future, for war is a constant trial of the church throughout the centuries. The symbol of the armed rider on the blood-red horse presents a vivid picture of the horrors of war. It was a figure which spoke to the imaginative Eastern mind with a power superior to words, especially to those who had known in their own experience the destructive ravages of war; but the details were left to be supplied by individual thought.

3 The Opening of the Third Seal, Ch. 6:5, 6

At the call of the third living creature, “Come”, a black horse and his rider appear, weighing out grain with a balance: the symbol of famine, want, and consequent [pg 128] suffering by the church. This expressive figure of the black horse and his rider with a balance foretold in a form that surpassed the power of language to describe, the prevailing gloom and distress of famine. Grain is sold by weight instead of measure, thereby indicating its scarcity (Ezek. 4:16), and the price is from eight to twelve times its usual cost, the food of a working man requiring his entire wages, and leaving those dependent on him without support.[395] The famine indicated is not, however, any special season of want, but recurrent famine as a condition of trial, and is limited in its extent, as indicated by preserving the oil and the wine which may be regarded as typical articles of food, or the best of the things of common life[396]—a famine affecting the poor rather than the rich, the multitude rather than the few. The contents of this seal were realized in prevailing famines such as that under Claudius, that at the siege of Jerusalem, and many other seasons of want which have occurred at different times throughout the ages, but especially in the ancient world and in the Far East. The emaciation and terror produced by hunger and want was a form of suffering too well known among the inhabitants of those lands to need any further emphasis—it spoke a language of its own to all those who had felt

its power.

4 The Opening of the Fourth Seal, Ch. 6:7, 8

At the call of the fourth living creature, “Come”, a pale, ashen colored, or green horse, and his rider Death appear, with Hades following after, i. e. the world of departed spirits accompanying death as his after-part to swallow up his victims, both personified, and with power given them to kill with the sword and with famine and with death in all its forms: the symbol of mortality in the church, destroying the forces of the kingdom. The pale green or livid horse, the color of a corpse, reflects the ghastliness of a dead body bordering on dissolution, and points to the ruin wrought by death. Death is here considered as in itself a trial, and some of the more terrible [pg 129] and widespread agencies by which it is brought about are mentioned in order to make its ravages more impressive. Among other forms death by sword and famine are included, evils already introduced under the two former seals as the occasion of suffering, but here regarded as leading to death and constituting a separate trial. The trial of this seal is also limited, and affects only one fourth of men, i. e. a fractional part, not an actual fourth, the fourth being perhaps suggested by the four horsemen. The contents of this seal were realized in the fearful mortality of Roman

times by means of the fourfold scourge of sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, the crown of all sorrows to the Jewish mind; but they have also been realized in a similar way, though different form, through the many dread visitations of death in later days.

It will be noticed that almost every part of the symbolism in these visions has a meaning of its own. The horse in motion seems to indicate the swift progress and triumphal march through the earth of the things represented in the first four seals, viz. of Christianity the conquering religion, and also of war, famine, and death, the widespread terrors which are impersonated by the riders as treading the path of the centuries. The color of the different horses, too, is not without significance; white is the sign of victory (white horses were not uncommonly ridden by Roman conquerors)[397] and it is also the symbol of purity, while red is the symbol of bloodshed, black of want, and pale or ashen green of death, each of the latter betokening something of the nature of the scourge which they bring to men. The whole content of the seals presents a bare outline of various forms of suffering, and is intended to typify a multitude of sorrows that are unnamed. It should be noted, too, that at the close of the fourth seal a division of the seals is apparent into two groups with four and three in each. The first four relate to the sphere of the natural world, as the number four indicates, and the fact also that they are ushered in by the four living creatures who

represent creation. These seals are chiefly designed to show that during the period in which Christ is carrying forward his conquest unto [pg 130] victory, both trial and suffering in this world form part of the divine purpose of discipline for his people which cannot be escaped from but should be endured with patience and hope. The last three seals relate to the things of the spiritual life, of which three is the symbol, and point forward to the future and great reward in the world to come which is about to be realized by those who are faithful. The same division into four and three, pertaining to the natural and the spiritual, though with a distinctive application, is found in the visions of the trumpets and vials (see App'x. D).

5 The Opening of the Fifth Seal, Ch. 6:9-11

At the opening of the fifth seal a vision of the souls of the martyrs appears, viz. of those “that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (cf. ch. 19:10), who are now seen underneath the altar (i. e. the equivalent of the great brazen altar of sacrifice in the Jewish service, at the foot of which the blood of the sacrificial victims was poured) as the sign of their having sacrificed their lives for the truth. The altar is in the heavenly temple, which to the Jewish mind was the archetype of the earthly, where they are found crying to God as their

master[398] to judge and avenge them, i. e. calling for vindication, not for vengeance in the earthly sense; and they receive each a white robe, the recognized symbol of purity and victory, and are bidden to rest until the roll of martyrs is complete:[399] the symbol of martyrdom so often experienced by the church throughout the ages. These saints of God have not been delivered from death, but they have been delivered through death. The limit of this trial is the “little time” of the church's further conflict, a period looked upon as relatively short in the whole course of the centuries, though not in itself necessarily short or definitely limited, for the “little time” is practically the whole period of this and the preceding seals. The contents of this seal [pg 131] were partly realized in the ten persecutions of the early church, especially those under Nero, and under Domitian, belonging to the period of the Apocalypse; but they have also been realized in every subsequent persecution that has followed the planting of the gospel in heathen lands. The martyrs belong to all ages and all nations, and include every man who has given his life as a testimony for the truth; and this seal looks along the whole line and comprehends every martyr of every age.

6 The Opening of the Sixth Seal, Ch. 6:12-17

At the opening of the sixth seal a vision of an

earthquake appears, in which the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the whole moon as blood, and the stars of heaven fell, while even the heaven itself was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, for we are told that the day, the great day, of divine wrath is come: the symbol of judgment and retribution, especially of the last judgment, and of the destruction of the world. The terrors of the judgment thus described are sevenfold, affecting the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, the mountains, and the islands; and seven classes of men are mentioned, who call to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, viz. the kings of the earth, the princes, the chief captains, the rich, the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman,—additional signs of universality and completeness. The contents of this seal have been realized in one way in the crises of history and the fall of empires, which we may regard as described here after the analogy of Jewish Apocalyptic, under the form of a great catastrophe of nature bringing to an end the existing order of things—the fortunes of the people of God, though not their fate, being conceived of as inseparably interwoven with the world of nature; but this is only a temporary and passing fulfilment which foreshadows and points to the final day of wrath (called in Greek (v. 17), “the day, the great [day] of their wrath”, i. e. of the wrath of God and of the Lamb), or the day of the Lord,[400] [pg 132] and the end of the

world. The End is a constant element in all Apocalyptic writings, as it is the recurrent point of interest with John in the Apocalypse; and it was undoubtedly due to the influence of Jewish Apocalyptic conceptions that an expectation commonly prevailed in the primitive church that the End was close at hand, and that it would come not through development but through crises of judgment.[401] The important part which the End has in the Apocalypse may be regarded as owing in some degree to the place it must necessarily occupy in any exhaustive scheme of the course of the world; but it is perhaps more largely due to the peculiar view-point of Apocalyptic, which exalted the End out of proportion to the present in order to impress more deeply its lessons.[402]

All the visions of the six seals had a particular application and an undoubted though partial fulfilment in the first age in which they were given; but they have a wider and more perfect fulfilment in all subsequent time, and perhaps will have an especially complete fulfilment in the last time, such as we know that the sixth seal will surely have. To seek constantly, however, for a merely literal fulfilment is surely to emphasize the least important part of their meaning, and to limit them narrowly to a definite historical event is to rob them of their larger purpose, for they are wide-flung types that speak as with a thousand tongues to the open ear and ready mind.

[In the order of the Revelation the connection is at this point interrupted and the climax

suspended by introducing the Episode of the Sealed Ones (ch. 7:1-17), which will be found under IIb. The episodes are given separately in this outline, and outside of their proper position in the text, for the sake of clearness and emphasis].

7 The Opening of the Seventh Seal, Ch. 8:1

At the opening of the seventh seal a vision of heaven wrapped in perfect silence appears: the symbol of mystery, the unrevealed, the unspoken, the ineffable bliss of heaven which cannot be told in human words or portrayed in physical form, the great sabbath of the church's history,—a significant sign of the deep, unbroken rest [pg 133] from conflict and toil into which the people of God shall enter at the end of the earthly trial, and of the fulness of joy to be realized in the future life of the redeemed when the conflict and judgment of this world are over, all of which now lies beyond the power of words or vision to describe or display. The form of the vision is remarkably suggestive; the silence indicates that which cannot be spoken; it gives time for thought that is beyond expression, deepens “the sense of trembling suspense”, and serves to quicken anticipation of the revelation to follow.[403] The contents of this seal are to be realized in the future life of the redeemed after the conflict and judgment of this world are over, and they cannot now be revealed

except in symbol; they lie beyond the sphere of earthly thought. The half-hour is a broken, fractional number, implying a limited period, and is here the sign of the relatively brief time during which John beheld the vision,—for the period covered by the thought of the vision is the whole period of eternity, the future endless life with God, and only a glimpse of it is given at this point in order to reassure the hearts of God's children in the midst of conflict,—thus affording an impressive break between the seals and the trumpets, which, though short in itself, must have seemed relatively long to the beholder in the midst of such stirring scenes. The silence may have been suggested to John's mind by that which the people kept during the time when the priest offered incense in the temple, for we find that the offering of incense by an angel immediately follows (v. 2-5),[404] and the solemnity of that time in John's own experience of the ritual worship may well have left its impress upon his mind. In closing the series it remains to be said that the last seal, notwithstanding that its contents are incompletely developed, yet joins with the first, and serves to mark out the whole course of the church's history through all the dread and storm of the other seals, as ever advancing from opening conquest to final peace, all the trials of the seals leading on to deep quiet in the end, the symbol of the great and enduring peace of God.

[pg 134]
It may be well for us before entering upon the

episode of consolation in the seventh chapter, to review rapidly the steps by which the prime purpose of the Apocalypse has been thus far wrought out in the vision of the seven seals, viz. to encourage the hearts of weak and suffering Christians and to fortify their patience on the upward way in the midst of trial and distress by pointing out the path of faith and hope alike to the certainty of victory in the future days of the church upon earth, and to the fulness of joy reserved for the redeemed in the far and fadeless glory beyond. The deeper lesson of the first four seals is one of absolute trust in God when the way, as then, was dark and the hearts of men terror-stricken. God has not in any sense forsaken his people, the vision proclaims, though his path and purpose lie hidden in the night. Amid all the trials of the earthly life his plan is working out unseen through the way to final victory. His people must learn the lesson of discipline in the path by which he leads, and strive to trust and be patient and obey, while he with unerring wisdom rules and works and wins. The closing three seals contain a more direct revelation of hope and comfort. Under the fifth seal the peace of the future life and the guarantee of recompense to the saints is reassured; the vision of the sixth leads to the episode of consolation which portrays the safe gathering of the redeemed on God's right hand at last, while the contents of the seal itself point to the surety and justice of divine judgment that shall inevitably fall upon sin and sinners; and the seventh reveals the endless and unbroken peace and glory of

the future life with God. Thus, contrary to all appearances in the world of men, the perplexing trials of the Christian life are seen in the apocalyptic vision to be not in vain; the painful discipleship of Jesus has its abundant reward hereafter; the certain and unfailing victory of the righteous lies at the very heart of the eternal purpose of God; and this triumphant hope is presented as an abiding consolation for the Christian mind in the midst of prevailing trial and distress.

IIb The Episode of the Sealed Ones (A Vision of Salvation Assured). Ch. 7:1-17

The episode of the sealed ones is a vision of consolation, that is introduced as a digression between the sixth [pg 135] and seventh seals, elaborating the idea of redemption inwrought with judgment, and showing the safety, even in the midst of tribulation, of God's people who are divinely sealed, as also the certainty of their final reward. It is given for the encouragement of tried and suffering Christians who cannot understand why they suffer, and as an answer to the question in ch. 6:17, “who shall be able to stand?” i. e. in the midst of such judgment as is depicted under the sixth seal. There is, of course, a manifest element of consolation for the saints in the

contents of the seals themselves, as indicated above, viz. the certainty of victory under the first, the divine limitation and control signified in the second, third, and fourth, the promise of peace and reward in the fifth, of vindication and judgment in the sixth, and of the heavenly rest in the seventh; but this word of comfort receives such a distinct reinforcement and emphasis in the episode interposed as to indicate clearly its purpose. The blessed consolation for God's people in all ages given in the book of Revelation has not, perhaps, been sufficiently emphasized in the past,[405] yet this has always made it a cherished message for those in affliction. The episode is found to consist of two parts, corresponding in some degree to the two dispensations, the Old and the New, the first setting forth the surety of salvation in the divine choice out of Israel (v. 1-8), and the second the fulness of salvation in the restoration to the divine presence of the entire body of the redeemed out of all nations (v. 9-17), the two together manifesting the consoling thought that redemption triumphs in the midst of judgment.

A The Sealed of Israel, Ch. 7:1-8

The first part of the episode shows Israel's share in the sure and unfailing results of God's elective and redemptive purpose, and through this the wider truth that God seals and keeps

all his own (cf. Ezek. 9:1-6).[406]

1 The Angels Holding the Winds, Ch. 7:1-3

At the bidding of another angel who ascends from the sunrising as the sign that he brings light and hope, [pg 136] and who bears the seal of the living God as the token of his authority, “the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea” restrain the winds, which are apparently those of destruction and judgment, until the act of sealing has been accomplished: the symbol of the delay of God's final judgment upon the world until all his chosen ones are sealed, i. e. are marked as the subjects of redemption, or until his redemptive purpose is complete—the choice beginning with Israel. Four, the earth number, is the number of the angels, corners, and winds in the vision, indicating the world-wide character of the judgment; and the sealing is upon earth, though apparently not to be thought of as occurring in any particular point of time, and not therefore to be placed, as by some, just preceding the final judgment, for in a wider sense the sealing stands as a symbol of redemption as a whole, viewed in effect as a process concurrent with the trials of the seals, and illustrated by its operation in Israel.[407] The time of holding back the winds is the entire period of divine grace, and the sealing shows the brighter side of the former picture of trial and suffering—God is ever

doing what he did in Israel.

2 The Number of the Sealed, Ch. 7:4-8

The redeemed are sealed upon the forehead, the sign of the visible and personal ownership of Christ, but the act of sealing is not revealed; as the act of God it is hidden, and only the number of the sealed is given, a hundred and forty-four thousand, i. e. the square of twelve, the national number, multiplied by a thousand, the cube of ten, the number of completeness,—twelve thousand from each tribe, or twelve, the number of the tribes of Israel, multiplied by a thousand, the number of heavenly completeness: the symbol of a vast, complete, but indefinite number chosen from the people of Israel and kept unto eternal life as the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, the true or ideal people of Israel, who are in a sense representative of all the redeemed. Other interpreters, accepting the apocalyptic-traditional view of late writers, regard the first section of the episode (v. [pg 137] 1-8) as a reproduction in form or substance from a Jewish apocalypse, while the second section (v. 9-17), where there is so manifest an expansion of the horizon, is the Christian development of the same idea, showing how the older vision may be understood in our time.[408] Such views evidently have strong attraction for the modern mind, but it may well be doubted

whether such a view solves as many difficulties as it creates, for it assumes the existence of documents that have no evidence on which to rest except the theory which assumes them.

B The Redeemed Out of All Nations, Ch. 7:9-17

In this section is presented a view of all the glorified in heaven, showing the world-wide results of redemption, and the ultimate felicity of the redeemed, a scene of triumph in vivid contrast with the trials and sufferings of the church upon earth, and a striking illustration of the difference which Christ has brought about through his atoning work.[409]

1 The Innumerable Multitude, Ch. 7:9

With the opening of the second part of the episode there is a sudden expansion of the horizon; every barrier of race and nation has disappeared, and a triumphant multitude of the saved from all peoples, a company which no man could number, far surpassing that of Israel, is seen standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, the symbol of purity,[410] and having palms in their hands, the token of joy as well as victory (cf. *I*

Macc. 13.51), and perhaps, also, as a sign of triumphant homage to the Lamb. The use of palms in the Feast of Tabernacles may have been foremost in thought here, but we need not confine the significance of the figure to the Jewish symbolism of joy. It probably includes all the ideas connected with palms that were familiar to the thought of the time, without regard to their origin; for it is not justifiable to assume that the Apocalypse contains no ideas borrowed from heathen antiquity, but moves exclusively within the circle of sacred, that is, Jewish imagery and symbols.[411] This represents an opinion [pg 138] which in the light of later studies in Apocalyptic cannot be maintained, though manifestly everything has been assimilated by the Jewish conception, from whatever source it may have been derived. The phase of the vision presented in the ninth verse, affords a view of the redeemed church in its fulness, the multitude of the saved from both covenants now joined in one body in which no distinction of race or nation exists, a view much wider in its scope than the former one of the sealing.[412]

Many commentators, it must be recognized, view this passage differently (v. 4-9), and maintain the full identity of the hundred and forty-four thousand and the great multitude by a somewhat strained exegesis, making the hundred and forty-four thousand the symbol of the Christian church.[413] In the interpretation of such symbols, however, we must always allow a latitude of view, for

different interpretations appeal with varying force to different minds; and it should be remembered in holding the view accepted in this work, that while the symbol is taken from the case of Israel, and is therefore correctly interpreted as applying primarily to the people of Israel, yet it is not Jews as distinguished from Gentiles that are meant, but the saints of the Old Testament as distinguished from those of the New, the few in contrast with the many; and that in a wider sense the figure symbolizes salvation as a whole, represented here by a part in which it is shown to be effective, the main idea being salvation made certain and efficient by the divine act of sealing, while in the great multitude the symbol is that of salvation become world-wide in its results. The question of the identity of the two groups is therefore subordinate, and cannot be regarded as of any special importance.

It may be well at this point, in view of the great and radiant multitude of the redeemed, the innumerable company out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, who stand before the throne and join in the cry of "Salvation unto our God ... and unto the Lamb" (v. 10), for us to emphasize the wide-spread and triumphant effect of the gospel in the world of men which is here [pg 139] foreshown. It has been too often asserted by modern critics that the outlook of the Revelation is narrow and Jewish, and its view limited and discouraging. As against this it is well to remember the lesson of these verses,

as well as that of many other similar passages throughout the book (cf. chs. 5:9; 21:24; 22:7, *et al.*). We should also clearly see that the Revelation from its nature and purpose deals chiefly with the plan of God for the ages, and with the causes and events which lead on to the end of the world, and that therefore its essential message is not addressed to evangelistic effort or to missionary enterprise, but to faith in God when days are dark and storms fill the sky, and to preparation for meeting him in a fairer world when earthly days are done. Yet the book just as clearly shows that the divine plan both includes and prepares for the essentially world-wide and universal mission of Christianity; and the message of the gospel to every creature is repeated and emphasized throughout in such a way as to make plain that the great work and chief purpose of the Kingdom of God in the earth is to redeem and to save the lost. And surely this important truth should never be left out of view in our perusal of the book.

2 The Cry of the Church Triumphant, Ch. 7:10-12

The whole body of the redeemed, the saved out of both covenants, the united company which no man could number, that includes both Jews and Gentiles, is heard unitedly to cry with a loud voice, “Salvation unto our God ... and unto the Lamb”, i. e. salvation is

attributed unto God and the Lamb[414] (the Salvation Chorus), while all the heavenly court join them in a seven-fold symphony of praise. This is the last in a series of growing doxologies. In ch. 1:6 the praise ascribed is twofold, in ch. 4:11 it is threefold, in ch. 5:13 it is fourfold, and now in ch. 7:12 it is sevenfold—"Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God forever and ever". It should also be noted that in the Salvation Chorus, for the first of three times in the book, salvation is ascribed by a voice from heaven to God, or to God and to Christ, viz. in chs. 7:10; 12:10; and 19:1.

[pg 140]

3 The Redeemed Before the Throne, Ch. 7:13-17

John's attention is at this point specially directed to the triumphant company that is before the throne of God by one of the elders (v. 13f.)[415] in order to emphasize that they of that company have come victorious out of the great tribulation of the earthly life, and *therefore* they are ever before the throne serving God day and night in his temple, i. e. in the ναὸς, the shrine of the temple in heaven, and sharing in the exceeding blessedness of the divine presence as their great reward. "And he that sitteth on the

throne shall spread his tabernacle over them ... and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."[416] It is not likely that by the great tribulation in v. 14 is meant a special period of trial such as is implied in ch. 3:10, and by the words of our Lord in Mat. 24:21, but rather the world-tribulation that belongs to the earthly life of the Christian throughout all time, "the tribulation of Jesus" (ch. 1:9) in which John felt that he had a share. Some, however, think that it is the same period of trial referred to before as preceding the end of the world.[417] Thus with a prophetic view of the redeemed before the throne the episode closes, and the seventh seal is opened (ch. 8:1).

III The Vision of the Seven Trumpets (A Vision of Threatening). Ch. 8:2-9:21, and 11:14-19

The vision of the seven trumpets sets forth in pictorial form a divine proclamation of the judgments of God upon the sinful world, especially those to be experienced throughout the prospective history of mankind until the final consummation of all things. It consists of another group of seven that are parallel in a certain sense to the vision of the seals, covering like them the path of the ages, but that form a separate series complete in

themselves and that are issued for a different purpose, the seals specially manifesting God's care of his people in the midst of trial, while the trumpets reveal the divine punishment visited upon the sinful. These two lines of judgment are conceived of as occurring mainly [pg 141] in the same period, but looked at from another point of view: or, perhaps, it might better be said, that we have here another group of seven which follow the whole course of history and develop a new line of divinely ordered occurrences that neither follow nor precede, but are quite independent of any time-relation to the preceding series of the seals. The number of the trumpets, like that of the seals, is intended to indicate the completeness of the series, for seven is the number of completeness. They are general indications of God's judgments, and though particular events may be partial fulfilments, the complete fulfilment is in all time.[418]

A The Preparation for the Trumpets, Ch. 8:2-6

In a short intervening section preparatory to the trumpets, we are shown that the prayers of the saints lead to the manifestation of divine wrath against sin. These verses, it may be said, form a transition from the vision of the seals to that of the trumpets, and are in fact included by some under the seventh seal, though not properly belonging to it. The

former vision reaches a fitting close in the period of eternal rest which is looked upon under the seventh seal, and we wait in the quiet that it brings, expecting the end to be announced at once. But instead of that a further vision is revealed to the seer, and we again traverse the course of history by a different path to its ending. In another series of seven under the trumpets the punishment of the ungodly is reviewed, and divine wrath is seen to fall upon the heads of the sinful. This succeeding series of trumpet visions is introduced by verses two to six in the eighth chapter.

1 An Angel Offers Incense upon the Golden Altar, Ch. 8:3-5

The incense is added unto the prayers of all the saints which are thus typically purified, and they are straightway presented before the throne of God in heaven. Incense was the symbol of prayer under the Old Testament, but it becomes here, by a further development of the symbol, the vehicle for bearing the prayers to the throne, and the action apparently follows the form of the Jewish ritual worship. An angel standing over the brazen altar of sacrifice, takes fire from it in [pg 142] a golden censer or fire-pan, and much incense is then given him to add unto the prayers of all the saints, evidently for their purification and that he may offer them

at the golden altar of incense which is before the throne of God. Completing this action, the angel returns again to the brazen altar to take fire from it that he may cast it as the symbol of judgment upon the earth (cf. Ezek. 10:2f). Others, however, think that only one altar, that of incense, is referred to in the action.[419] In either case the worship of the Old Testament is the basis of the figure, though the scene is laid in heaven. “And there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake”, the tokens of God's presence and of the approaching divine judgment.

2 The Seven Angels Prepare to Sound, Ch. 8:2, 6

To the seven angels are given seven trumpets with charge of the series of impending woes; and the angels put the trumpets to their lips ready to sound, mention of which is made in order to emphasize the importance to be attached to their action as angels who stand before God. Their position implies special service, and their number doubtless indicates the perfection of their ministry.[420] The trumpet, which was the common instrument for public announcement, and often connected with the idea of judgment,[421] may be here intended to recall its use at the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6:4f). The seven angels may also be taken to represent the whole body of

angel ministrants who serve before God, just as the seven churches symbolize the whole church.

B The Trumpets Sounded, Ch. 8:7-9:21; and 11:14-19

The sounding of the trumpets represents the proclamation of signal and destructive judgments upon the ungodly world. The form of these judgments in the vision was adapted to current conceptions of great calamities, and may be regarded as symbolizing all the [pg 143] terrible woes in store for all the wicked in all the ages—wide world-pictures of the divine purpose of punishment. The latter half of the first century was marked by many terrible visitations, such as earthquakes, famines, and plagues, and it should not be thought strange to find these events reflected in such a book as the Apocalypse at a time when they were fresh in the public mind. That they had some such source is evident, for the graphic descriptions of appalling disaster by earthquake in Martinique (1901), and in Messina (1908), have served to illumine many passages in the Revelation, as have also other similar occurrences previously known. These judgments in the visions constitute not only the divine means of punishment, but become the divine test of character, revealing the essential nature of evil men; for the effect of the judgments, unlike that of the seals, falls

mainly upon the evil.

1 The Sounding of the First Trumpet, Ch. 8:7

The sounding of the first trumpet is followed by hail and fire mingled in blood cast upon the earth: the symbol of disaster visited upon the land, and men punished by such means as in the days of Pharaoh,—for fire is a symbol of the divine presence and wrath, and the blood indicates the destructive effects about to be wrought upon both the animate and inanimate creation for the chastisement of man. The resemblance of the first four judgments of the trumpets and also of the vials to the plagues of Egypt, is too manifest to escape the attention of any careful reader of Scripture, and affords a ready proof of their representative character. These well-known historic incidents of judgment, belonging to the birth-period of the Hebrew nation, which are so deeply inwrought in the Old Testament story, and whose significance was so well understood, become the ready types of other judgments that are sent with a similar purpose and that belong to the divine order, but the intimate nature of which it was not the divine purpose to disclose. They are widely suggestive of God's power over things the most permanent and stable. The destruction of but a third part of the objects affected as the result of the trumpet series, represents a limited judgment, not an actual

third but a fractional portion destroyed, a great but not the greater part. The earth, the sea, the rivers, and the heavenly bodies, on which the [pg 144] first four judgments fall, are parts of a fourfold division of the universe which is common in this book, and are intended to designate the entire created world, both here and in the vision of the vials.[422] In this comprehensive designation the earth, or the land, was thought of as the nourishing mother and the dwelling-place of man; the sea as the agent and arena of commerce; the rivers as the seat of cities, the centres of population, the arteries of trade, and the source of water supply; and the heavenly bodies as the source of light, and as the rulers of destiny—together representing in common thought the great things of life to the world of men. Disaster to these, the sources of wealth and well-being, has always been among Oriental nations the type of all that is most terrible.

2 The Sounding of the Second Trumpet, Ch. 8:8-9

The sounding of the second trumpet is followed by, as it were, a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea, thereby working widespread ruin: the symbol of disaster visited upon the sea, one part of creation which is used as God's agent for punishing mankind. To move a mountain was

a token of divine power, and it was blazing with fire as a sign of the divine presence and wrath—another Sinai in effect flung into the sea. This striking figure of a mountain of fire was perhaps suggested to John's mind by a volcano, with which he must have become familiar while resident in Asia; but attention is directed more particularly in these visions, especially the first four, to the effect produced rather than to the means used, whether hail and fire, or a mountain, or a star, or the smiting of the planets.[423] The effect produced is one of great terror, though the way in which it applies to men is left to be inferred, and is not attempted to be described. Such an incident was well adapted to the thought of the first century, and could not but strike terror in the mind of the beholder because of the complete helplessness of men in the presence of such a disaster. It presents a wide field for thought, the limits of which are not defined. It is in fact one way of saying that God will make all nature to strive against man because of sin.

[pg 145]

3 The Sounding of the Third Trumpet, Ch. 8:10-11

The sounding of the third trumpet is followed by the falling of a great star from heaven, called Wormwood, upon the waters, burning

as a torch and making them bitter: the symbol of disaster visited upon the rivers and fountains of waters, still another part of creation, as an act of divine judgment upon sinful men who dwell by the waters. As under the former trumpets only a third part was affected: “And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.” The falling of a star was regarded as a sign of some great disaster about to happen, and is here apparently intended to be typical of judgment sent from heaven, while the name Wormwood signifies the bitterness of the trouble which it entails upon men. But beyond this all is indefinite, a quality characteristic of Apocalyptic which often heightens rather than lessens the general effect. The bitter waters expressed the moral bitterness that men must taste because of their sin: the wide result is thus covered by an unspoken appeal to thought through a significant symbol.

4 The Sounding of the Fourth Trumpet, Ch. 8:12

The sounding of the fourth trumpet is followed by the smiting of the sun, moon, and stars: the symbol of disaster visited upon the heavenly bodies, not only destroying their light but inflicting a punishment peculiarly terrifying to the Oriental mind because of the occult influence which these bodies were supposed to exert upon the future destinies of

men. We need not necessarily regard John as personally sharing in this opinion, but only as using the language and appealing to the thought of his time, as in the preceding reference to the falling star. He seems to look upon these strange occurrences mainly as signs of the divine purpose, as “wonders in the heavens and in the earth” (Joel 2:30) through which God wrought in manifesting his will. The evils resulting from this visitation in the vision, as in the former judgments, are suggested rather than named; but they lie before the mind in a haunting way to be filled in by a vivid imagination with scenes of terror and wrath.

(1) The Eagle and Its Message, Ch. 8:13

At this point an eagle (not an angel, as in the Authorized Version), the symbol of carnage, appears flying [pg 146] high in mid-heaven, crying, “Woe! Woe! Woe!” and indicating by its rapid flight and thrice repeated call of terror the swiftness of the three coming woes of the remaining trumpets.[424] Also three, the number of the spiritual in contrast with the material, serves to indicate the sphere to which these judgments belong. These three, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, are often called the “woe-trumpets”, and their effects are visited directly upon men, not indirectly through natural objects as under the preceding four of the series.

5 The Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet, Ch. 9:1-12

The sounding of the fifth trumpet is followed by a vision of a star from heaven, fallen unto earth, the symbolic representation of Satan cast out of heaven for his sin, and by smoke as of a great furnace enveloping a swarm of locusts that ascend from the pit of the abyss, the present dwelling-place of Satan and the familiar haunt of demons: the symbol of disaster to men through Satan and his multitudinous host, “the spiritual hosts of wickedness” (Eph. 6:12), the demons from the pit. These are permitted to torment men, producing bitter anguish for five months, the usual life of the locust, and the symbol of an incomplete or limited period of time, which may here refer to the time of man's existence upon the earth. Five, the half of ten the complete number, is a symbol of incompleteness or indefiniteness. The invading army of locusts is a well-known figure of widespread disaster, as in the prophecy of Joel (ch. 2:1-11). In accordance with general apocalyptic usage the pit of the abyss is regarded as the present abode of the Devil and his angels, and is conceived of as a vast subterranean depth connecting with the surface of the earth by a great shaft or well which can be opened or closed from above, and the entrance to which may be locked or unlocked by a key.[425] That which at first seems to be a cloud of smoke proves to be teeming with forms of life, an evident token of the hidden nature of the source of evil. The

power of the locusts is directed immediately against the wicked, such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads, while their sting seems to be the type of the poison of sin which they infuse into [pg 147] the veins of men, and the torment which they inflict to refer to the visitation of sins that bring terrible punishment upon the offenders so that men prefer death rather than life. The description of the locusts as “like unto horses prepared for war etc.”, is a realistic touch intended to heighten the sense of terror, but not to identify them with any objects in human experience. Also the statement that “their faces were as men's faces”, implies only that they were like men in appearance, though some think this points to human agents. The star is here used in a quite different sense from that under the third trumpet,—for to insist that all objects must have a single symbolism, and that the star must mean the same in every case, i. e. a person, there as well as here, is to neglect one of the clearest lessons of Apocalyptic. Here it is a personification or symbol of Satan (Isa. 14:12), the angel of the abyss, who is named Apollyon,[426] i. e. one who causes perdition to mankind, or in Hebrew, Abaddon, i. e. the destroyer, a sufficient identification for the reader of the Old Testament. The awful woe that the world of evil men suffers at the hands of Satan and his legions is the ideal content of this trumpet; and we notice that the severity of the judgments seems to increase as they progress toward the end. The first woe is now declared to be past (v. 12), but two others are

foretold as yet to come.

6 The Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet, Ch. 9:13-21, and 11:14

The sounding of the sixth trumpet is followed by the loosing of four angels from the bed of the Euphrates (which is done at the bidding of a voice from the four horns[427] of the golden altar of incense that is before God, and underneath which are the souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God—evidently a divine command) who had been prepared for an appointed time, even "for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men" from the earth, and by the coming of a vast invading army of horsemen, the double square of a myriad, or two hundred millions [pg 148] in all, the largest number used in the Apocalypse, the type of an innumerable multitude, which apparently act under direction of the four angels, and destroy a third part of men from the earth:[428] the symbol of disaster to men through the world-forces of heathenism, which are under direction of the world-rulers of the darkness (Eph. 6:12). The unbinding of the angels is the symbol of evil let loose among men, for the angels are evil as is indicated by their being bound, by their number, and by the place of their imprisonment, i. e. the binding is the symbol of divine restraint until the

appointed time; their number is four, the earth number, indicating that they belong to this world which is usually thought of as evil; and the Euphrates, the place where they are bound, is the old seat of the world-power, and the representative of heathenism with its multitudinous host. The evils inflicted by the heathen nations upon mankind, especially the evils of war with their concomitant results, are here indicated by this forceful figure; yet these, though deep and terrible, entirely fail to turn the rest of men, who escape death, from idol worship and its attendant impurities —a marvelous forecast of the path of history, for the heathen powers have time and again become the agents of woe to mankind, yet the people have not awakened to the true source of their sorrow in idolatry. The description of the horses and of their riders in the vision is purely an ideal one, intended to make them the objects of greatest terror, a true Oriental touch, appealing to the vivid Eastern imagination as such figures do with us to the minds of children. The woes of men at the hands of heathen nations is the evident content of this trumpet, as is clearly indicated in the twentieth verse of the chapter. At this point the second woe is declared to be past, and the third to be about to come quickly (ch. 11:14); but between them intervenes a vision of divine help, and of the value of the church's witness (ch. 10:1-11:13).

This view of the fifth and sixth trumpets seems to meet more fully the statements of the text than other views, and to conform best

to the general character of the [pg 149] whole series; for notwithstanding the recognized obscurity of the trumpet visions, we can surely discern divine judgments for wrongdoing in the first four, under forms of physical evil visited upon the natural creation, and in the remaining three, manifestations of moral evil visited upon men for their sin. That the pit or abyss points to demoniacal forces, and the Euphrates to human agencies, is sufficiently evident without discussion.[429] The application of the incidents of the fifth and sixth trumpets to Mohammedans and Turks by some of the historical school, who have even interpreted the tails of the horses as a prophetic reference to these well-known symbols of authority used by Turkish Pashas, is a curious example of capricious fancy. The fact that the events predicted under the sixth trumpet find a wide exemplification in the incursions of Turk and Mohammedan, Goth and Vandal, is only a clearer proof of their ideal character. And it is surely better to leave these highly wrought imaginative symbols of the trumpets, with their deep suggestiveness of appalling forms of coming evil, in the vague indefiniteness in which we find them, rather than to mar their beauty by weak and narrow interpretations.

[The Episode IIIb, which in this work is given after the seventh trumpet, occurs at the present point in the vision covering chs. 10:1 to 11:13. The connection is resumed in ch. 11:14, for the second woe found in that verse belongs in order of thought at the close of the

sixth trumpet, the intervening part being parenthetical—see the Scripture text as paragraphed in this volume].

7 The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, Ch. 11:15-19

The sounding of the seventh trumpet is followed by great voices in heaven, declaring that the kingdom of the world is now become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of his Christ;[430] by the elders praising God that the time of judgment and reward has come (the Victory Chorus); by the ark of the covenant, the token of God's abiding presence, being revealed in the opened temple in heaven—a traditional sign in the later Judaism of [pg 150] the coming of the Messiah;[431] and by lightnings, voices, thunders, and an earthquake with great hail, the necessary accompaniments in Jewish thought of the great and final day of wrath: the multiple symbol of the final judgment, and of the glorious triumph of God's kingdom. The contents of the seventh trumpet are not fully developed, perhaps because they are too great for description, but in it we reach the climax and issue of the whole process of judgment that is exhibited in the series, the full and final establishment of the kingdom. The result is viewed in its entirety, and the millennial period of victory is not brought separately into view. The unveiling of the ark of covenant mercy and

the ushering in of the kingdom close the vision, and constitute an informal transition to the vision of conflict through which the triumph has been effected.

If we now rapidly recall the whole course of the seven trumpets, we can see how with progressive movement they increase in severity as they go forward; the judgments they prefigure fall first upon the land, and then consecutively upon the sea, upon the fountains of water, and upon the heavenly bodies, as signs of God's judgment upon the physical universe, and thus upon men who in their earthly lives form part of the natural world; then with the fifth trumpet the judgments take a wider trend, and point to and include the setting free of numberless demonic forces of evil from the pit of the abyss to prey upon men, and under the sixth trumpet the loosing of the multitudinous world-forces of heathenism from the banks of the Euphrates to bring world-wide judgments upon the race, thus preparing the way for the blowing of the seventh trumpet which ushers in the day of cumulative wrath upon sin, and the final triumph of God's kingdom. This onward progress of the plan of the ages is only broken by a passing view of the possibility of recovery for men in the episode of the angel and the book, and of the two witnesses, which follows. The whole sweep of the judgments of the trumpets, in the view of Apocalyptic perspective, is toward the end of the present world and the triumph of righteousness in the final judgment. There the

redeemed are left with God in his glorious kingdom; the after life is not attempted to be described; its blessings are evidently [pg 151] too great for our present comprehension. But the triumph would not be so definite, without the vision of conflict which follows, for it presents the path to victory through prevailing trial and opposition as ever leading on to complete and final triumph in the end, that is to be realized in the glorious presence of the Lamb who is revealed as standing upon Mount Zion in the midst of the redeemed.

IIIb The Episode of the Angel with the Book; and of the Two Witnesses (A Vision of Divine Help). Ch. 10:1-11:13

This twofold vision forms a digression between the sixth and seventh trumpets, similar to the episode between the sixth and seventh seals, setting forth the opportunities which God has afforded men of escaping his wrath, showing the divine method of help through the institutions of religion, and affirming the permanent value of the church's witness,—a paragraph that notwithstanding its acknowledged difficulty, is manifestly interposed for the comfort of the church as well as to prepare the way for the last woe of the remaining trumpet.[432] The restraint of wrath indicated by the destruction of only the

third part under the trumpets, is now further developed by showing the divine offer of escape; and also man's common neglect of that offer, which leads at length to final doom under the seventh trumpet. The episode, it will be seen, differs in theme from the one under the seals, the former setting forth the divine side of redemption, and the surety of its accomplishment through the act of sealing, the latter showing the human side of redemption as it is made known to men through the institutions of religion, and the failure of its universal operation through unbelief, leaving the world without excuse to bear the weight of judgment—the one throwing light upon God's relation to the church, and the other upon his relation to the world, in accordance with the general theme of the seals and the trumpets. Though many are unable to agree that John had such a comprehensive view in mind, or that it is to be looked for in a writing of this class, yet when we consider the various marks of elaborate structure in [pg 152] the book, exhibited in the relation of its different parts, and the deep prophetic insight and poetic intuition manifested by the author in his idealization of the course of the church, we need not be surprised to find a broad and perspicuous view of redemption such as this, especially since the plan of salvation had already been so fully elaborated in an earlier period by the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

A The Angel with the Little Open Book, Ch. 10:1-11

The first part of the episode exhibits the revelation of God's will and purpose as a source of help. The little book in the vision is evidently the Apocalypse, though in a broader sense it doubtless represents as well the general purpose and beneficent effects of all God's revelations to men; and the book is found open to indicate that its contents are made known to the world. Some regard the little book to be the remaining part of the Apocalypse, beginning with the succeeding chapter;[433] by others its contents are considered to begin with chapter twelve, the first break in continuity after the episode; but it seems more likely that the whole book is intended. In any case it is clear that the prophetic form in which the writer's ministry is to be realized (viz. “thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings”, v. 11) serves to link the center of the book (ch. 10:11) with both the beginning (ch. 1:3) and the end (ch. 22:19),[434] and thereby furnishes an incidental proof of its unity of design.

1 The Angel Foretells the End, Ch. 10:1-7

A mighty angel, the representative of Christ and bearing his insignia,[435] having a book in his hand, and standing both upon sea and

land as a sign of his world-wide mission, declares the coming end under the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God's method and purpose in human life and redemption shall be fully revealed and finally manifested in the establishment of his universal kingdom. The manner of the angel is scenic and impressive, and the message is one of undoubted power.

[pg 153]

(1) The Thunder Voices, Ch. 10:3b and 4

Seven thunders utter their voices[436] in token of the approaching judgment, but John is directed by a voice from heaven to seal them up and is forbidden to record them, probably indicating that the terrors of God's voice in judgment are for the present hidden from men; though some regard the voices as introduced only to emphasize the element of mystery with which the Apocalyptic form always delighted to clothe its thought. The voice, declared to be from heaven in verse four, is apparently not intended to indicate by whom the words were spoken, but only the source from which they came; some, however, attribute them to Christ.

2 The Book Delivered to John, Ch. 10:8-11

The book is Christ's revelation to John in the Apocalypse, a little open book or scroll (v. 2), evidently set in contrast with the great sealed book of God's purposes in chapter five; and it is taken by the Apostle, in obedience to a voice out of heaven, from the hand of the angel, who commands him to eat it, thereby indicating that John should digest the prophecy therein contained (Ezek. 3:1-3).[437] Though it was sweet to his taste at first as a message from Christ, it became bitter afterward when its deeper meaning was understood, for it told of long continued trial and conflict instead of speedy triumph and victory. The prophecy is declared to be “over [i. e. concerning] many peoples and nations and tongues and kings”, a fourfold prediction, showing its world-wide application and indicating its ideal content.

It was the common thought of the early church that the period of the Christian dispensation would be very brief; and it may have been in order to dispel in some measure this illusion, and at the same time to inculcate patience and hope by showing the ideal shortness of the Christian age in God's eternal plan, that we are to find one of the many purposes of the Apocalypse. For it should be noted that by the end of the first century the view-point on this subject shows a material [pg 154] change. The attitude of John's Gospel toward the second coming of Christ is manifestly different from that of the Synoptists;[438] the significant predictions of Christ concerning his own return are omitted,

notably the discourse on the last things (Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21); and the only references to his coming again are indirect (Jn. 14:3, 18, 28; 16:22; and 22:22-3), though from these it is evident that it is subsumed throughout, a view that is confirmed by the Epistles (I Jn. 2:28; and 3:2). This is far from showing, as some hold, that the coming predicted was only figurative, and was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, an event already past when John's Gospel was written; but seems rather to indicate that the earlier stage of thought, shared in by all the apostles, which expected the Lord's return within the first generation, had given way to a new and wider outlook which emphasized the continuous coming that is present and spiritual more than the personal coming that is future and outward, though without losing faith in the surety of that coming. And even if the later date of the Apocalypse be not conceded, yet coming from the same source as the Fourth Gospel, we might not unnaturally expect to find in it some anticipation of this view involving delay, for the coming thought of in the visions is undoubtedly personal and future.

B The Two Witnesses, Ch. 11:1-13

The second part of the episode sets forth the indestructibility and permanent value of the two special divine institutions for human

help, viz. revealed religion and the church; and shows the triumph of enduring witness for the truth.

1 The Measurement of the Temple, Ch. 11:1-2

The ναὸς, or inner sanctuary of the temple of God, is at this point introduced in the vision, a term which applied to the apartments of the temple building proper, including the holy of holies, the holy place, and in this case by implication the inner court, as distinguished from the ἱερὸν which applied to the whole temple and included all the buildings with the outer courts. The ναὸς in classical Greek is the sanctuary or cell of a temple where the image of the god was placed. In [pg 155] Hebrew usage, as applied to the temple at Jerusalem, it signifies the sacred edifice so called, including the holy and most holy place.[439] Thus it is the true temple with the altar and them that worship therein, i. e. the entire contents of the inner court, the combined symbol of revealed religion and of those who accept its truths, especially the revelation and worshippers according to the Old Testament, which is here introduced in the vision. This is directed to be measured, i. e. it is to be subjected to careful scrutiny, and its proportions are to be observed, the sign as in Zechariah (ch. 2:1f.) of preservation and renewal, and not of destruction. The measurement apparently applies to the

heavenly temple, though it may be interpreted either of the temple at Jerusalem or its counterpart in heaven, for to the Jewish mind the earthly temple was the type and shadow of the heavenly (Heb. 9:5).[440] In either case the meaning is the same, viz. only that which corresponds to the outer court of the earthly,[441] the unessential portion, is given up by the fall of Jerusalem to be trodden underfoot of the nations (Lk. 21:24) during forty-two months (v. 2), the indefinite period of the world's conflict with the church (see App'x. E). The true temple with its worshippers, the heart and center of the religious life of Israel, is indestructible and reappears in heaven with the ark of the covenant restored (v. 19). This is a symbolic expression of the important truth that the revealed religion of Israel is to endure, the best in Judaism is imperishable, all that is fundamental and essential is preserved though the outer form be destroyed;[442] and it was designed to be [pg 156] a vision of comfort for the Jewish Christians, who naturally regarded the ruin of the temple as a profound calamity. The vision has been regarded by many interpreters as indicating that the temple and the city of Jerusalem were still standing when this was written, thus confirming the earlier date of the Revelation (circ. A. D. 69); but the weight of evidence to be attached to an Apocalyptic vision as testimony in such a case is very small, and is quite insufficient when compared with other evidences of the historical situation found in the book.[443] It is evident, also, that there is a

reference in the symbolism here used, i. e. in the preservation not only of the altar, but "of them that worship therein", to the preservation of the Jews as a people, and their future restoration when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled (Lu. 21:24), though not necessarily to Palestine,[444] and surely not to a rebuilded temple, which in any case would be mere incidents, but to the richer blessings of renewed fellowship with God, of which the temple and its service were to the Jewish mind the truest type (cf. Rom. 11:1f.). The late Apocalyptic-Traditional view, it may be mentioned, attributes verses one and two to a former Jewish apocalypse that has been lost, which is here quoted as an introduction to the prophecy of the two witnesses that follows. It may well be doubted, however, whether this theory of the origin of the passage adds anything effective to its interpretation.

2 The Two Witnesses and their Martyrdom, Ch. 11:3-13

The two witnesses who prophesy, i. e. bear witness for God, and whom God ever preserves throughout all vicissitudes, and delivers even out of seeming destruction, are the churches of the Old and New Dispensations which have been divinely called to witness for the truth.[445] The two olive trees represent the Old and New

Testament revelations which supply oil, the symbol of grace, to the two candlesticks, i. e. to the two churches,[446] the Jewish and Christian, that have been and are God's special witnesses throughout the ages (cf. Zech. 4:2f.). [pg 157] The identity of the candlesticks and witnesses is shown both by the connection, and by the explicit statement of verse four: “These [two witnesses] are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth,” i. e. the witnesses are, in a sense, both the Old and New Testament revelations and the churches of the Old and New Dispensations, which alike witness for the truth of God, though the connection shows that the churches are specially intended.[447] Two is the number of confirmation in witness-bearing (Jn. 8:17); hence the two witnesses may also be considered to symbolize the sufficiency of the testimony of the Old and New Testament churches, as also a sufficient number in the church in every age who witness for God and truth. These have power that is not of man but divinely given, as is indicated in symbolic language (v. 5-6), yet when their testimony is finished, the Beast out of the abyss, the world-power of chapter thirteen, introduced here by anticipation, accomplishes their apparent overthrow. Out of this deadly conflict with the world, and the apparent defeat and eventually the death of the witnesses, with the exposure of their dead bodies and contemptuous refusal of burial, a personal indignity and sign of hatred and contempt, the fitting type of the world's treatment of the

church in all ages and times, which in the vision occurs in Babylon, “the great city”, the type of the godless world,—out of all this seeming defeat comes ultimate victory. After three and a half days the breath of life from God enters into them, and they live again, and go up to heaven in a cloud. This points to the experience of grave peril by the church preceding her triumph, including temporary and seeming extinction at the hands of her enemies, and forming the occasion for an expression of their supreme contempt, an experience such as has occurred at different periods in her history, and which may, indeed, occur again in the future—the church persecuted, scattered, peeled, seemingly destroyed, but revived and restored by the power of God. Three and a half days of defeat,—a broken number, indicating a short but indefinite period in contrast with the three and a half years, or forty-two months, or a thousand two hundred and three score days, (v. 3), the length of the entire world-conflict, —a time of rejoicing by [pg 158] them that dwell upon the earth, is followed, as in the case of our Lord, by resurrection, ascension, and triumph, a parallel that is apparently suggested by the similarity and was doubtless intended. This is true not only of individual saints who have borne witness and suffered death only to rise again in the witness of others and in their own personal resurrection, but is especially true of the church in a collective sense, both under the Old Testament and the New, which always rises triumphant after every great disaster in her

history, and shall rise again in all her members at the resurrection of the last day after her witness is complete.[448] God avenges his own, as is indicated in the vision by the fall of the tenth part of the city, which is the share of the tithe under the Mosaic law, and by the death of seven thousand men, a great and complete number, seven multiplied by a thousand, who bear the punishment of their sin. As the result of the martyrdom and avengement the rest of men, give glory to God, a manifest attestation of the value of the church's witness. The world's persecution, though bitter and continued, fails to accomplish its end; the church of Christ survives, and rises again in power, and its witness becomes effective. Historical interpreters, however, generally regard the two witnesses as persons, futurists identifying them as Moses (or Enoch) and Elijah, whom they regard as yet to come, and preterists finding in them two leading characters during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, a view that restricts the vision to very narrow limits. Others, catching the larger view, interpret as "The Christian church and the Christian state", and still others as "The law and the prophets", or "The prophets and the priesthood",—i. e. the whole spiritual authority of the old dispensation which, "though perverted and destroyed by the Jews (some of the best representatives of each being put to death), yet rose to new life and enthronement in Christianity". In any case the obvious teaching is the triumph of faithful testimony for God, a principle of inestimable

value for the church when in the throes of persecution. And now, having looked on the vision of the angel and the book, and of the two witnesses, the way is open for the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

[pg 159]
It may be noted in closing our study of this episode that many commentators interpret "the great city", in verse eight of this chapter, as referring to Jerusalem, because of the designation "where also their Lord was crucified"—Jerusalem being regarded as a world-city. The decisive reason against this, however, is the uniform usage of the book,[449] for the interpretation is not otherwise materially affected. Jerusalem is everywhere else in the Revelation the type of that which is holy, and is nowhere else called "the great city", while this name is applied seven times elsewhere to Babylon (or Rome), the type of the ungodly world, in which and by which our Lord may be truly said to have been crucified; and there seems to be no adequate reason for regarding this passage as containing an exceptional use of the phrase. Whether, however, we interpret of Jerusalem or of Babylon the general sense remains the same. In the one case the apparent defeat and contempt for the church of God, or its witness and witnesses, occurs in Babylon, the type of the godless world, while in the other it happens in Jerusalem, in that case the type of unbelieving Judaism. Either symbolism, it will be seen, is suitable to the context.

IV The Vision of Conflict (A Vision of Warfare). Ch. 12:1-14:20

A discursive view of moral and spiritual conflict as the key to man's redemptive history, the prime thought which underlies the whole book, and which is portrayed in this central fourfold vision as a pervasive church-historic world-conflict of the evil against the just, now forms the essential climax of the Revelation, disclosing a divine panorama of the world in process of redemption with the great opposing forces which contend against Christ and his kingdom; a discriminating outlook upon the significant world-movements of all time from the spiritual point of view, for it is everywhere assumed that the forces which mould history are spiritual, and that the master key to life is found in the supernatural. And, whatever the form in which these movements became apparent to John in his time, we may rest assured that the divinely inspired prophetic insight led him to perceive, at least in some measure, [pg 160] that in their essence they were timeless and repeated themselves in every age. This central vision is in part the most difficult portion of the

Revelation, containing seven mystic figures, viz. the Sun-Clothed Woman, the Great Red Dragon, the All-Ruling Man-Child, the First Beast (the Beast from the Sea), the Second Beast (the Beast from the Land), the Lamb on Mount Zion, and the Son of Man on the Cloud, each one of whom is invested with a special symbolism. The difficulties of interpretation belonging to this part of the Revelation, it will be seen, are scarcely lessened in any degree by referring different parts of the section to various Jewish apocalypses which are supposed to have contained the gist of the thought in this portion, according to the Apocalyptic-Traditional view;[450] for, apart from the fact that no such apocalypses are now extant, these sections, even if they were originally derived from such a source, have an application here that is distinctively new and specifically Christian. The vision itself is properly divisible into four parts or sections, as indicated in the arrangement that follows.

A The Woman and the Dragon, Ch. 12:1-6, and 13-17

This is a vision of Satan persecuting the church and the Messiah, and of the effective divine deliverance, which although permitting a continuance of the conflict yet provides help for overcoming and anticipates final victory. The scene opens in heaven, but is afterward

transferred to the earth—see verse six.

1 The Sun-Clothed Woman, Ch. 12:1-2, 5-6, and 13f.

A great sign is seen in heaven, a Woman glorious and crowned, arrayed with the sun, the bearer of light, and having the moon under her feet, i. e. triumphing over time and change, who evidently represents the church of God on earth which was first Jewish and then Christian—"the ideal community of God's people". The moon was the Jewish divider of time, and the phases of it being marked by recurrent changes, it naturally formed a ready type of both these ideas; and it may here also include the thought of stability of existence in the midst of change of outward appearance.[451] The sun and [pg 161] moon have been thought by some to indicate the relative light of the New and Old Dispensations, though it is more probable that both have been introduced mainly to enhance the conception of the church's ideal glory. The crown of twelve stars is the sign of the covenant people,—the crown is στέφανος, the crown of victory, which God designs to give the church, and the number, twelve, is the number of the tribes of Israel—while the woman's travail anguish is the figure of Jewish affliction, and of deep longing for the Messiah. Some interpret the figure of the woman as representing the Virgin Mary;[452]

but the symbol is clearly wider than a person, as is shown by the whole course of the persecution with its transference to the rest of her seed when the Man-Child has escaped, and evidently applies to “the mystical mother of Christ”, the church whose seed are many, though the source and appropriateness of the figure is doubtless found in the fact that Christ was born of a woman.

2 The Great Red Dragon, Ch. 12:3-4, and 13f.

The Dragon, a mythical animal of traditionary terror, the symbol to the Jewish world of all that which was hideous and harmful, and described as red in color to indicate his sanguinary and destructive character, is introduced in order to represent the Old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan (v. 9),[453] the lord of the present world and the adversary of Christ. His seven heads with diadems, and the ten horns, are symbols of his full dominion and absolute power over evil in the world during the period of conflict. The head with a crown or diadem is the natural symbol of dominion, which in the Apocalyptic literature usually signifies kings or empires (cf. Dan. 2:32; and 7:6), and the horn is a recognized Jewish emblem of power. The crown is the διάδημα, the sign of royalty, not the στέφανος, or garland crown of victory—a distinction that is carefully observed in the Revelation, as is indicated in the Revised

Versions by the translation “diadem”.[454] This symbolism of the seven heads and ten horns was evidently [pg 162] chosen to indicate the manifestation of Satan's power in the kings and kingdoms of this world which are adverse to the kingdom of God, as is clearly shown by their use in chapter thirteen,—that through which Satan operates and makes his power felt being attributed to him as an essential part of his being. The use of seven and ten together implies a twofold completeness, i. e. completeness of kind and completeness of parts (see App'x. E). This combination of seven, the symbol of perfection of quality which is usually moral, with ten the symbol of completeness which is usually earthly, though without necessarily implying any moral element, is used with an evil significance throughout in the Revelation, and creates some difficulty of interpretation; but it is doubtless best explained as indicating that that which was originally designed for moral perfection, signified by seven, has been combined with and prostituted to purely earthly ends, as signified by ten, which ends are in this case notably sinful. The suitability of the seven heads and ten horns belonging alike to the Dragon, who represents Satan, and to the Beast (ch. 13:1), who represents anti-Christian national government, is thus quite manifest, for both are evil. If we compare this with the combination of seven with seven in the horns and eyes of the Lamb, where the idea of a twofold spiritual perfection is indicated, something of the peculiar combination and significance of

numbers in the Revelation will become apparent. The Dragon's casting down the third part of the stars from heaven (v. 4), i. e. a considerable number but not the larger part, is another sign of his power (Dan. 8:10), and may allude to the angels who lost their first estate and fell with him. He stands waiting in the vision before the Woman, the church, in order to destroy her child, the Messiah, as soon as the child is born, a purpose that he does not prove able to carry out.

3 The All-Ruling Man-Child, Ch. 12:5

The Man-Child is Jesus Christ, who was born of a woman, and whom Satan endeavors to destroy, but who was brought forth to rule or to shepherd all the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9), i. e. with irresistible power, and who was caught up to heaven by his resurrection and ascension. In this symbolic action the sufferings and death of Christ are passed over in silence [pg 163] in order to set forth at once the triumphant escape as the chief thought in mind, and the futility of the Dragon's effort.

4 The Wilderness Refuge, Ch. 12:6a, and 14a

The wilderness represents the present evil

world as the place of trial during the period in which the church, like Israel, continues her pilgrimage toward the promised fulness of the messianic kingdom. There may also be a reference in this to the lands of the Gentiles, called a wilderness in contrast with Canaan the glorious land to the Jewish patriot, where the church “hath a place prepared of God”, and is now nourished like Israel of old in the wilderness; or, by a change of figure, like the prophet Elijah was fed for twelve hundred and sixty days, the equivalent of forty-two months, or three and a half years,—the time, [two] times, and half a time, i. e. three and a half times, of verse fourteen,—the symbol of the indefinite period of the church's conflict with the world, or of the world-triumph, which is a shortened time, a term that will end (see App'x E). It may be mentioned here that the preterist interpreters usually regard the wilderness refuge as a reference to the flight of the Christians to Pella before Jerusalem was destroyed, by which they escaped the three and a half years of the siege[455]—certainly a remarkable coincidence, though not serving to establish that interpretation—a meaning that is narrow and local instead of broad and universal.

5 The Persecution of the Woman and her Seed, Ch. 12:4-6, and 13-17

The persecution of the Woman with her seed

represents Satan's malign but fruitless attempts to destroy the church. The two wings of the great eagle, i. e. the number of added strength and surety, are those of divine preservation which are given her to escape from the destroying flood cast out of the mouth of the Dragon, the apt symbol of Satan's persistent effort to overwhelm the church. To John's mind the eagle, which was inscribed upon the Roman standards, may have seemed the symbol of the Roman Empire that at first protected Christianity from Jewish persecution,[456] or the [pg 164] symbol may have been suggested by that fact; but it represents as well what God is ever doing through human and earthly means for the church's deliverance. By the exceptional statement that “the earth helped the woman”, we are evidently to understand that natural causes helped Christianity, a fruitful suggestion that is remarkably exemplified in history. The Dragon making war upon the rest of the Woman's seed, i. e. all of her seed except Jesus Christ, who was caught up to heaven, indicates his continued attack upon the church and its members.

B War in Heaven, Ch. 12:7-12

We have in this incident a digression in the midst of the account of the persecution of the Woman in order to show the origin of Satan's hatred, and the beginning of the conflict in

the far past.[457] Michael the archangel, regarded as the presiding angel of the Jews from the time of Daniel, together with the angels under him, warred with the Dragon and his angels; and Satan, being cast out of heaven, transferred the conflict to earth. A great voice is then heard in heaven declaring his downfall together with the triumph of the kingdom of God, and recounting the suffering of the saints because of him (v. 10-12). This term which is here introduced, "the kingdom of our God", though used but twice in the book of the Revelation, is the most notable phrase in the New Testament. It occurs nearly a hundred times, either as "the kingdom of God", or "the kingdom of heaven", a term which signifies the rule of God in the earth, God becoming king among men. The kingdom of God, it should be seen, has a far broader meaning and wider sweep than the church, for it serves to include all that God is ever doing the ages through for the spiritual uplift and permanent betterment of mankind. In the broadest sense this beneficent kingdom may be defined as all that divinely directed movement and control in human life and history which has for its object the ultimate accomplishment of the mind and will of God in the hearts and lives of men—for this glorious kingdom on the earthly side has its ultimate seat within the human heart (Lu. 17:21). Jesus by his luminous teaching lifted that name, "the kingdom of God", out [pg 165] of the older and narrower phases of its Jewish use, and gave it a broader and more beneficent meaning for all succeeding time.

The casting out of Satan, which is related in this section, is introduced as a contributive event to the glorious coming of the kingdom. His defeat in heaven foreshadows his defeat on earth, and though he still has “great wrath” which he pours out upon men, yet 'he hath but a short time' (v. 12), i. e. a time that is relatively short, until Christ shall reign in power. They who are our brethren overcame him, we are told (v. 11), “because of the blood of the Lamb”, therefore they are called upon to rejoice. In connection with this interpretation it should not be forgotten that the time-relation is, in this view, ignored in the vision, as commonly throughout the book, for Apocalyptic often does not separate the near and the far, and events widely separated in time are viewed as contemporaneous in the timeless sequence of prophetic perspective. Thus the incident before us without any intimation takes us back to the period anterior to creation, and then recurs as suddenly to the experience of persecution by faithful Christians.[458] In all Apocalyptic writings there is a manifest indifference to formal consistency that we do well to bear in mind.

According to another view the account in this section is to be regarded as continuous with the last, verse seven following verse six in natural order, and the conflict described is to be placed after the resurrection of Christ, making the victory a shortening of Satan's power following upon Christ's redemptive work, and depriving him of such opportunity

as he hitherto had in heaven of accusing the brethren, thereby limiting his sphere to this world. Notwithstanding the attractiveness of this view, however, and what may be said in its favor from several passages in the Gospels (cf. Lk. 10:18; Jn. 12:31; 14:30b; and 16:11),[459] the former interpretation is upon the whole to be preferred as agreeing best with the general sense of the chapter.[460] Such a symbol of victory over Satan, whatever the period to which the victory may be attributed, was not out of accord with ideas [pg 166] current at that time; for "this feature impossible in modern conceptions of heaven, shows itself from time to time in pre-Christian and also early Christian conceptions, viz. the belief in the presence of evil, or the possibility of its appearance, in the heavens" [i. e. in the lower heavens].[461] In any case this section places in clear perspective the great truth that leadership in the antagonism of evil with righteousness belongs to and takes its rise from the supernatural world, and what we constantly see here has its source and occasion there, in the deeper spiritual vision of prophecy.

In the interpretation of this section a manifest parallelism has been pointed out between the conflict of Marduk with Tiâmat in Babylonian mythology, and the war between Michael and the Dragon in the Apocalypse.[462] Others pursuing this idea still further, though without sufficient ground for their conclusion, have attributed to Babylonian origin a body of Jewish apocalyptic traditions which they

assume to have been one of the sources of the Revelation and to have furnished the incident of this section.[463] In correction of this position it should be seen that even when we recognize to the fullest extent the necessary influence of contact with Babylon, both early and late, upon Jewish thought, and the introduction of ideas from that source as natural and inevitable, it does not follow that there was any such use made of Babylonian mythology in the later Jewish writings as this would imply, for the Jew was exceedingly wary of any religious ideas that did not spring from his own ancestral heritage. It is indeed quite probable that particular concepts, or thought-elements, like that of the Dragon and of the two Beasts in this vision, are of Babylonian origin; but "the hypothesis of a Jewish messianic use of an entire heathen sun-myth, and then the Christian adaptation of the Jewish form",[464] is in itself highly improbable at so late a period in Jewish development, and can scarcely be accepted by those who maintain the inspiration of the Apocalypse in any essential sense. It is much more likely [pg 167] that the author, if using such material at all, incorporated the thought rather than the form of such floating Babylonian fragments as belonged to his time, in accordance with his usual method of employing the Hebrew literature, though this is wholly a matter of hypothesis.[465]

C The Two Beasts, Ch. 13:1-18

The vision now sets forth two of the principal forms of the world's opposition to Christ and his kingdom, which are represented as Beasts, monsters that are terrible and revolting in appearance, that are placed in notable contrast with the Lamb, and that are inspired by Satan who stands watching in his dragon form on the sands of the sea—for according to the corrected reading of the Revised Version, it is the Dragon and not the Apocalyptist that stands upon the seashore.[466] This vision affords an interesting example of John's use of already existing material, for the idea of two wild beasts opposing the Messiah is found elsewhere in apocalyptic writings, although not in exactly the same form,[467] and is here made the basis of an illustration of undoubted power. The Beasts in the Apocalypse are the natural and fitting embodiment of brute force operating to control men in the sphere of religion. Some would prefer the translation of θηρίον as a "monster" rather than a "beast",[468] and perhaps, it is technically more accurate, but the long use of the term "beast" in this connection has made it familiar to our minds and also intelligible, for it is a beast in the bad sense that is intended, and to the average reader this term undoubtedly conveys the proper meaning.

1 The First Beast—the Beast from the Sea, Ch. 13:1-10

A wild Beast fierce and bloodthirsty, and ideal composite creature, “like unto a leopard and his feet were [pg 168] as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion” (v. 2), evidently formed from the beasts in Daniel's vision (ch. 7:3f.), is seen coming up out of the tempestuous sea of the nations, and is manifestly the same as the Scarlet Beast of chapter seventeen, the one constantly referred to as “the Beast” without any other qualification. This is the symbol of the universal world-power, i. e. all the world-kingdoms are considered as one and personified in this Beast in open hostility to the church;[469] national opposition to Christianity, exemplified by heathen Rome in John's day which supplied the groundwork of the conception, but extending far beyond that and applying equally to all persecuting nations during the whole forty-two months, or three and a half years, of world-domination, which represents the duration of the church-historic period of trial (v. 5), a period that is broken and incomplete (see App'x E). The Beast is described as having ten horns and seven heads, the symbol of a twofold completeness, both that of parts (ten) and that of quality or kind (seven), the same number as the Dragon, though in inverse order, indicating that the Beast is the agent of the Dragon, i. e. of Satan, and is possessed of like dominion and power,—for “the Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority”. The heads seem to symbolize the world-power taking form, and the horns the exercise of that power. (For the further

development of this symbolism, see ch. 17:9f.) And it should be noted that the ten horns and seven heads are common not only to the Dragon and the Beast, but are also the sum total of those belonging to the four beasts in Daniel's vision, i. e. to all the world-powers there designed, a symbolism which suggests that it properly applies to more than one nation, and which here seems intended to portray the persistent opposition of the Devil to the church of God, working through the power of the world in all time and in all nations. The ten crowns or diadems upon his horns denote the fulness of his sovereignty, and imply the extent of his earthly rule; the names of blasphemy upon his heads seem to refer to the divine titles and honors assumed by earthly kings, especially those of Rome, as Domitian who ordered that in official documents he should be styled "Our Lord and God"—a figure [pg 169] that is perhaps suggested here by the mitre of the high priest on which was written "Holiness to the Lord", to which this was antipodal;[470] while the wounded head that is healed refers to the death stroke, given to the world-power by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, from which there has been seeming recovery,[471] for this was a true deathblow to the world-power, even though it failed of immediate realization and thereby disappointed Jewish-Christian hopes of early victory. The Beast blasphemes against God, "his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heavens", i. e. the inhabitants of the tabernacle. "And it was given unto him to

make war with the saints and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation"; but it is only as it is "given unto him" that he can exercise his power, i. e. he is subject to divine control. And every one, "whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain", shall worship him. Thus is depicted not only the fierce antagonism of the Roman Empire to the church in that age, but the perpetual hostility and unceasing opposition of the universal world-power in all ages and nations to the growth of the kingdom of God among men.

The symbol of the Beast, notwithstanding the difficulty of its interpretation, has certain distinguishing features that help to interpret its meaning. The close resemblance to Daniel's vision gives a clue to the thought in mind, and serves to indicate the proper method of interpretation. That the world-power in some form is symbolized in the vision, is clearly indicated; on this point all interpreters are agreed, though the majority of modern interpreters regard the Beast as the Roman Empire. That John had Rome primarily in mind can scarcely be doubted; but, in the view accepted by the symbolic interpreters, the Roman Empire served only to supply the groundwork for an idealized conception, in which the ordinary and limited view of sense has become transformed under the influence of prophetic insight into the wider vision of a world-power belonging to all time and

pervading all history that rises beastlike in strength and might to oppress the people of [pg 170] God. The Beast, according to this interpretation, is the persecuting world-power in any and every age antagonizing the kingdom of God; the national and political forces of the world in their organized form arraying themselves against our Lord and his Christ; that phase of the world's life which finds expression for its opposition to the children of the kingdom under the forms of law and government, the most sovereign and irresistible of all kinds of persecution. This symbol naturally found a ready and satisfactory interpretation by the early church in the prevailing surveillance of the Roman authority; but it is an interpretation none the less true of heathen nations everywhere and always, who constantly persecute the church of God. The interpretation thus given is the one accepted by the symbolist school as the most natural and satisfactory of all, having a world-wide application and universal content; and it may be confidently adopted with an adequate degree of assurance that it conveys the meaning intended. The preterist interpreters, on the other hand, limit the meaning of the First Beast to the Roman Empire, using its power to oppose and oppress Christianity, and construe the wounded head as a reference to the death of Nero (see notes on chapter seventeen).

(1) An Admonition to Patience, Ch. 13:9-10

John adds a word of warning concerning the need of patience and perseverance for the saints. If any one is ordained to captivity, into captivity let him go as the lot appointed him; resist not, for he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword; this is the test of "the patience and the faith of the saints". When we compare this message contained in the tenth verse, which is an exhortation to patience under persecution, with that in the eighteenth verse of this same chapter, where the exhortation is to wisdom against deception, we get a glimpse of the different kind of danger that is to be apprehended from each of the two beasts, the first persecuting men, the second deceiving them.

2 The Second Beast,—the Beast from the Land, Ch. 13:11-18.

Another wild Beast, also an ideal and composite creature, like unto yet different from the first, is seen [pg 171] coming up out of the earth,[472] i. e. out of established and well-ordered society; the Two-horned Beast in whom the exercise of personal power or force is less prominent than in the First Beast with ten horns to whom he is subordinate, for the power he exerciseth is "all the power of the First Beast". This Beast is the symbol of the universal world-religion, i. e. all the world-religions are considered as one and personified in the Second Beast, in disguised

hostility to the church of Christ;[473] the False Prophet of chs. 16:13 and 19:20, assuming to be what he is not, and using his authority for evil ends, who "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth".[474] His two horns like a lamb, but voice like a dragon, indicate that he has the external characteristics of a lamb, but the inner nature of a dragon, and are evidently intended to signify that he appears to be like Christ, while he is like Satan; he represents the forms of religion that assume to save men, but in fact only bind them to evil. "He doeth great signs that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men", i. e. not a literal bringing down of fire, but a power counterfeiting the power of God as shown of old in fire from heaven, a great sign to Israel (Num. 16:35; I K. 18:38), and sembling that of the two witnesses (ch. 11:5). And he required of "them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the Beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived", i. e. the false religions of the world, which the Second Beast represents, operate to make the people subservient to the world-power, the First Beast which had the stroke of the sword and lived, with which these religions always [pg 172] stand connected whether in Rome or in other nations;[475] and the people render worship as they are directed. "And it was given *unto him* to give breath to the image of the Beast that it should speak and cause as many as should not worship the image to be killed", i. e. the heathen religions give life and authority to national worship, give vitality to

the world-power that it should command and compel men to join in its idolatrous forms or lose their lives by refusal. Thus the whole figure seems to indicate the spirit of the world operating against the church through the forms of religion, especially as seizing upon the natural and ethnic religions, permeating them with deceit, and subverting them to worldly ends (v. 14), the element of religion being a prominent feature throughout. Actuated by worldly wisdom, which is "earthly, sensual, and devilish" (Jas. 3:15), this Beast, we are told, bids all men worship the image of the First (v. 12 and 14), i. e. worship the deification of the world-power, thereby insidiously rehabilitating the world-power in another form, a figure likely drawn from the worship of the Emperor's image, a cult prevailing at the time, and showing how false religions rest upon and are upheld by heathen governments. John doubtless had primarily in mind the heathen priesthood of that period, especially the priesthood of Caesar-worship, which afforded the best example of the then existing world-religions, but this only formed the groundwork of the larger thought of the vision. Preterist interpreters, as a rule, would limit the meaning of the Second Beast to the heathen priesthood of that time, but this is too restricted a view. Any religion anywhere rejecting the Christ and crowning the world-power is represented by the Second Beast. It has also been suggested that the Second Beast represents the Asiarch, or chief priest of Asia, the director and instigator of Emperor-

worship.[476] This may possibly have been the source of John's idea; but however formed we should regard it as a universal and poetic conception of one continuous phase of the world's opposition to Christ and his kingdom, and not limit it to any particular historic [pg 173] manifestation of that opposition. Others, without sufficient grounds, have referred the title to the papacy, interpreting the First and Second Beasts as Rome pagan and papal. Another interpretation is that the First Beast is the secular persecuting power, pagan or Christian, and the Second Beast is the sacerdotal persecuting power, pagan and Christian; while still another and better interpretation is that world-force is the first, and world-worship, i. e. world-religion and superstition, the second.[477] Symbolist interpreters always prefer the wider to a narrower symbolism in accordance with their general view of the book. According to this view, which is the one accepted in the present volume, all the world-religions which profess to be holy but are controlled by the same spirit, belong to the Second Beast and contribute to his power. The aspect of heathenism which here presented itself to John's mind is the most general and obvious of all its many characteristics; and although we now recognize more fully the elements of truth in the ethnic religions, and their relative value in the moral education of mankind when without the gospel, yet John's view still holds good, and is confirmed by the world-wide testimony of the mission field. The world-spirit which lies at the door of the

world-religions is and always has been evil, and will always be degrading to the soul, that spirit which subordinates the moral and spiritual to purely selfish and worldly ends. The forms of the Two-horned Beast today are just as deceiving and defiling to men, and as much opposed to the kingdom of God, as they ever were of old. And not only are all the world-religions the abiding manifestation of the Second Beast, but even the Christian church also, whether Catholic or Protestant, may become subservient thereto, whenever or wherever it, or any part of it, may be dominated by the spirit of the world-religions, and thereby yields its God-given prestige to this Beast. The forms of human learning, too, as philosophy, science, literature, and art, when they trench upon the sphere of religion and become atheistic, agnostic, materialistic, or God-defying, exhibit the spirit of the world-religions in opposition to Christ, and are manifestations of the same Beast. This power is world-wide and age-long, and the vision seems to look [pg 174] through and beyond the forces then at work to their wider manifestation in history. For the Second Beast is the incarnation of the permanent and universal world-religion in each and all of its forms, and while presenting one aspect of the world-religions of John's time, yet goes far beyond that and portrays the principle of opposition to the church of Christ which underlies them all, and which would develop new forms in the period when Christianity had nominally triumphed, continuing the conflict upon different lines from the violent

persecutions of the earlier ages; a period when the world's opposition to God would be expressed “by affiliation with the religion of Jesus, and by penetrating its life with false ideals”, producing a faithlessness within the church even more deadly in its results than the fatal furor of persecution, for the world within the church is one of the forms of the Second Beast, and there is nothing so dangerous to the life of the soul as irreligious religion.[478]

(1.) An Admonition to Wisdom, Ch. 13:18

“Here is wisdom”, John says: “He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the Beast; for it is the number of a man”,—or rather, “the number of man”, for there is no article in the Greek, implying that the reference is not to any particular man—[479] i. e. it is a human number. The mark of the Beast, like that of an ancient devotee to his idol, is put upon both the hand and brain (v. 16)[480] of all the people who accept his authority, without any distinction of rank, rich and poor, bond and free, small and great, all alike, showing that their powers are uniformly devoted to the service of this world. John exhorts the church to wisdom in discerning this Beast, indicating the subtleness of his hidden power. The number of his name, i. e. designation, is six hundred and sixty-six (some manuscripts read six

hundred and sixteen, but this is almost certainly an error of transcription), the symbol of a threefold, composite power of evil which includes the Dragon, the First Beast, and the Second, and which culminates [pg 175] in the last, viz:—600, a hundredfold of six, a numerical designation of the Dragon, plus 60, tenfold of six, a similar designation of the First Beast, plus 6, onefold of six, a like designation of the Second Beast, if considered alone, which together, equal 666, the numerical designation of the full power which the Second Beast represents. The key to the mystical designation 666, according to this interpretation,[481] is found in the number six, the number of evil, one short of seven or perfection, Satan's number, whether multiplied by ten or not, here thrice repeated, *six*, *six*, *six*, each repetition multiplying the previous number tenfold, or six a hundredfold added to six tenfold added to six a single fold, producing a triple symbol of the full power of evil. In this symbolism we seem to have the thought of a trinity of evil striving in antagonism to the divine trinity; and though we cannot be sure that John had this in mind, yet it seems quite in accord with the apocalyptic method of depicting truth. If the reading 616 is preferred, the First Beast is then designated by 10, the symbol of earthly completeness, instead of 60 as above, a much less likely symbolism, but not affecting the general meaning.

The mark of the Beast is one of the most disputed points in the whole book, and some

commentators, while suggesting a probable interpretation, prefer to leave the meaning unsolved. Certainly all interpretations finding in the number a cryptic name, such as *Neron Caesar*, or *Lateinos*, notwithstanding their wide acceptance by modern interpreters, should be discarded as fanciful.[482] The number was evidently intended as a designation rather than a name; it is a symbol like every other number in the Revelation, and any attempt to solve it by reference to the Jewish *gematria*, or numerical indication of names, is foreign to the method of the book, and only involves it in greater obscurity, as the different answers obtained in that way will show.[483] [pg 176] While that interpretation has been the generally accepted view with preterists, a revolt against its arbitrariness is manifest in late writers, and cannot but be felt by the attentive student.[484] That six hundred and sixty-six is a triple symbol of the full power of evil, has found acceptance with a multitude of readers, and is the most satisfactory interpretation to those who hold the symbolic view.

In conclusion it should be said that the identification of this Beast, or of the former one, with the Antichrist of John's Epistles is of more than doubtful value in arriving at the meaning intended; for the Apocalyptist studiously avoided the use of that term though quite familiar with it (I Jn. 2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and II Jn. 1:7), and we surely cannot do better than to follow his example. Indeed the entire interpretation of the Apocalypse will be

permanently advanced when all direct reference to a *personal* Anti-christ is finally eliminated as foreign to the purpose, if not the thought of the book. In the broad sense of the term the Anti-christ is the Against-Christ in any and every form. John tells us (I Jn. 2:18) there are "Many antichrists" (ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ), a term peculiar to John in the New Testament; our Lord said (Mat. 24:24) "There shall arise false christs" (ψευδόχριστοι), a different term in the Greek, and evidently referring to more than one; and it may well be doubted whether the prediction is anywhere intended to refer to a single person. The term may be understood in a general way to include the Two Beasts, the Harlot, and all other forms of anti-christianity, but no more definite identification can with any probability be made.

[pg 177]

D. The Lamb on Mount Zion, Ch. 14:1-20

The closing part of this fourfold vision, revealing the final outcome of the preceding conflict in the glorious triumph of the Lamb and his followers, is now given for the comfort of the church, and to relieve the sombre shadows of the earlier parts of the vision by a foregleam of victory.

1. The Redeemed with the Lamb, Ch. 14:1-5

We see here a vast and virgin multitude, a hundred and forty-four thousand, a large and perfect number, the former symbol of the complete first-fruits from Israel (ch. 7:4), now used by synecdoche to represent all the redeemed who have been chosen from among men, the best of their race, who are called "the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb",[485] and who stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, having his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads, signifying to whom they belong and marking them as antipodal to those who have received the mark of the Beast (ch. 13:16), and who sing a new song, the song of victory (the Incommunicable Chorus), known only to the redeemed. Of this blessed company it is said that "they are without blemish", i. e. they are sinless before God, which is apparently an explanation of the symbolism used in saying that they are "virgins", and "not defiled with women",—or "among women". Roman Catholic commentators, however, usually interpret literally, and apply the passage to those women who have never entered into wedlock for the kingdom of heaven's sake—a construction that it scarcely seems to bear.[486] Futurists generally maintain that the vision refers to the earthly Zion, and connect the incident with the second advent, making the

hundred and forty-four thousand to consist of Jews alone.

[pg 178]

2. The Three Angel Messages, Ch. 14:6-11

These are distinct notes of divine warning, prelusive of the End, which are given by the mouth of three different angels, showing their separate and individual importance; they are three in number, the symbol of the spiritual, indicating the nature of their contents; and they are introduced as preparatory to the scenes of anticipated judgment in verses fourteen to twenty, and are premonitory of the End. The End is an ever-recurrent note that always finds place in the deeper strains of Apocalyptic literature. The End that victory may come, was the natural cry of a spirit that despaired of the present world, and believed that God could only be vindicated by the consummation of all things. This was a fundamental weakness of the Apocalyptic point of view, which found the proper design of the world in its speedy ending and not in its longer continuance, a mistake that unfortunately has been perpetuated in Christian thought as though it were fundamental to it, whereas the victory and the End may well be as far apart as the creation from the victory. The Apocalypse sounds the note of the End without hesitancy

or discussion. The difficulties that embarrass us did not enter into the thought of that time.

(1) The Message of the Eternal Gospel, Ch. 14:6-7

“Another angel” and the first of the three which follow, flying in mid-heaven proclaims the (or *an*) eternal gospel to every nation and tribe and tongue and people before the time of judgment, the symbol of the fulfilment of the words of our Lord: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come” (Mat. 24:14). The angel exhorts men to “fear God and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come”, i. e. is now at hand.

(2) The Message of Babylon's Fall, Ch. 14:8

A second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, the city of the world, the dwelling-place and symbol of the world of sinful men, and the antithesis of Jerusalem, which is the city of God, the dwelling-place and symbol of the holy. The destruction of Babylon is a necessary prelude to the End, for the sinful worldly life which [pg 179] finds its fitting type in this great city must be broken down

before Christ can triumph.

(3) The Message of Doom for the Beast and his Followers, Ch. 14:9-11

The third angel proclaims the doom of divine wrath upon the worshippers of the Beast and his image, i. e. upon those who glorify the blasphemous world-power, or share in the deceit of the world-religion; and the terms of the message are full of terror and foreboding. Thus in a concise and triple message is foreshadowed the universal proclamation of the gospel, the overthrow of the world's social and communal life adverse to God, and the final destruction of those forces in national and religious thought that withstand the full and final triumph of the Christ.

3. The Blessedness of the Holy Dead, Ch. 14:12-13

The author at this point expresses his sympathy with the church, setting forth the need of patience in the conflict (v. 12); and then he records a voice heard from heaven (v. 13), declaring that the dead who die in the Lord are blessed “henceforth”, i. e. after death, for they have both rest and reward,[487] and possibly including, also, the additional

thought that they have thereby escaped from the great tribulation even though by martyrdom. Thus once more the redeemed are placed in opposition to the unredeemed, the saved are set over against the lost, as those who have secured the better part.

4. The Harvest of the Elect, Ch. 14:14-16

One like unto the Son of Man (or *a* son of man), i. e. one sharing our humanity—a designation of the Messiah after the time of Daniel[488]—is seen sitting upon [pg 180] a white cloud, the traditional covering of the divine majesty and a symbol of the divine presence, having on his head a golden crown, the token of glory and of victory, and in his hand a sharp sickle, the instrument for reaping. And on the announcement of another angel[489] from out the temple that the hour was come, he cast his sickle upon the earth and gathered all the faithful into his kingdom as a harvest that was ripe, a symbol of the ingathering of all the redeemed preceding the punishment of the wicked (cf. Mat. 25:31-46). The action set forth in this part of the vision is preparatory to and anticipates the judgment, yet the process of judgment is not described. The vision is occupied rather with pointing out how the path of history inevitably leads to the judgment bar. The incident serves to introduce the seventh and last of the mystic figures of this wonderful

vision of conflict, the Son of Man on the Cloud, who represents Christ as the theanthropic Redeemer and Judge, a quite different aspect of his character from the Man-Child where he is set forth subject to the conditions of his mysterious incarnation, and therefore requiring an entirely different symbol.

5. The Vintage of Wrath, Ch. 14:17-20

Still another angel came out from the shrine or sanctuary of the temple in heaven, at the summons of the angel who had power over fire, i. e. the fire of the altar, which is here the symbol of judgment, and gathered all the ungodly as vintage from the earth, and cast them into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God, a figure of the ingathering and fearful punishment of the wicked at the end of the world. According to this view the two gatherings described in verses fourteen to twenty, are regarded as depicting the opposite fate in store for the faithful and the wicked, instead of a twofold account of the same event repeated in different form for the purpose of emphasis. This interpretation agrees best with the general tenor of the chapter and the common method of contrast throughout the book; others, however, regard the passage as a double figure of the judgment.[490] The scene is laid outside [pg 181] the city, i. e. Jerusalem,

most likely the New Jerusalem, the home of God's people, without the gates of which are the wicked who perish (ch. 22:15). The figure may have been drawn from the scenes of terror and bloodshed which attended the fall of the earthly city under Titus, a view quite possible if the later date of authorship be accepted, though possibly there may have been no definite city in mind. Some connect this passage with the struggle in chapter twenty (v. 7-10), where the nations compass the beloved city, and connect both with the advent, interpreting literally,—a view common with the futurists. And we are told that when the winepress was trodden "there came out blood, from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses,"[491] a symbol of the terrible destruction of life that ensued, a flowing stream that reached as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs, i. e. almost two hundred Roman miles, or somewhat farther than the entire length of Palestine, a Jewish synonym for a great distance. Sixteen hundred is also the square of four, the earth number, multiplied by the square of ten, the number of completeness, which perhaps indicates that the punishment is complete throughout the whole created world. The passage in its essential thought is an echo from the rhapsody of Joel (ch. 3:13), combined with the vision of judgment in Isaiah's Zion redeemed (ch. 63:3-6), and recalls his Assyrian flood, reaching even to the neck (Isa. 8:7-8).[492] The transition to the vision of vials is now made by a sudden change of theme, and a return to the world-

process of judgment that is age-long and world-wide in its scope and purpose.

V. The Vision of the Seven Vials [or Bowls] (A Vision of Judgment). Ch. 15:1-16:12, and 16:17-21

The vision of the seven vials is a revelation of God's last plagues upon the ungodly, a final view of the divine providential purpose concerning the wicked, another group of seven that are set forth in a form similar to the judgments under the trumpets, but of increased severity, and that are promptly executed. They are called “another sign”, and may be regarded as another [pg 182] line of judgments of similar character to the trumpets, or as the complete fulfilment of the contents of the trumpet-judgments presented in another way, which are given for increased emphasis under figures that are analogous, and that indicate their inner connection; and, so far as the vials have any time-relation, they may be regarded as belonging to the same general period as the trumpets, i. e. the time of man's existence on the earth, especially the period of conflict, though shown by their progressive and destructive character to culminate in the closing period of human history. The vials are marked by an intensity of form and rapidity of movement, especially

as they approach the end, and they are not limited like the trumpets to a part of men, but affect all the evil. They are vivid symbolic presentations of deep and terrible punishments, and are called 'the last plagues' because in them is fulfilled or completed the wrath of God upon the earth—a new and final view of the divine purpose concerning the wicked which may be looked at quite apart from any previous view.

Some preterists, who find in the seals a prophetic description of the trials of the church in the first age, regard the trumpets as a typical presentation of the fall of Jerusalem, and the vials as a portrayal of the fall of Rome.[493] This opinion, it is affirmed, accords best with the general method of the Apocalyptic writings, which have for the most part a definite and local interpretation, and avoids the difficulty of an apparent repetition of similar judgments upon the same objects under the trumpets and the vials. But, upon the other hand, the prophetic outlook of John appears to the majority of devout minds to have a far wider sweep than that of other Apocalyptic writers outside the Scriptures, and to embrace a world-view that is universal, and that is not at all met by these limited historical fulfilments. Still, even if the former view were correct in its main assumption, “that does not preclude us,” as has been well said,[494] “from interpreting the inspired words as referring not only to events near John's time, but also to other events of which they were the foretaste and figures. To

us the meaning [in that case] is that the type of the end has been foretold and has come, but that [pg 183] the end itself which has been equally foretold [the full end] must be watched for in all seriousness." If we have a correct view of prophecy we can readily assent to these words of wisdom which cannot be too strongly emphasized.

It should be noted in passing that the revelation of these world-judgments in the visions of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, notwithstanding their separate character, may be seen to follow a certain line of development, showing an inner connection; and also, that the divine purpose of judgment may be considered as being in a general way partially disclosed under the seals,—for judgment is one phase of the seals though a subordinate one—as being publicly proclaimed by the trumpets, and as being fully executed in the pouring out of the vials, each series presenting a different view, complete in itself, of God's punitive inflictions for sin throughout the whole history of mankind. They are seen, also, to reflect God's long-suffering patience with the sinner, first making known his wrath in an order of providences which affect his people as well as those of the world; then in threatening and manifesting his purpose to punish evil by an order of events which affect only a part of mankind, i. e. the sinful because they are sinful, and that afford abundant opportunity for repentance; and, finally, by the swift execution of a divinely just though terrible

punishment upon all the obdurately wicked that refuse to repent. This last is the great, impressive, and awe-inspiring thought of the vision of the vials.

A. The Preparation for the Vials, Ch. 15:1-8

The preparation for the vials, which is now entered upon, is a connecting link with the former vision, and a prelude to the plagues that follow. It is introduced by an inspiring view of the saints who have come victorious out of the conflict depicted in that vision, and is intended for the comfort of God's people in the midst of trials to which they cannot be indifferent, and which in affecting the world of nature and of men must in some degree also affect the righteous as well, though delivered from their destroying power. The comfort afforded in trial by the promise of deliverance, an element which has no small share in the purpose of the [pg 184] Apocalypse, is clearly brought out in this introductory passage before the vials have begun to be poured out, and is not interjected between them, as in the episodes that occur in the seals and trumpets—the episode in the vision of the vials being a warning of danger. The vision, too, is followed immediately by the comforting vision of victory beginning in the seventeenth chapter.

1. The Angels with the Plagues, Ch. 15:1-2a

Seven angels appear, to whom is entrusted the execution of the seven plagues, which are called “the last” because they lead to the end of the world and to the bar of judgment;[495] and the sea of glass, formerly described as “like unto crystal”, now becomes “mingled with fire”, the sign of the flushing of victory through anticipated judgment felt by all those who share in that great boundless life which exists before the throne, and whose experience is symbolized by the sea with its wide relation to the people of God in the past (cf. notes on ch. 4:6).[496]

2. The Victors by the Sea, Ch. 15:2b

The victors over the Beast and his image stand by rather than *upon* the sea,[497] indicating their close relation to it, having harps of God prepared for tuneful melody. The figure seems to be drawn from the triumph of Israel at the Red Sea, though the significance of the sea cannot be quite the same, for in the old sense 'the sea is no more' (ch. 21:1); it has here become the symbol of the calm and fulness of life and joy in the presence of God.

3. The Song of the Redeemed, Ch. 15:3-4

The united song of all the redeemed before God, (the Adoration Chorus of Moses and the Lamb) who belong [pg 185] alike to the Old Dispensation and the New, to Moses and to Christ, represents the essential unity of faith and life under both parts of God's redemptive plan which is now about to be completed. It is an outburst of praise and adoration addressed to the Lord God, the Almighty, the King of the Ages, whose wondrous works and righteous judgments have been and are about to be made manifest before all nations. The song is the counterpart of the song of deliverance by the shore of the Red Sea, but it has a new and deeper fulness that is consonant with its theme.

4. The Judgment Made Ready, Ch. 15:5-8

The temple, the ναὸς or inner shrine of the tabernacle of the testimony (i. e. of the tabernacle of the law of God), is seen in heaven opened, and the seven angels who are clothed as priests and have charge of the plagues come out of it as the vindicators of that law. These are “arrayed with *precious* stone”, according to the variant reading adopted in the Revised Version, which has the weight of manuscript authority in its favor; but, as this reading differs from the Authorized Version only by a single letter in

the Greek word, and only yields sense by the insertion of the word “precious”, it is best to regard it as due to a very early mistake of a copyist, and keep the old reading, “clothed in linen”, (Ezek. 9:2).[498] The thought is in either case practically the same, viz. that these angels are clothed like priests, for the phrase “arrayed with precious stone”, if we adhere to that reading, recalls the breastplate of the high-priest, as the phrase “clothed in linen” evidently refers to the garments of the priesthood. There are seven angels in the vision to symbolize the universal character of the punishments, and there are given unto them by one of the four living creatures who represent all created life, seven golden vials or bowls full of the wrath of God (cf. Jer. 25:15f) to indicate the nature of their mission. “And the temple was filled with smoke”, the sign of the presence and glory and terror of the Lord; and, as at Sinai, no one could enter his presence while the judgments were being manifested.

[pg 186]

B. The Vials Poured Out, Ch. 16:1-12, and 17-21

The vials or bowls in the vision, which are apparently the same as the basons used in the temple service for receiving the sacrificial blood and the wine of the drink-offering, are

made the symbolic receptacles of the judicial wrath of God against sin, called “the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” in verse nineteen, which is evidently conceived of as stored up through long periods to be suddenly and violently poured out. The golden bowls seem to indicate broad shallow vessels quite unlike our modern vials, probably of a deep saucer-like shape so that their contents could be poured out at once and suddenly.[499] The name “vials” has, however, been retained in these notes, notwithstanding the change to “bowls” in the Revised Version, because of its associations and wide use in commentaries. The translation of φιάλας as “bowls” is doubtless more accurate, but the term used is relatively indifferent if the proper meaning be attached to it. They are not vials in the modern sense, but in the original sense of the word φιάλη in the Greek, which is the source of our English word “vial”, but which meant a shallow cup or bowl. The pouring out of the vials or bowls is the symbol of the execution of divine wrath upon the world. The vague description given in the vision of the nature of the inflictions which finally fall upon men as the result of the pouring out of the vials, forbids our attempting any very definite interpretation of them beyond the most general one that the world of nature and of men is made to abound with terrors which distress the evil. In this interpretation we can be absolutely confident, and the general effect seems to be the chief matter of importance. The abiding impression of the judgments of the vials, despite their obscurity, is one of

deep and pervasive solemnity.

(1.) The Command to Pour Out the Vials, Ch. 16:1

Preceding the opening of the series a great voice is heard out of the temple, i. e. from the inner shrine of the temple in heaven, apparently from God himself, though possibly from one of the Angels of the Presence, saying to the seven angels, “Go ye and pour out the [pg 187] seven bowls [or vials] of the wrath of God into the earth”; and in obedience to this command each angel empties his vial into, or upon, an appointed object. The first three vials are poured *into* the objects named, while the last four are poured *upon* them, as indicated by the prepositions εἰς and ἐπὶ; but, so far as can be seen, no special purpose is served by this use.

1 The Pouring Out of the First Vial, Ch. 16:2

The first angel poured out his vial into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the Beast: the symbol of wrath poured out on the earth, and thus upon the men who are of it and belong to it, producing suffering that is bitter and intense. The form of the judgment

is doubtless purposely indefinite, but the object on which it falls is made plain: the men who have attached themselves to the company of the Beast bear their punishment to the full, and it is poured out upon them by divine authority.

2 The Pouring Out of the Second Vial, Ch. 16:3

The second angel poured out his vial into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man, i. e. clotted and putrefying, and it caused every living thing in the sea to die—a form of judgment that was very repulsive to the Jewish mind: the symbol of wrath poured out on the sea, one part of the fourfold division of creation noted under the trumpets, and thus upon men who are made to suffer by this means for their evil doing. As under the trumpets the first four vials are poured out upon the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, and the sun, a figurative form indicating their world-wide character—they affect the whole created world.

3 The Pouring Out of the Third Vial, Ch. 16:4-7

The third angel poured out his bowl into the

rivers and the fountains of the waters; and they became blood: the symbol of wrath poured out on the sources of water supply for the people, thereby punishing men retributively for the righteous blood which they had shed, and calling forth voices of approval from heaven, viz. from the angel of the waters,[500] and from the altar, i. e. from [pg 188] the place where the martyrs rest (ch. 6:9). Retribution is declared to be the judicial result of divine wrath for sin; those who poured out the blood of saints and of prophets are given blood to drink as their just desert—a fearful punishment to the Eastern mind.

4 The Pouring Out of the Fourth Vial, Ch. 16:8-9

The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire: the symbol of wrath poured out on the heavenly bodies, especially upon the sun the source of light and heat, that they may become the agent of punishment to men. And men blasphemed the name of God, who is recognized as having power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory, exhibiting the aspect of punishment which embitters and does not lead to repentance. It is a curious coincidence that the parts of creation which are made the subjects of judgment under the fourth vial and the fourth trumpet are described in

Genesis as having been created on the fourth day.

5 The Pouring Out of the Fifth Vial, Ch. 16:10-11

The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the Beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and men gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, and they repented not of their works: the symbol of wrath poured out on the throne of the Beast as the representative of Satan's power in the world, thus afflicting the worshippers of the Beast and his image. Under the fifth vial it will be seen that the plagues pass from the physical to the spiritual sphere of action, just as they did in the seals and trumpets; and they are found to be cumulative rather than successive, while, as under the preceding vial, they do not lead to repentance but to wrath and punishment. Also, throughout the vials, it is not the third part only that is affected, as under the trumpets, but the punishment falls upon the whole created world, showing the universal character of the judgments.

[pg 189]

6 The Pouring Out of the Sixth Vial, Ch. 16:12

The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river, the Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up,[501] that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising: the symbol of wrath poured out on the Euphrates, the center and seat of heathenism, or on the world-forces of evil, thereby opening the way for the influx of the Kings of the East to march to their ruin. The Kings of the East evidently belong to the "kings of the whole world" (v. 14), and are instruments of the Dragon and of the Beast who go up to war, not against Babylon, but against believers.[502] The Euphrates was the center and stronghold of heathenism to the Jewish mind, and behind that lay the indefinite world-power which is here represented by the Kings of the East; upon these the angel poured out the vial of the retributive wrath of God.

[At this point the Episode Vb, given in verses thirteen to sixteen, occurs in the order of the vision,—a paragraph which though of limited extent has yet a clear relation to the course of the vials as an intervening vision of warning to the redeemed, and preparing the way for the approaching end.]

7 The Pouring Out of the Seventh Vial, Ch. 16:17-21

The seventh angel poured out his vial upon

the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done:[503] and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth”: the symbol of wrath poured out on the air as the familiar abode of evil spirits,[504] and also of the coming of the End, which is depicted by the fall of cities, especially of Babylon the great city, the type of the godless world, which is divided asunder into three parts, a symbol of completeness,—also three a symbol of the divine, perhaps implying God hath wrought it,—and is [pg 190] given to drink of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath; by the destruction of islands and mountains, and by a plague of great hail, exceeding great, every stone of which was about the weight of a talent, i. e. from 108 to 130 pounds; “and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail”.[505] The End itself is unrecorded; but with the infliction of the seven vials it is declared that “the wrath of God is spent”.[506] The whole course of the vials is toward the End, which though not described, yet stands out in singular prominence as the inevitable result of the ruin wrought by sin; and here, as in the vision of the trumpets, the millennial period is not brought into view as a preceding stage. The transition to the scene of victory in the seventeenth chapter is after this immediately made by one of the vial-angels (ch. 17:1).

If we now recall the path of the seven vials,

we can see how in their course they rapidly and intensively press on to the end of the ages and to the final ruin of the world, and also how they aptly prefigure the progressive punitive inflictions of God for sin. They are both world-wide in their character and relentless in their execution. They fall upon the land, and upon the sea, upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and upon the sun the source of light,—the figurative representatives of the created universe. Then, like the judgments of the seals and of the trumpets, they pass from the natural world to the sphere of the spiritual, and are seen to fall upon the far-reaching kingdom of the Beast, i. e. upon the world-powers operating under Satan's direction in open hostility to the church; afterward they fall upon the Euphrates, the old center of heathenism and seat of spiritual darkness in the far East, the typical center of the world-forces of evil; and finally under the seventh vial they lead to the end of the world, the conclusion of the centuries, and the day of complete recompense for sin. The distinction between the kingdom of the Beast, i. e. the world-powers of all time, and the forces represented by the Euphrates, the center and seat of heathenism, is not so clearly drawn under the fifth and sixth vials, as that between Satan [pg 191] with his host, and the world-forces of heathenism, under the fifth and sixth trumpets. But the kingdom of the Beast, here, as elsewhere, evidently represents the world-kingdoms in their organized form (or if taken in a narrower sense the then kingdom of Rome that foreshadowed them

all), which forces are spiritually opposed to the kingdom of God; whereas the Euphrates, the center and seat of spiritual darkness in the historic past, apparently represents heathenism in the great East, which is here regarded as a far-reaching spiritual force operating against Christianity—the judgments under these vials falling upon the world-force operating in the sphere of the spiritual, and upon the world-religions opposing Christianity. And no one surely can read the record of the vials without being impressed with the unerring certainty and absolute terror of the final punishment for sin; so that even if the vision of the vials did point primarily, as most preterists insist, to the destruction of Rome and its temporal power, it surely points yet more decisively to the great era of judgment upon the powers of evil that culminates in the closing period of human history. The vision depicts God punishing the evil in a progressive course to the very end, and this end is only effectively reached in the day of final judgment.

Vb The Episode of the Frog-like Spirits (A Vision of Warning). Ch. 16:13-16

This passage, it will be seen, is a minor digression between the sixth and seventh vials, corresponding to the episodes in the

vision of the seals and of the trumpets, though not like them a vision of comfort, but a vision of danger to the church from the combined forces of evil in the world, yet not without anticipation of the glorious outcome which is given in the nineteenth chapter (v. 19-21), for these forces, we are told, are gathered together unto "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (v. 14), the outcome of which in the Revelation is never at any time in doubt.

1 The Unclean Spirits of Evil, Ch. 16:13-14, and 16

At this point three unclean spirits, as it were frogs,[507]—three, the symbol of the spiritual, used in this [pg 192] case exceptionally of the spirits of demons,—come out of the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet (or Second Beast), representing the malign influences by which these powers of evil incite the kings of the earth to the great world-conflict against Christianity, described here under the figure of a battle of the war of the great day of God, the Almighty, taking place at Har-Magedon, i. e. either the fortified city, or the mountain of Megiddo, by the edge of the plain of Esdraelon, the great historic battle-ground of Jewish history (cf. Joel 3:2f; also *Bk. of Enoch* 56.5-8),[508] probably referred to because of the notable victory attained there over the kings of Canaan (Jg. 5:19). In

this culminating scene of conflict we have what may be regarded as a symbolic view of the entire struggle between sin and holiness which is ever going on in the world the ages through, but more particularly of its triumphant ending in the last age when the Dragon and the kings of the earth shall be completely and finally overthrown;[509] but beyond this partial interpretation we cannot safely go in any trustworthy exposition of this truly impressive figure. The symbol of battle and victory, it depicts the conflict of the centuries, and points to the assured triumph that awaits the people of God in the end of the world, while it incites men to persistent faith and hope; but like many other prophetic predictions, its explicit interpretation can only be definitely given after the events themselves have been openly fulfilled.

2 John's Word of Warning, Ch. 16:15

In the midst of the episode a word of warning is given by John to the reader, as from Christ himself, declaring the importance of watching in the presence of such trial, and announcing a blessing upon him that watcheth and keepeth his garments. Then with the closing words of the episode in the sixteenth verse, the vision recurs to the seventh vial which is at once poured out.

[pg 193]

VI The Vision of Victory (A Vision of Vindication). Ch. 17:1-20:15

The vision of victory is a revelation of complete and enduring triumph in the final issue of the conflict between sin and righteousness, showing the doom of Christ's enemies, the vindication of the righteous, and the consummation of the ages. The vision consists of three parts, viz. (1) the mystic Babylon and her fall, (2) the triumph of the redeemed, and (3) the last things, which are seven in number, implying a sevenfold completeness. This triple division of the contents of the section before us, into a description of Babylon's fall, redemption's triumph, and the things of the end, is one that is clearly indicated in the thought of the text, whatever plan of division we may adopt, and as these all belong to the final victory in its completeness, they may well be presumed to constitute parts of one vision. Opinions differ, however, concerning the correct division of this part of the book almost as much as they do in regard to the interpretation. The division adopted here, though not coinciding in all its parts with any single authority, is one of the simplest and most natural, and it is believed will commend itself to the reader.[510]

In entering upon this section it will be noted that the transition from the vision of vials to the vision of victory is made in the first verse of the seventeenth chapter by one of the seven vial-angels, who offers to show John the judgment of the great Harlot, or of Babylon, i. e. the complete and final judgment of the seventh vial wrought out, thus leading by a natural connection of thought to a fuller view of one phase of the judgment of the world, and through this on to victory and to the End.

A The Mystic Babylon and Her Fall, Ch. 17:1-18:24

In these two chapters there is given an impressive portrayal of the sinful world as she lures men to evil, under the symbol of Babylon, or the Harlot, and of the final punishment inflicted upon her; it is, in fact, an elaboration of the judgment of the seventh vial, foreshadowing the downfall of the most insidious, seductive, and persistent form of the world's opposition to Christ and his kingdom, viz. corrupt society. This passage [pg 194] forms a subclimax of rare beauty and power, and one that is of prime importance in the interpretation of the book, for it contains one of the chief ideas of the Revelation, and necessarily affects our conception of the prophecy throughout. That pagan Rome in its social debasement and

spiritual degradation was in the foreground of John's thought can scarcely be doubted;[511] but in the light of prophetic vision it formed an ideal groundwork for the larger thought of the godless world, the world from the standpoint of its material and social forces adverse to God and his kingdom, the perpetual Rome. Some interpreters limit the meaning of Babylon to the coeval city of Rome, or to the nation that centered in the city, pagan Rome, others refer it to the Roman church, papal Rome, and still others to Jerusalem, the Jewish Rome, while a common interpretation makes it the apostate church in a fallen age, a prophetic Rome. But the figure is more correctly interpreted as the ideal and universal world-city, a symbol designed to include every city or community that exalts itself against the dominion of Christ, the perpetual Rome, the ever-recurring Babylon whose spirit never dies, the city being regarded as the highest expression of the world's social and communal life.[512]

With the portrayal of Babylon is completed the cycle of great world-forces that we find depicted in the Revelation as arrayed against our Lord and his Christ. The entire opposition of the present evil world to Christ and his kingdom is presented in these visions under four separate and distinct symbols,—four the earth-number—viz. (1) the Dragon or Satan, the World-Lord, the prime antagonist and representative leader of the spiritual forces of evil, who incites the world to resist the rule of Christ, the world taking its cue and color from

Satan, the arch-enemy of all good; (2) the First Beast, the World-Power, the national and political forces of the world in their organized form opposing and persecuting Christ and the church, the world acting through the elements of civic and social order, of law and government, making them the agents [pg 195] of persecution; (3) the Second Beast, the World-Religion, the national and racial false religious forces of the world, with their moral and intellectual thraldom over the minds of men, contending against Christianity and the kingdom, the world acting through the elements of the natural and ethnic religions, and of superstition and priestcraft their innate cogeners, permeating them with deceit and making them the agents of delusion and oppression; and (4) the Harlot Babylon, the World-City, society in its commercial, impure, and godless life resisting the progress of the kingdom, the world acting through the elements of the social, sexual, and commercial relations of men, making them the agents of sin. This fourfold form of world-opposition to Christ and the church is a fundamental conception of the Apocalypse, and lies at the core of any correct interpretation of the book.[513] For, notwithstanding their close relation, to identify Babylon with the first Beast, or the second, or both, as is often done, is to confuse ideas that are essentially distinct, and measurably to miss the proper significance of the lesson contained. And if we fail to perceive the proper meaning of any part of this fourfold symbolism, we lose in some measure at least the complete and

general effect of the whole sublime creation of the Apocalyptic vision.

1 The Harlot and the Interpretation, Ch. 17:1-18

The vision of the Harlot is a figurative and profoundly significant view of the world's sin as unfaithfulness to God, described under the analogue of unfaithfulness to the marriage relation, according to the familiar method of Hebrew thought. The world is presented as a spiritual harlot, one that has proved untrue to her Lord and that merits condign punishment.

(1) The Judgment of the Harlot Announced, Ch. 17:1-2

One of the seven angels having the seven vials, calls John in order to show him the judgment about to be inflicted upon the great Harlot. The agency of a vial-angel in revealing this vision, indicates a connection between the vial-judgments and the fall of Babylon; and, as stated above, it is an elaboration of those judgments, especially that of the seventh vial.

[pg 196]

(2) The View of the Harlot, Ch. 17:3-6

The angel carries John in the Spirit away into a wilderness where he sees in the vision an impure Woman arrayed in purple, the royal color, and in scarlet, the sign of bloodshed, while she is decked with gold and jewels, the tokens of her wealth, and has in her hand a golden cup, full of the abominations of her fornications; and she is seated on a scarlet-colored Beast that is covered with names full of blasphemy, i. e. she rests upon and is allied with the world-power, for the scarlet Beast is the same as the Beast from the sea in chapter thirteen (v. 1-10); and upon her forehead her name is written,[514] "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH", and she is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus".

(3) The Interpretation Given, Ch. 17:7-18

The angel declares the mystery of the Woman of Sin to John's waiting ears. The Harlot whose home is in the wilderness, i. e. in this world (perhaps so called from the thought of the wilderness as the place of temptation of Israel, of Elijah, and of Christ, and as the haunt of demons where the scapegoat was sent forth to Azazel), is definitely identified with Babylon (v. 5 and 18), the great World-

City, the dwelling-place and representative of corrupt society tempting men to evil. The great Harlot is the ideal personification of the great city. There is in fact a double symbolism; the great Harlot symbolizes the great city, as the great city symbolizes the great world, for the Harlot, the city, and the world are one and the same in the wider thought of the Revelation. She is the combined incarnation of commercialism, lust, and irreligion,[515] the unbelieving world and not the apostate church, humanity untrue to God, [pg 197] the social life of men adverse to the kingdom.[516] The Harlot is the manifest impersonation of lust and sexual impurity, a form of the world's sin that has always been the source of ruin to a multitude of souls—her traffic, we are told, is in the "souls of men" (ch. 18:13). She represents the world tempting men through the sexual appetite, though the figure does not stop with that, as the story of the fall of her wealth and the punishment of her irreligious life clearly shows. All the social side of life that tends to sin is represented by this impressive figure before which the Apocalyptist "wondered with a great wonder" (v. 6).

The interpretation of the Harlot Babylon as the Roman Catholic Church, a method so prevalent in the period that succeeded the Reformation, is happily in its decadence, for it has no justification in the text. But to find in this figure a symbol and portent of apostasy prevailing in the church universal that shall increase as the centuries go on,[517] is equally

unfortunate and imparts a tone of pessimism to the entire prophecy which cannot be too strongly deprecated. No sign of apostasy is anywhere given in the account of Babylon's fall, for there is no indication that the Harlot was ever holy. Her sin is worldliness, impurity, idolatry, and persecution of the saints. For an apostate church the fitting symbol for that age would have been not Babylon but Samaria, the city of the faithless Israel. And we may be confidently assured that Babylon represents here what it always stood for to the Hebrew mind, the typical world-city, the hereditary enemy of the church from without and not from within, whose harlotry is the sign of her unfaithfulness to God and truth. For even though a majority of Protestant interpreters until within a late period have made Babylon the apostate church, following the traditional opinion, it is nevertheless a mistaken view, since it is based upon the Old Testament use of harlotry as a figure of apostasy and idolatry in Israel, a figure assumed to be identical throughout, ignoring the manifest difference in its present use in connection with a heathen city. The modern view that Babylon is Rome in John's day is nearer correct, but is too narrow in its application. Babylon is the abiding [pg 198] Rome with its worldly life striving to supplant the Christ, the world-city in all ages and times.

The Scarlet Beast on which the Woman is seated, the color of the Dragon (ch. 12:3) and the sign of the blood which it has shed, is

referred to as the one that "was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss" (v. 8), a description showing it to be the same as the First Beast which received the deadly wound that was healed (ch. 13:3), i. e. the world-power, and apparently designed to place it in marked antithesis with the divine designation, "who is and who was and who is to come," in the first chapter of the book (v. 4 and 8). The enigmatical phrase "was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition", may also refer to a lull in the persecution by the world-power, subsequently to be renewed and leading to its final destruction as a power, though its wider reference is perhaps to the persistence and reappearance of the world-power after any one of its forms has been overthrown, together with the certainty of its final ruin. Most preterists interpret the Beast that "was, and is not; and is about to come", as a reference to Nero whose return was generally expected (a superstitious phantasy of a *Nero redivivus*), by a change of figure, the emperor previously referred to as the fifth head of the Beast becoming the Beast itself—a questionable interpretation, apparently wrought out by a keen fancy to fit the words of the prophecy, but lacking efficient support in the text. The Beast in the vision carries the Harlot, i. e. the world-city rests upon and is upheld by the world-power, an unhallowed union in striking contrast with that of the Lamb and the Bride. This symbolism indicates the near relation existing between the world-city and the world-power exemplified in

history, the world in its social and irreligious form allying itself with and relying upon the persecuting world-power.

It should be noted here that the symbolism used in the chapter before us is shown to be very wide in its application. The seven heads of the Beast have first of all their proper symbolic meaning of full or universal dominion, i. e. dominion over this present evil world; but they are further interpreted to have other and different significance. We are told in verse nine that they are "seven mountains", evidently in the primary meaning [pg 199] those of the city of Rome, which was seated on seven hills; but symbolizing besides this all mountains and hills which are the seat of world-cities, in accordance with the common apocalyptic usage of seven (cf. *II Esdr.* 2.19; and *Bk of Enoch* 18.6). The seven heads are also in a sense identified with the "many waters" on which the Woman sitteth (v. 15), which we are told, are "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues", the many dwellers in world-cities—for she spreads her power over all mountains and all waters.[518] They are also "seven kings" (v. 10), the king representing the throne and all it stands for, i. e. seven kingdoms, a complete number, the totality of kind, all the kingdoms of the world throughout history, though probably, like the seven churches, conceived of as individual kingdoms which are taken as representative of all.[519] Perhaps in John's thought they were Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece, the five known to him

that were already fallen and Rome, the one then existing—the nations connected with Israel's past. The past was history, but the future was seen only in outline, and John groups it all under one great world-power, completing the number seven, which was yet to appear. This last “must continue a little while”, i. e. during the remaining time of the world's existence, the usual sense of “a little while” in the Revelation, a period short in comparison with eternity. The Beast is also “an eighth”, we are told, i. e. when it is regarded apart from the seven heads,[520] for the world-power may be conceived of as in itself a unit, comprising all its different manifestations, and yet separate from them and giving rise to them. The remark is, however, parenthetic and incidental, and ought not to be regarded as creating any special difficulty, for no reference is anywhere else made to an eighth, and it is probably introduced here simply because eight is the symbol of culmination [pg 200] (see App'x E). We are further told that the Beast is “of the seven” (v. 11), i. e. he is formed—Gr. ἐκ —“out of seven”, or in other words the Beast *is* the seven kingdoms regarded as a unit, the world-power as it exists in all ages.[521] Also the ten horns (v. 12) which symbolize complete earthly power, ten symbolizing completeness and usually applying to the earthly, are representative of various subdivisions of the world-power, minor kingdoms with their kings, which are added to the seven heads as an additional symbol of world-wide empire. These are evidently thought of as yet to rise

after John's day, for they are denominated "kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority as kings with the Beast for one hour", i. e. each one for an hour, or for a time that is relatively short,[522] an indefinite period, the ten kingdoms reaching in this case, apparently, to the end of the world—not definitely ten kingdoms or kings any more than one hour is a definite time limit, but rather ten, the number of completeness of all the parts, representing all kings and kingdoms yet to rise throughout succeeding time. "It seems probable," as has been well said, "that John foresees that the hostile world-power will not be always preëminently wielded by one nation as in his time; but will be divided into many parts, here represented by the number ten which is a complete number and not necessarily implying only ten in all. This indeed exactly describes what has really been the case since St. John's time, and what, humanly speaking, seems likely to continue to the end of the world."[523] It may, also, be pointed out that the ruin of the world-city described by John has been the fate of every such city known to history. Thus the ten horns would seem to be identical with the seventh king or kingdom which is apparently the last, the world-power divided into many parts and continuing to the end of time. These divisions of the world-power, [pg 201] though originally hostile to Christ (v. 14), shall yet under divine direction eventually destroy the world-city in all lands and make her desolate (v. 16 and 17), i. e. the corrupt society, centered in cities, which

opposes Christ and his kingdom. “And the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings”, i. e. while God is seen to work through the multiple world-power, the ten horns or kingdoms, and eventually to destroy the Harlot, corrupt society in the world, he yet finally overcomes the kingdoms of this world that war against him, and makes them his own; he triumphs on the earth in the fulness of time, for the kingdoms of the world, we are told, shall “become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever” (ch. 11:15). “And they *also shall overcome* that are with him, called and chosen and faithful” (v. 14)—the promise of success for the believing. In the preterist-historical view the overthrow of the great city, or the Harlot, by the ten subordinate rulers or kings, the ten horns, is commonly interpreted as a reference to the current expectation that Eastern nations, especially the Parthians, were likely to march against the city of Rome and overthrow it, an application of the prophecy quite possible in the minds of the generation which first received it, but not reaching its deeper and essential meaning, and failing of any actual realization. At this point it may be not inapt to remark that the wide latitude with which the symbolism of the seven heads is interpreted by the angel in this chapter, is a valuable guide to the general method of the Apocalypse, and should put us on our guard against limiting the significance of the symbols strictly to a single thought, where more than one may properly be intended. At

the same time this does not give us the liberty of unlimited freedom, but prevents our being too positive in many cases as to the exact limits of the symbolism.

Other interpretations make the Beast the Roman Empire, and the seven heads seven different forms of Roman government known to history, or seven individual kings, and the ten horns the various parts, subdivisions, or subordinate rulers of the Empire. The current interpretation of the preterist school accepts unqualifiedly the seven heads as seven kings of the Roman Empire and identifies Nero with the fifth head or king [pg 202] who is now "fallen", i. e. is now dead, but is about to be restored again, according to a wide-spread expectation of that time, and to become the eighth head or king. This view, though supported by many eminent authorities, especially those of the later critical school, involves serious difficulties. It is dependent upon the earlier date of the Apocalypse, or at least this portion of it, i. e. just after the death of Nero, the only time fitting such a prophecy —a matter by no means assured; and the prophecy, if it had this meaning, was falsified by subsequent events within a generation, a contingency which would necessarily have discredited the book before the church, and would make its acceptance as a genuine prophetic writing extremely difficult, if not impossible, to account for. These considerations serve to nullify the surety and positiveness with which this interpretation is generally urged by its advocates, and late

writers indicate a healthful reaction against the view.[524]

Another similar view makes the emperors who are intended by the heads of the Beast to be (1) Augustus, (2) Tiberius, (3) Caligula, (4) Claudius, (5) Nero (now “fallen”, or dead—Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who succeeded Nero for short periods being omitted as pretenders), (6) Vespasian (the one who now “is”, i. e. now is on the throne), (7) Titus (who “must continue a little while”, i. e. have a short reign), and (8) Domitian (a second Nero—“an eighth” who “is of the seven”). This interpretation, though quite possible from one point of view, necessarily limits the vision to a narrow horizon; and while, like the former view, it tends to bring the teaching of the book into closer harmony with Jewish Apocalyptic, yet it obscures to some extent at least the wider and universal teaching which seems to the average Christian mind to belong essentially to the prophetic insight. It should be remembered, too, that the seven heads and ten horns belong originally to the Dragon or Satan, as symbols of his world-wide power, and are here transferred to the Beast as Satan's representative; and therefore it is more likely that they have a universal reference than that they apply to a single empire, for Satan's sphere of influence is confessedly world-wide (cf. ch. 13:1, note). Besides it is fruitless [pg 203] to attempt to interpret with any positiveness the heads and horns as individual nations and kings, as the diverse results have shown, each interpreter

having his own application, and no one interpretation being generally accepted.[525] But even if we cannot be so positive as to the primary meaning, we should not allow the larger and more important meaning to escape us, the meaning for us and for all time. This is the fundamental principle of interpretation according to the symbolical school, which should be kept in mind throughout; and it is remarkable how often the general meaning is plain when the original reference, as in this case, is obscure. For even if John had primarily in mind certain phases of the Roman Empire, we must not lose sight of his idealization of the symbolism. The numbers seven and ten are not to be interpreted literally but symbolically as elsewhere throughout the book. Whatever kings and kingdoms are in the first instance intended, they are introduced as the type of all kings and kingdoms of this world throughout all time, in accordance with the prevalent use of numbers in the Apocalypse; so that in any case the chief thought established is essentially the same, viz. that the anti-christian world-power attains its fulness and completeness under the numbers seven and ten, and then wanes and is eventually destroyed. If we interpret of Rome, then the ruin of the one empire with its rulers and parts foreshadows that of every other earth-power that opposes the rule of Christ among men, and the overthrow of the one city with its social and civic forces allied with evil, prefigures that of the entire anti-christian social and civic power throughout the world.

2 The Fall of the City Proclaimed, Ch. 18:1-24

The mystery of the Harlot and of the Beast having been revealed, another angel now declares the doom which awaits them. The downfall of the city and the destruction of her wealth is set forth as the type of the overthrow of corrupt society with all pertaining to it, in order that the fulness of Christ's kingdom may be ushered in among men. In the vision of the prophet the ruin is viewed as already complete; attention is centered so fully upon the result attained that the method [pg 204] by which it is accomplished is left quite out of view. But the closing verses of the preceding chapter serve to indicate the source of her destruction, viz. in the ten horns, or subdivisions of the world-kingdom, which rise against the Harlot and overthrow her (ch. 17:16-17),—the historic fate of world-empires and world-cities in revolution and ruin. It is here worthy of note how clearly we find in this chapter reverberating echoes from Isaiah's Doom of Babylon and of Tyre (Isa. ch. 13:23, 47), and from Jeremiah's Doom of Babylon (Jer. chs. 50 and 51), as well as from Ezekiel's Doom of Tyre (Ezek. chs. 26-28).[526] Though the fall of the heathen city of Rome was doubtless foremost in John's mind, let us not forget that it only formed the basis of the wider thought of the ultimate fate and fall of the great godless world which it so clearly foreshadowed, the foresight of which was a

part of the prophetic vision.[527]

(1) The Announcement of Her Overthrow, Ch. 18:1-3

An angel—called here “another angel” in distinction from the one designated as “one of the seven angels” in chapter seventeen (v. 1) —is seen coming down out of heaven, having great authority, and crying with a mighty voice, “Fallen! fallen is Babylon the great!” and recounting the story of her crimes as the abundant cause of her ruin.

(2) The Warning to God's People, Ch. 18:4-8

Yet another voice from heaven bids the people of God come out of her before the final retribution, that they be not made partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached even unto heaven; and urges the executors of her judgment to reward her double, i. e. to exact full legal retribution for her sins (Ex. 22:4-7). And she shall be utterly destroyed, shall be “burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her”.

[pg 205]

(3) The Lament of the Kings of the Earth over Her Doom, Ch. 18:9-10

The rulers of the world-powers who have shared in her sin are seen standing afar off for fear of her torment, witnessing her fall; and their cry is heard, “Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour [i. e. in a short time or suddenly] is thy judgment come”,—mourning over her ruin which is sudden and complete.

(4) The Lament of the Merchants, Ch. 18:11-17a

The merchants of the earth also weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise or cargo any more. The articles of merchandise enumerated are many, indicating her wealth, and seem to be arranged in a progressive order of importance, and to fall naturally into six classes, (Babylon's number, the symbol of evil —ch. 13:18), which may be divided as follows, viz. (1) those of personal adornment; (2) of furniture; (3) of sensual gratification; (4) of food; (5) of animate forms; and (6) of souls (i. e. persons) of men.[528] All have perished; and the merchants cry aloud, “Woe, woe, the great city! ... for in one hour so great riches is made desolate.”

(5) The Lament of the Seamen, Ch. 18. 17b-19

All those who gained their living by the sea, ship-masters, mariners, and every one that saileth any whither, stood afar off and cried, “What *city* is like the great city?” And they cast dust upon their heads, weeping and mourning, the sign of their deep though worldly sorrow, saying, “Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.” In this triple mourning of the kings of the earth, of the merchants, and of the seamen, is shown the wide relations of Babylon, too wide in fact for any single city. The darkly shadowed terms of poetic description used throughout the chapter, set forth the completeness of her destruction, and are an echo from the Fall of Tyre in Ezekiel's prophecy (chs. 26-28).

[pg 206]

(6) A Call to Heaven and to the Church to Rejoice, Ch. 18:20

By a voice, evidently from above, the holy are bidden to rejoice, i. e. heaven with its inhabitants, and the saints or the church, and her two highest orders of ministers in the past, the apostles and the prophets, are called

upon to rejoice because God hath judged Babylon with the judgment which is her due for her treatment of the saints. This invitation to the “saints, the apostles, and the prophets”, to rejoice over the judgment of Babylon, which to that age doubtless meant Rome, is regarded by some as a possible allusion to the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul who met death under Nero.[529]

(7) The Symbol of Her Irretrievable Ruin, Ch. 18:21-24

A strong or mighty angel, taking up a stone like a great millstone, casts it into the sea as the sign of her total extinction, and rehearses the fate of the city in the ominous words of ancient prophecy, which are here enlarged and made more terrible (cf. Jer. 51:61-64). The symbolism used throughout this chapter, it will be noted, is largely drawn from the Old Testament prophecies concerning the ancient cities of Babylon and Tyre. “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.” Thus in terms that are as wide as the earth and as far-reaching as history, is set forth the sin of the godless and unbelieving world in all ages, which concludes the pronouncement of the judgment upon Babylon; and the judgment seems to belong properly in seven parts as a sign of its completeness.

B The Triumph of the Redeemed, Ch. 19:1-10

A hymn of praise (the Hallelujah Chorus), such as follows each crisis in the Apocalypse, and forms a relief to the sombreness of the visions, is sung in heaven by a great voice of a great multitude as the sequel to the fall of the city and the lament of the world—the seventh and last great chorus in the Revelation (see App'x C): and then the marriage supper of the Lamb is announced for the delight of the redeemed in heaven. The final triumph, it will be seen, is here viewed as a [pg 207] whole, without distinction of parts such as are found in the succeeding section which treats of the last things.

1 The Choral Song of Hallelujahs, Ch. 19:1-8

In response to the heavenly summons to rejoice (ch. 18:20), a thrice repeated note of victory, the Hebrew “Hallelujah”, Praise ye Jehovah! is heard in heaven; first from the voice of a great multitude, who say a second time, “Hallelujah”, and then from the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the redeemed church, together with the four living creatures, the representatives of all created life, who reply, “Amen; Hallelujah.” After this again, in response to a message from the throne (v. 5), another “Hallelujah” is heard from the voice of another multitude (v. 6-8), as the sound of many waters, the voice

of those who are praising God in full and joyful chorus because he has avenged the blood of his servants, and who are now rejoicing with exceeding gladness (v. 7) because "the marriage of the Lamb is come", i. e. the complete and final union of Christ with the redeemed church, for his wife, the church, hath made herself ready. The word "Hallelujah" occurs four times in this passage, and is not found elsewhere in the New Testament: it should be noted, too, that it is used here, as it is chiefly used in the Old Testament,[530] in connection with the punishment of the wicked. The first voice in this chorus of hallelujahs (v. 1f) is apparently that of the great multitude of the angelic host in heaven, which is responded to by the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures; while the second voice (v. 6f) is that of the multitude of the universal church who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. The description of the pure array of the Bride (v. 8), which is the symbol of her righteousness and is in such marked contrast with the clothing of the Harlot, may be an explanation added by the Apostle, as indicated in the text of the Revelation given in the preceding part of this book by including the verse in a parenthesis, though it was apparently regarded by the American Revisers as part of the words of the redeemed church.

[pg 208]

2 The Blessedness of the Marriage Supper, Ch. 19:9

John is directed by the angel to record a blessing upon those who are bidden to the marriage supper, i. e. who are invited to share in the nearer fellowship of the redeemed with Christ, and to partake of the rich and abundant spiritual food that awaits them in the new relations of the heavenly life—a further symbol of the spiritual union of the church with Christ added to that of the bride and the marriage, setting forth the joys of the heavenly life under the familiar figure of a marriage feast, the great social event of the East, and the popular type of the highest enjoyment, as well as the public acknowledgement of the consummation of the union. The marriage of the Lamb is put in vivid contrast with the fornication of the Harlot, in the usual method of the Apocalypse.

3 Worship Refused by the Angel, Ch. 19:10

The Apostle is so overwhelmed by the impression of the vision that he falls at the feet of the angel to worship him—probably the interpreting angel of the opening verse of the book, though some think identical with the vial-angel of chapter seventeen; but the worship is refused,[531] because, as the angel declares, he is only a fellow-servant with

John, and shares in “the testimony of Jesus” which “is the spirit of prophecy”. This significant phrase is characteristic of the Revelation,[532] and we find in it a key to the general interpretation, a principle to be applied throughout, viz. that the mysteries of the Old Dispensation find their only proper solution and fulfilment in the clearer teaching of the New. “The testimony of Jesus” is the witness for the truth borne *by* Christ in the world, which gathers up into one and gives expression to the essential and animating thought of all prophecy. Others interpret the passage as applying to the witness borne *for* Christ and the truth by his disciples in the world; and it is possible that both meanings are included, for if broadly interpreted they both merge into one.[533]

[pg 209]

C The Last Things, Ch. 19:11-20:15

A new phase of the vision of victory now opens, which presents the final culmination and crisis of judgment and redemption, a rapid preview of the closing events of human history, a forecast of the triumph and completion of the gospel age. These events form a series of climaxes that are progressive and catastrophic, and usher in the final consummation of God's world-plan of the ages, a feature that is prominent in all

apocalyptic writings.

It is important for us to note afresh at this point, what should be apparent to our minds in the study of the book throughout, viz. that the element of climax, which enters so largely into the thought of the Revelation, belongs essentially to the mood and temper of Apocalyptic; and we should avoid emphasizing too much that which pertains chiefly to literary form and spiritual mood, as though it were intended to set forth the intimate nature of the divine method. Upon careful reflection it must become more and more apparent that the emphasis here laid upon the climactic side of the divine way of working, was only intended to be in proportion to the apparent hopelessness of the historical outlook without such manifest and repeated divine interpositions for human help, and was not intended to indicate that the chief effects to be wrought out will be accomplished by other than the method displayed in history, viz. by long periods of quiet progress and patient waiting, broken now and then by short and decisive periods of crisis. The apocalyptic writers followed the general mode of conception prevalent in the Old Testament, according to which "the final condition of men and the world is regarded less as the perfect issue of a gradual ethical advancement ... than as the result of an interposition or chain of interpositions on the part of God",[534] which is only one side of the truth—a view growing out of their idea of God as the immediate author of all

movements in nature and history, and fitting in well with the increased emphasis laid upon climax in Apocalyptic. There is also a distinct foreshortening of the future which is very evident throughout [pg 210] this section, and this is a well known and characteristic feature of all prophecy. The extreme brevity with which are described and grouped together so many great events of the far future that so deeply affect the Christian hope, serves to indicate that the chief aim of the Revelation does not consist in fully manifesting these events which lie hidden in the hand of God, but in preparing the church for what precedes them, both of trial and of conflict. “Like a flash of lightning in the darkness the vision lights up the whole line of God's purposes to the end”; but how much of the actual form and manner of the events it was the divine purpose to disclose through this ideal and scenic presentation must continue to be, pending the manifestation of the events themselves, to some extent at least, a matter of diverse opinion.

1 The End of the Holy War, Ch. 19:11-21

This part of the vision sets forth the final victory over all the powers of this world which is eventually to be attained by the supreme power of “The Word of God”, the ever conquering Christ, who is here described by this transcendental name for our Lord

which is a distinctive title with the Apostle John.[535] Beginning with a view of the triumphant Word going forth to conquer as under the first seal (ch. 6:2), Christ appears in the opened heaven riding on a white horse; he is called "Faithful and True", and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes are a flame of fire, the type of purity and judgment; upon his head are many diadems, the crowns of conquered nations; he hath a name written which no man knoweth but himself,—evidently the "new name" of chapter three (v. 12) which John cannot interpret; and he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood, the token of his redemptive work. The armies of heaven, which apparently include the redeemed, such as have already entered there, follow him [pg 211] on white horses,[536] clothed in fine linen white and pure; out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations,[537] for he shall rule them then with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty, thereby bringing punishment upon the evil. His divine right is clearly seen, for he hath on his garment and on his thigh (i. e. both on the garment and on the thigh, or else on the garment covering the thigh), a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS". And the Beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse and against his army, i. e. against Christ and his kingdom to attempt to overcome them. Thus with sublime imagery the vision

leads up and on to the close of the great battle with the world-forces, which was briefly described before in chapter sixteen as occurring at Har-Magedon; the war is the same, the battle between the sinful world and the hosts of God which is ever going on through the ages to final victory in the end. Now, by a further view, the Beast, and the False Prophet (or Second Beast) who misguides the people in spiritual things, are seen to be taken, and they twain are cast alive into the lake of fire, while all their followers are slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth (v. 15); and all the birds that fly in mid-heaven are called by an angel standing in the sun to feed upon their flesh, as in Ezekiel's prophecy of the Judgment of Gog (ch. 39:17-22), a judgment exceedingly repulsive to the Hebrew mind. The lake of fire is only a more fully developed form of the Jewish conception of Gehenna as a furnace of fire (Mat. 13:42, and 50). The symbolism here used may have been suggested to John's mind by the appearance of a sea or lake during the eruption of a volcano, a view not unfamiliar to those resident in Asia.[538] This lake in the Revelation is the place of final punishment of the wicked, and is clearly distinguished from the pit of the abyss, the abode of Satan during the present world-period. Thus [pg 212] is signified the triumphant overthrow of the World-Power and of the World-Religion as manifested in history. These together with the World-City are now broken and destroyed, while only the World-Lord, or Satan, remains

to carry on the conflict, and the way is thereby prepared for the great millennial victory.

This section is considered by many to refer to Christ's second coming, the Parousia, and, if that view were established, it would serve to support the opinion of those who hold that the second advent will be premillennial; but such an interpretation is beset with many difficulties and cannot be sustained by what is said in these verses. The description does not correspond with the account of Christ's coming again which is given in the Synoptic Gospels and the Epistles, nor with the passing foregleams of it in the preceding chapters, but rather with the delineation of Christ's conflict with the world as it is set forth in this book, which is depicted in its beginnings under the first seal where Christ goes forth conquering and to conquer, and which is now seen to pass through the thick of battle to the crowning of victory. For while the second coming is manifestly the one great objective event ever retained in the background of the visions, overshadowing and interpenetrating every part of the Apocalypse, yet it is at no time definitely introduced or particularly described; and the most accurate and impartial interpretation throughout is that which regards both the time of its occurrence and the position it occupies in relation to other events of the last days as nowhere revealed in the Apocalyptic vision. With the present author this view has grown through time from that of a possible solution of a

much vexed question into a settled conviction of its correctness.[539] And it should be seen, that with this section (ch. 19:11-21) in grave doubt, to say the least, concerning its application to the advent, if indeed it should not be regarded as entirely inapplicable, there is nothing definitely taught in the Revelation in regard to the time of Christ's second coming; for whatever opinion we may entertain concerning the time of that glorious event so dear to the Christian heart, we cannot regard this [pg 213] passage as decisive in the matter unless we interpolate into it a meaning which it does not necessarily contain.

2 Satan Bound, Ch. 20:1-3a

The temporary destruction of Satan's power is here indicated by his being bound for a season; and this marks another advance in the triumphal march of events. An angel coming down from heaven with the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand, lays hold upon the Dragon, the Old Serpent, Satan, and binds him for a thousand years, and then shuts him up in the abyss, his present dwelling-place, from which he can now emerge at will during the period of conflict, and seals it over him that his power may be restrained until the end of that time. The binding of Satan indicates the limiting of his authority over the nations, with the subsequent ushering in of

the triumph of the gospel among men, when, according to the announcement of the seventh trumpet, “The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” (ch. 11:15), a promise partially fulfilled at this stage, but awaiting its complete fulfilment in the final consummation. The limiting of Satan's power is a preparatory stage to the events that follow, and precedes the first resurrection, as it also precedes the millennium.

3 The First Resurrection, Ch. 20:4-6

The resurrection, which is the effective redemption of the body from death, that is necessary for complete victory over sin and for the full consummation of man's life in eternity,[540] is at this point begun,[541] and is marked in the Revelation by two successive stages, the first accompanying the triumph of the messianic kingdom, and the second preparatory to the final judgment. These two parts of the resurrection are separated in the vision by the whole millennial period. The first resurrection is special and compensative (scil. “the resurrection out of the dead”—Gr. ἐκ νεκρῶν—Phil. 3:11), consisting of certain [pg 214] of the saints and martyrs who by reason of their enduring resistance of the forces of evil in their lives and deaths are adjudged worthy to attain unto this resurrection, viz. “of them that had been

beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the Beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand." The first resurrection which is evidently limited to this particular class, and is compensative in character for evils endured, precedes the second or general resurrection by a thousand years, or the whole duration of the millennium, which is not a definite, numerical thousand years, but in accordance with the general use of numbers in the Apocalypse is a period of vast but indefinite length. The cry of the martyrs (ch. 6:9) has been heard, and they who have part in this resurrection shall live and reign with Christ throughout the whole millennial era, i. e. shall share in his presence and glory as a reward for their superior faithfulness, shall be with him where he is, evidently in heaven, for nothing is said of any new or different relation of Christ or of the saints to those who dwell upon the earth as now begun, or as entered upon at any time during this period. We are simply told that the redeemed saints shall live and reign with Christ, i. e. they shall enter upon the new and fuller life with Christ which follows the resurrection of the body, and they shall share in the triumphant rulership of Christ in heaven. The main thought in the phrase "with Christ", it will be seen, is not so much that of location, as of association with him in messianic rule.[542] The statement here made that "they shall be priests of God and of Christ" (v. 6) evidently does not mean that

they are to exercise the function of mediators for the rest of mankind during that intermediate period,—for no such service in heaven is anywhere taught in Scripture—but only that they are granted familiar access to and fellowship with God and Christ such as the priests had who drew near under the old covenant; they stand in his presence as the priests of old stood in the temple and waited and served and worshipped.

[pg 215]

4 The Millennium, Ch. 20.: 2b, 3b, 4b, 5a, 6b and 7a

The millennium is the Latin equivalent of the Greek phrase χίλια ἔιη or a thousand years, which has now attained a permanent place in Christian thought. In the prophetic view of the apocalyptic vision this is the crowning period of the church upon earth so long looked for and foretold, the triumphant realization of messianic prophecy, the *dénouement* of redemptive history in the world, a time of rest and victory when evil shall be restrained though not extinguished, and righteousness shall rule among men. The millennial reign of the saints with Christ, while Satan is limited in his sphere, as is indicated by his being bound with a great chain, is evidently intended to represent the period of the church's triumph. The length of

time implied by the millennium is a period of multiple completeness which is represented by a thousand, the cube of ten, the symbol of a duration that is of great but indefinite extent, covering a long period of time, stretching to untold generations, during which the rule of Christ shall be triumphantly established upon the earth.[543] The chief thought in the thousand years is doubtless that of great and enduring victory. This period, as has been effectively said, "may well be of such an indefinite length as to lead to the salvation of unnumbered multitudes—multitudes so vast and countless that all the lost of all the ages will be but an infinitesimal fraction in comparison."[544] Such a view serves to lighten in a measure the dark places of Scripture and history with a vision of blessing and hope, though it cannot be said to disperse to any great extent that impenetrable shadow which hangs over God's purpose in the world's long deep night of sin and death.

No other passage in the New Testament has taken a deeper or more permanent hold upon the minds of believing men than this pregnant prophecy of a millennium, in which the thousand years is six times named in as many verses. Unfortunately interpreters have not been agreed concerning the meaning of the passage; in fact no part of the Word of God has, perhaps, been so much in dispute as these verses in the Revelation. It may [pg 216] be worth while, therefore, to say that in the interpretation we should clearly recognize upon the one hand that the promise of a

millennium was intended to create in the minds of men a pervasive hope of ultimate divine triumph in the world; while upon the other hand we should avoid making this glorious promise the groundwork of purely human fancy. The blessings of the millennial period here set forth evidently pertain both to the saints in glory and to the kingdom of God in this world. The particular nature of the reign of the saints with Christ during the thousand years is not revealed; but we know assuredly that Christ and his kingdom have prevailed upon the earth. The millennium manifestly presents a natural and complete antithesis to the long period in which the church suffered oppression under domination of the world-powers. The part allotted to the saints in the triumph of the kingdom in which they live and reign with Christ, is set forth in terms of long prevailing and deeply cherished Jewish ideals. To occupy “thrones of judgment” was part of the recognized hope of Israel (Ps. 122:5), and is clearly a human way of conceiving of superhuman relations. That this hope is to be realized in the final spiritual supremacy of God's children, specially promised to the twelve of the inner circle (Mat. 19:28; and Lu. 22:30), and evidently to be shared in a particular degree by all those who have part in the first resurrection, though ultimately in some measure also by all the redeemed, does not admit of serious doubt, but the exact form in which it will be realized is not made plain.

According to the usual premillennial view the

first resurrection is interpreted as consisting of all believers who have died previous to that time, and not of those only who share in it by reason of special service and testimony; and the millennial reign of those who rise from their graves in this resurrection is held to be upon the earth, and is to be ushered in by the second coming of Christ who will establish a new dispensation in which he will be personally manifest, and will rule in the world, either from an earthly capital as Jerusalem, or from heaven in close communication with the saints.[545] This view, it will be seen, rests upon Jewish conceptions, and derives its support from a sternly literal interpretation [pg 217] of Old Testament prophecies. But, notwithstanding its natural attractiveness to the minds of men, it fails of adequate confirmation in the text. Upon the other hand most of the symbolical school interpret the first resurrection figuratively, as a resurrection to spiritual life, and regard the millennium as now in progress. The prevalence of this view seems to be largely due to the early influence of Augustine,[546] who identified the millennium with the period of the Christian church on earth, and held that for those who belong to the true church the first resurrection is past already, making it the equivalent of the resurrection to spiritual life spoken of in John's Gospel (Jn. 5:25),—a passage which, though showing that a spiritual resurrection is a distinct Johannine conception, does not serve to break the natural force of these words in their present connection. The usual interpretation of the

thousand years given by the symbolical school cannot be considered as satisfactory,[547] viz. that the phrase expresses a quality, i. e. completeness, and not a period of time; and that the meaning of the phrase "bound him for a thousand years" is that Satan was completely bound. The symbolical use of the number one thousand is evident, but that does not deprive it of all quantitative value, it only affects its literal significance; and the denial that the word "years" has any reference to time is without proper exegetical support and must be rejected.[548] According to the current symbolical interpretation the entire passage (ch. 20:1-10) is regarded as an episode which is descriptive of the complete safety and spiritual deliverance of Christ's people throughout the whole period of the age-long conflict;[549] and thus the millennium as a period of triumph and blessedness for the saints on earth, preceding and distinct from the final blessedness of the world to come, fades away into a figure of speech, while the triumph of the gospel is obscured. But this view cannot be sustained except by a sacrifice of the [pg 218] natural, if we may not certainly say the correct exegesis; for the paragraph will not fit a purely figurative interpretation.[550] This view would dispose of the question of a pre- or post-millennial coming by denying that there is any millennium, in the historic sense of the term, taught in the Revelation. But the expedient is a fallacious one, if John spoke as a prophet by the inspiration of the Spirit, for his words incorporated the thought of his time in which

the millennium had a definite meaning; and that he foresaw and described it as such is fairly evident, though he manifestly modified its extravagances. The idea of a triumphal period of the Messiah's reign is too deeply inwrought in the Apocalyptic literature which preceded the present Apocalypse to be put aside lightly as a symbol of completeness.[551] The duration of this time was a frequent and favorite subject of Jewish speculation;[552] and according to the general laws of language, the phrase used in the text, “a thousand years”, necessarily carries with it the conception of a period of time, but in accordance with the usage of the author, it loses its definite numerical significance and indicates a period of long but unmeasured duration; it becomes the symbol of a period that is complete.

It will be recognized by the attentive student of the Word of God that this passage and its connections form the *crux interpretum* of the whole book of Revelation; and it is well, perhaps, not to speak with too much positiveness on a subject so differently understood by many of the most eminent scholars and interpreters. The view presented above seems to be the most natural meaning that can be given to the words of the vision, and seems also to accord more fully than any other with the many promises of God concerning the outcome of all that great and progressive movement among men which we call the Kingdom of Heaven in the earth. For without such a period of victory, the whole evolutionary movement in human life and

history, which so manifestly [pg 219] marks the purpose of God and the plan of redemption, would somehow seem to fail of any proper consummation; while in this view the millennium, marking the triumph of the gospel, would vindicate the present method of history and redemption, just as the premillennial view would abandon it and introduce a different order. Indeed, it may be well here to say, what should be clearly seen by every student of the Revelation, that the premillennial view introduces practically three dispensations into the plan of redemption, viz. the first, that of Moses which measurably failed; the second, that of Christ which is also to fail of complete success; and the third, that of the Holy Spirit which shall absolutely triumph. Whether, indeed, such a view is justified by what the Gospels teach and the Epistles indicate, is a question that each interpreter of Scripture must determine for himself; though it must be said that the large majority of Christians in all ages have not so understood the message of the Word. And it would certainly be remarkable if Christ, who was so wonderful a teacher, had intended to predict a premillennial coming to his own, and yet left it in such an indefinite form that the majority of earnest Christians would forever fail to apprehend it. But, in any case, to give up the expectation of the final supremacy of the gospel in the world, whether we look for it to be attained before or after the coming of the Lord, through the method of history or contrary to it, is to empty of its richest content the Christian hope

for the world of men, and to contradict the deepest longing of the pious heart.[553]

5 Satan Loosed Again and Overthrown, Ch. 20:3c, and 7-10

A renewal of Satan's activity is permitted by divine authority, as is indicated by his being loosed again out of his prison, and seems to be of the nature of a reaction in favor of evil, a sequence for which we are scarcely prepared at this juncture, after the millennial period of Christian ascendancy. We find described in these verses a recrudescence of organized opposition to Christ and his kingdom, indicated by Satan coming forth again out of the abyss, according to the prevailing [pg 220] method of the Apocalypse by which evil comes in periodic onsets. In the elucidation of the passage most interpreters, who regard the millennium as representing the triumphal period of Christ's kingdom upon earth, consider this incident, together with Satan's previous binding without the complete destruction of his power until the end when he is cast into the lake of fire, as showing conclusively that opposition to Christ has only been subdued during the millennial period but not extinguished, so that like a smouldering fire it bursts forth into flame again before the end.[554] It can scarcely be denied that such is the underlying assumption of the passage, as is generally conceded,

though the usual symbolist view, relying upon this, minimizes the character of the millennial triumph, and regards the opposition to Christ as being subdued only so far as believers are concerned, toward whom Satan is then completely bound, the millennium and the conflict going on simultaneously—a view that is not adequately sustained by the text. On the other hand the futurist view magnifies the nature of the millennial triumph, and leaves no reasonable room for this final outburst of sin; for the millennium with Christ dwelling among his people upon earth is heaven already begun, and the Scriptures nowhere teach either the continuance of evil after Christ's second coming, or the existence of an interval between Christ's coming and the judgment. The interpretation here given is accepted by many modern scholars and follows a median line, regarding the millennium as a period of relative triumph followed by a fresh outbreak of sin, as seems to be indicated in this passage. If we compare these verses with that strange apocalyptic passage in Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (II Thess. 2:3f.), we find that he there predicts a falling away from the faith and the coming of the Man of Sin before the advent, which seems to refer in the figurative language of Apocalyptic to this same period of final struggle preceding the end. And the Man of Sin there foretold may perhaps be regarded as an ideal personification of the sin of man then prevailing, “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth”. This last struggle is, however, only for a little time

(v. 3), [pg 221] i. e. for a season that is short in comparison with the millennial period, and is apparently permitted in order to bring about the triumphal termination of the conflict that Satan may be completely and forever overthrown and flung into the lake of fire (v. 10), the final place of punishment, together with the Beast and the False Prophet whose destruction has been already described.

Though the general idea of the paragraph is relatively plain, the particular meaning of the prediction is involved in much obscurity, viz. that of a war in which Satan deceives the nations of the earth, Gog and Magog,[555] whose number is as the sand of the sea, and who go up under his leadership to compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but who are destroyed by divine intervention through fire from heaven. The description is evidently symbolic, and Gog and Magog were doubtless not intended to be identified as particular nations; nor can the fulfilment be literally understood. Like many of the prophecies of the past it is surrounded by a haze of indefiniteness that prevents its full interpretation until its meaning is revealed by the course of events. The source of the symbolism is found in the Old Testament invasion of Gog, a passage in Ezekiel (ch. 38-39), a prophetic scene of war, which becomes here the formal type of the last struggle between the hosts of sin and those of righteousness, and seems to refer to some new, national, and world-wide form of opposition to Christ and his kingdom in which

all the earth-forces of evil are gathered together for their extinction—a final stage of the conflict necessary for the completeness of the victory, which is to be postmillennial, and in which all the powers of evil shall be speedily and finally overthrown.[556] It may also be that the view of battle here given is intended to be partly retrospective [pg 222] in its purpose, and to link this struggle with the age-long conflict which culminates when the Beast and the False Prophet are taken, giving another view of Har-Magedon in which now, after a period of quiescence, Satan's overthrow forms the final part.

6 The Second Resurrection, Ch. 20:11-12a, and 13a

This is the final and complete resurrection which occurs at the end of the world, and comprises all those, whether believers or not, who failed to participate in the first resurrection. The completeness of this resurrection is specially emphasized. Even the sea gave up the bodies of the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the souls of the dead that were in them (v. 13a), in preparation for the judgment. The description here given of the second or general resurrection, it will be seen, presents the ordinary view of Scripture, while that of the first resurrection introduces a new and different conception, viz. that of a special

resurrection. The main distinction between the two resurrections may be regarded as chiefly one of order rather than time, though the precedence of the first in point of time is also included. In each case a resurrection of the body is meant, but the first is partial in extent, consisting of a particular class, while the second is universal, comprising all classes.[557] The paragraph, when thus interpreted, affords a clearer view of the resurrection as a whole, showing its proper order or sequence, and separating into two main parts that which is mostly regarded in the New Testament in its entirety as a single event occurring at the last day. In fact the doctrine of two resurrections taught in this passage, and the clearness with which the resurrection of the wicked for judgment is set forth, together constitute the most notable contribution of the Apocalypse to the eschatology of the New Testament;[558] for "whatever may be the difficulties involved, and however they may be solved, we must recognize that John here predicts an anticipative and limited resurrection of the same character [pg 223] as the general resurrection which is to follow."[559] This was undoubtedly the thought presented to John's mind in the vision, whether we attach any didactive significance to it or not, and it ought not to be overlooked in our interpretation.

At this point it may be not amiss to say, what must be apparent to every careful student of Scripture, that it was not the divine purpose

in the book of Revelation to reveal the intimate nature or detail of the great events which lie at the close of man's history on the earth; but rather to give a general outline of the divine order, which would serve to invigorate our faith and stimulate our hope in the onward path of Christian duty. And while it is for the most part fruitless to inquire particularly concerning that which is not clearly revealed, at the same time the general bearing of this passage should not be allowed to escape our attention, for it is one of the most significant in the book of Revelation, and we may well pause a moment to consider its proper meaning. We have here, apparently, —if one may offer an opinion on so obscure a subject,—a hint that the resurrection which has just been described as occurring in two periods, first and second, is to be regarded as a *process* rather than as an *event* that is single and separate in itself, one which in its entirety covers a long period of time, and is to be accomplished in progressive stages in which the righteous share first according to their relative worth—a process which is apparently marked by two principal periods that are specially in mind in the description before us. In the light of this view it may be well to recall some of the events in the Scripture record which seem to support it. The translation of Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament, the equivalent of an immediate resurrection, which anticipated the victory of Christ over death, would otherwise be an unexplained anomaly. But according to this interpretation it forms a part of the divine

order; their resurrection was not anomalous; it was only one step in the ever progressive plan of the ages. The mysterious hiding, too, of Moses' grave [pg 224] in the valley of the land of Moab, finds an adequate explanation if he was subsequently translated when the divine purpose in his burial was accomplished —the burial vindicating the divine honor, while his resurrection was immediate and triumphant. The record, also, in the closing chapter of Daniel (Dan. 12:1-3) though obscure, points to a stage in the resurrection in which not all but many shall rise, and includes as well those who rise to shame and everlasting contempt, though no indication of the time when this will occur is given by the prophet. But more particularly in Matthew's account of the crucifixion of our Lord (Mat. 27:52-3), we find that his death was followed not only by the rending of the veil in the temple, indicating the departure of the divine glory, but that “the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints which had fallen asleep were raised, and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.” It is a weak exegesis that interprets their resurrection as merely spectral, or as only temporary and transient, even though it were for the purpose of witnessing to the divinity of our Lord. The natural meaning is that they arose as a part of the victory of Christ, and were ready to enter with him into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. These passages all seem to point to a progressive resurrection that is to be accomplished in

successive stages, and they cannot well be otherwise interpreted except by indirection. It is true that the subject is only incidentally touched upon in the New Testament, yet it seems to be here clearly implied that precedence in resurrection is divinely accorded to those who are prepared for it, as a part of the reward of righteousness, and that this belongs to the divine order.[560] Beyond this we cannot safely go, for it is not well to be too confident in maintaining any view that depends so largely upon the interpretation of single passages, even though the inference, as in this case, seems to be natural and conclusive.

7 The Last Judgment, Ch. 20:11-15

The final divine inquiry into the sum and fruitage of each and every life, which is retributive in its [pg 225] purpose, is entered into at the end of the world when all the dead, small and great, stand before God to be judged, after the resurrection is complete.[561] The great judgment throne in the vision is white, the symbol of purity, and he that sat upon it is not named, but throughout the book the judge is the Father as distinguished from the Son. The two principles of the judgment given in this graphic account, which is a reflection of the Vision of Judgment in the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 7 and 12), are *first* “according to their works” which are

written in the books of record that are now open; and *second* according to the divine purpose which is "written in the book of life". The "book of life" was originally the name used for the roll of Jewish citizens kept from at least the ninth century before Christ (cf. Ezr. 2:62; Neh. 7:5, 64; and 12:22, 23) from which the names of the dead were erased, that is now applied to the Lamb's book of life (ch. 21:27), the roll of living citizens of the New Jerusalem.[562] Those not found in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire together with death and Hades, both of which are now merged into this final and fitting retribution for sin, i. e. physical death as experienced by men in this world, and Hades the abode of the dead during the intermediate state, are both abolished as temporary conditions in preparation for the new heaven and the new earth of the righteous, and are succeeded by the lake of fire for the sinful. This is the last event of time, the issue of the earthly life, the End[563] foretold by prophecy, the crisis that marks the transition to eternity, the closing scene in the great drama of human history. The view now passes at once from this scene of terror and judgment to the sublime vision of joy and triumph in the far and fadeless glory beyond.

[pg 226]

VII The Vision of the New Jerusalem (A Vision of Triumph). Ch. 21:1-22:5

The vision of the New Jerusalem is a crowning picture of redemption consummated, a vision of triumph and peace after the conflict is over and the victory won, portraying the eternal bliss of the redeemed in the immediate presence of God, whose glory is realized in the intimate fellowship and ultimate well-being of his creatures that have been finally recovered from sin and fully confirmed in righteousness. In this closing vision of the Revelation we reach the goal of Christian hope in the future life with God. Some future-historical interpreters have, however, regarded this section as describing the millennial glory upon earth, preceding the final consummation of all things; but the view is involved in so many difficulties that relatively few have accepted it. On the contrary the Christian mind of all ages has instinctively found in the vision a perspective view of the heavenly glory, an opinion that it may be confidently said is not a mistaken one.[564] The New Jerusalem presents the resultant condition of victory following the long struggle against sin, “the world to come”

already ushered in, which lies beyond the millennium and the resurrection. At this point it may be well to call attention to the fact that the millennium in Hebrew thought is the culmination of “the *age* to come”, i. e. the age which is the triumphing period of the Messiah upon earth; whereas the New Jerusalem is the realization of “the *world* to come”, i. e. of the world that is future and eternal. These ideas were quite distinct in Jewish thought, and they ought also to be distinct with us. The wonderful account of the new heaven and the new earth speaks of other conditions than those of the present time; and the view of the glorious city in this closing vision (ch. 21:2-22:5) is aptly divisible into eight parts, the symbol of culmination, or of a new life or period begun, the division indicated in the comments that follow.

1 The New Heaven and the New Earth, Ch. 21:1

In this verse we are presented with a view of the [pg 227] new creation which environs the New Jerusalem, the sign of the changed and exalted conditions of future existence which await those that are Christ's, the creation redeemed as well as the creature, “for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away”, and all things have become new.[565] This idea, which coincides with that of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans (ch. 8:19-23), is not,

however, further developed, but the view turns at once to the heavenly city, for the vision has its proper center in the city, and is designed to present a view of redeemed humanity in the presence of God to which that of the redeemed creation is merely incidental.

2 The Holy City, Ch. 21:2-22:5

Heaven, its joys and its inhabitants, is described under the type of a city, the New Jerusalem, the counterpart of the Old whose warfare has been accomplished, a civic and social dwelling-place that is new, holy, and glorious, an ideally perfect city in the midst of an ideally perfect world;[566] the symbol of the glorious conditions of the redeemed and purified church in the midst of the new life of eternity, and the antithesis of Babylon, the type of the old sinful and polluted world. The description is full of echoes from the Isaian rhapsody of Zion Redeemed (Isa. 54, 60, and 65), and Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem Restored (Ezek. 40 and 48).[567]

(1) The Tabernacle of God with Men, Ch. 21:3-4

The city in its entirety becomes the antitype

of the tabernacle of Israel, especially of the inner sanctuary or holy of holies, where God forever dwells with men, and they shall be his peoples,[568] and sorrow, pain, and death shall be no more, for the former things are passed away. [pg 228] This is authoritatively declared by a voice out of the throne, a divine message, possibly given by one of the Angels of the Presence, as a comforting and assuring promise of the divine nearness and guardianship in the future life of God's people.

(2) The Bride, the Lamb's Wife, Ch. 21:2, 9-10

The city, the dwelling-place of the redeemed, and the symbol of the new conditions of the glorified church in the midst of eternity, becomes now by metonymy the symbol of the redeemed church herself, the Bride of Christ, the inhabitants being thought of to the exclusion of all else. The great city, the holy Jerusalem, is seen coming down out of heaven from God,[569] as a bride adorned for her husband on her marriage day,—a figure of the intimate and tender relation of Christ with his people in the final state of the blessed. The city in these verses (9-10) is manifestly the symbol of the church that dwells within it; but the view that makes the New Jerusalem the symbol solely of the redeemed church, not only here but throughout the entire passage,[570] fails to

realize the flexibility of prophetic usage. The idea of place and local surroundings in the general description of the city undoubtedly stands first in the Apocalyptist's thought, and would seldom be questioned by the ordinary reader, though it includes also the inhabitants as well, and may be used for the inhabitants alone, as is done in this part of the passage, without invalidating the general meaning. In the ninth verse, with the announcement of the angel, “Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb”, the account in verse second is resumed, and is wrought out in detail. One of the vial-angels carries John away in the Spirit into a mountain great and high that he may see the vision more fully, an indication of its importance.

(3) The City of New Things, Ch. 21:5-8

All things are declared new and changed, and to be the inheritance of those that shall overcome,[571] to whom [pg 229] also the fulness of divine sonship is awarded; but the craven and unbelieving, the sinful and impure, shall be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. These words of authority, promise, and threatening, are spoken by him who sitteth on the throne, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who now himself, when all is fulfilled, speaks openly instead of through those mysterious voices that have hitherto issued

from out the throne and temple, another token of the nearer communion of the saints with God in the new heaven and the new earth.[572] And John is again commanded to write, for the words spoken are “faithful and true”, and “they are come to pass”, i. e. all God's promises and threatenings have been fulfilled, even the things of the new creation have already come into being, and the mystery of God is ended, according to the prediction of the angel with the book (ch. 10:7), i. e. the mystery of the divine purpose in the great work of creation and redemption has now been fully made known.

(4) The City of Glory[573], Ch. 21:11-21

“Having the glory of God”, i. e. the glory of his abiding presence, which is reflected in the glory of gate and wall and street, yet the city is described for our better understanding in terms of the earthly creation. Its light is like unto a stone most precious, and the materials of its structure are most costly; the building of the wall is of jasper, the city and the street of pure gold, and the foundations of the wall adorned with all manner of precious stones,[574] while the several gates are each of a single pearl,—the mingled symbols of brilliancy, glory, costliness, and beauty. The city lies foursquare, a perfect figure, the distinctive number of the earthly creation still, though new, with twelve foundations, gates, and

angels, the church number, reflecting the number of the tribes of Israel and of the apostles of the [pg 230] Lamb, and with walls one hundred and forty-four cubits high, the square of the church number, and twelve thousand furlongs in length on each of the four sides,[575] the church number multiplied by a thousand, and the number of the sealed in each tribe (ch. 7:5f.),—pertinent symbols, all of these, of the perfect home of the redeemed, as well as of the symmetry of the perfect church. The city is further described as a perfect cube like the holy of holies in the sanctuary, the length and breadth and the height of it being equal (v. 16) which perhaps means that in the height is included the eminence on which it stands, though others think that there is an intentional absence of all verisimilitude.[576] The symbolical meaning of the cubical dimensions is evidently that of a symmetrical and ideal perfection which is proportional in all its parts, and like to the holy of holies in the earthly temple.[577] The circuit of the walls is forty-eight thousand stadia, i. e. four times twelve thousand furlongs or stadia, and seems to be a designed reference to the city of Babylon, the greatest city of the ancient world, the circuit of which was four hundred and eighty stadia, i. e. four times one hundred and twenty furlongs or stadia, while that of the New Jerusalem is greater a hundredfold, which is evidently the language of symbolism.[578] The city which is first seen from afar, coming down out of heaven (v. 11-14), is afterward measured, and its glories pointed out by the angel (see the

divisions indicated by paragraphs in the text of the Revelation given in the first part of the volume).

(5) The City of Many Nations, Ch. 21:24, and 26

The nations walk amidst the light thereof, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it, a description which seems to reflect the thought of a new earth that will be peopled as well as the holy city, as implied in the first verse of the chapter, and perhaps designed to show the cosmopolitan character of the New Jerusalem.

[pg 231]

(6) The City of Exclusions, Ch. 21:1, 4, 22, 23, 25, 27; and 22:3, 5

The city has no more sea, i. e. the old, earthly, turbulent sea of conflict and unrest (v. 1); no more death, neither mourning, crying, nor pain any more (v. 4); no separate temple or inner sanctuary of partial access to God, for the city is all temple, and God forever dwells among his people (v. 22); no sun, nor moon, nor night, for the Lamb is the light thereof, his spiritual light superseding

the physical (v. 23, 25, and ch. 22:5); no shut gates of defence or hindrance, for there is no longer either night or enemy abroad (v. 25); and no more curse, nor any unholy to renew the conflict, nor anything unclean or that maketh an abomination and a lie, for Christ is throned as victor (v. 27, and ch. 22:3). In this final view of heaven not only has the temple disappeared, but also the elders, and the four living creatures, and all that accessory symbolism of the earlier visions which was appropriate to the church-historic period. These are no longer needed, for the conditions which they served to symbolize have passed away. Even the angels are no longer seen within, for this is a vision of redeemed men who look upon the face of their Redeemer.

(7) The City of Life, Ch. 22:1-2

As the antidote of death the eternal city is seen to possess a “river of water of life” that flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the street thereof, the source of enduring life to all the holy (Ps. 46:4-5). The city is, also, seen to have the “tree of life”,[579] the seal of God's first covenant in Eden (Gen. 2:9; 3:22), bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and with leaves for the healing of the nations, which has at last wrought its beneficent results and forever removed the curse. The word tree is in the singular, but the

context shows that it is to be understood generically, i. e. a tree of life which is found on this side of the river and on that, or trees of life growing by the river-side.[580] We notice, also, that the river, [pg 232] which in the earthly Paradise was parted and became four heads when traced to its source, is now replaced by a single river of water of life in the heavenly; and the Scripture story of man, viewed from its beginning to its close, is seen to finally lead up from the lost Paradise of creation to the Paradise regained by redemption. And in that city forever dwell only those “that are written in the Lamb's book of life”.

(8) The City of God, Ch. 22:3-5

The crowning glory of the holy city is the abiding presence of Jehovah, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein, and the redeemed shall see his face[581] in the beatific vision, and his name shall be upon their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever. Then and there man redeemed, who has so long been separated from the face of God by the ruinous results of sin, shall be at last restored to the fulness of the divine presence to abide throughout eternity.[582] Whether, indeed, God in his essential being can ever be directly apprehended by the finite spirit, is a question that with our present light we cannot definitely determine. It may well be in

eternity as in time, there as well as here, that for us to see the Son is to see the Father, and that the beatific vision for which men have so often longed and hoped and prayed in the past, is to be realized in a way quite different from the common thought, by the blessed vision of the glorified and exalted Christ in the fadeless life of the perfected kingdom of God in heaven. The name which shall be upon the foreheads of the redeemed is evidently the "new name" of chapter three (v. 12) which sums up in itself all the fulness of the future revelation of God to the glorified, the transcendental and ineffable name to men upon earth "which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it", i. e. in the future life of the heavenly kingdom.

It is surely worthy of our attention here to note in closing, how all God's revelations of himself have not only tended to grow in intensity and clearness, but also to center in the name by which he is made known. Beginning with the announcement of his sacred name [pg 233] Jehovah, as distinct from his former name Elohim, in connection with the great events of Israel's redemptive history, there is a manifest movement in the historical self-revelation of God to men that is marked by progressive steps which lead on through all the promise and mystery of the incarnate Christ to this final revelation of himself, lying beyond history, that shall be made to the redeemed under the "new name" when redemption is complete. He who was first promised to men, to be born "of the seed

of the woman", and "of the seed of Abraham", and was afterward more clearly revealed to Israel as "the son of David", "the servant of Jehovah", "Immanuel", "the Son of Man", and "the Messiah", and who was made known to men in his incarnation as "Jesus", "the Christ", and "our Lord", was finally recognized by the church under his full redemptive title as "the Lord Jesus Christ", by which name he shall be known throughout all the centuries to the end of time. But the vision of the city of God reaches far beyond this, and tells of his name to be then written upon the foreheads of the redeemed, manifestly his "own new name" (ch. 3:12) that is to be revealed to the glorified when redemption is complete, which stands for the full, final, and complete revelation of God in Christ in the new relations of the great future life in heaven.

Thus, with the redeemed enthroned in power, and dwelling in the unveiled presence of God revealed, there is completely fulfilled the ultimate divine purpose of man's creation and redemption. This, in John's view, is the consummation of all things, that

> "One far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation
> moves."

The transition to the closing part of the book is now made, but it is not very definitely marked, and in the division into chapters it was overlooked entirely, for the twenty-

second chapter should begin at this point. Some would make the break at the close of verse seven, but it more properly belongs at the close of verse five, where the description of the New Jerusalem ends.

III THE EPILOGUE, Ch. 22:6-21

The epilogue consists of a recapitulation of the authority and contents of the book, instructions for its use, and an enforcement of its lessons. It is a brief but [pg 234] impressive conclusion, giving the final words of the angel, with the promise of Christ to the victors, and the closing testimony of John.

A The Final Words of the Angel, with the Promise of Christ, Ch. 22:6-16

These words should be regarded as spoken for Christ, and the promise to the victors as made in his name, by the angel that he sent to testify these things unto John, the interpreting angel of chapter one (v. 1), who now looks back over the entire revelation that has been given, returning from the series of visions revealing the future to the standpoint of the introductory vision.[583]

1 The Message Reaffirmed, Ch. 22:6-9

The importance of the message is recognized and its trustworthiness emphasized by repeated affirmation. An effort is thereby made to impress indelibly its lessons upon the heart of the church.

(1) The Witness of the Angel, Ch. 22:6-7

The sayings of the book are declared to be true and faithful, and of divine authority; the speedy coming of Christ is announced,[584] i. e. "quickly" in the divine view which covers all eternity, but not to be understood as at once or soon from the ordinary or human point of view; and a blessing is pronounced upon those who keep the words of the prophecy of this book in anticipation of their complete fulfilment.

(2) The Witness Confirmed by John, Ch. 22:8a

To the declaration of the angel is added the direct testimony of John that he saw and heard these things, a parenthetical remark, strengthening the statement of the angel and confirming the words of the book.

(3) Worship from John again Refused, Ch. 22:8b-9

The form and presence and message of the angel overwhelm John with awe, and he tenders his worship; [pg 235] but the angel, as before (ch. 19:10), acknowledges himself a fellow-servant with John, and bids the Apostle worship God—probably a protest against angel worship which may already have begun.

2 The Book Not to be Sealed, Ch. 22:10-11

The words of the prophecy are not to be sealed, i. e. they are not to be kept secret, evidently not even their deeper meaning, so far as it was known, was to be veiled in secrecy, but was to be openly communicated to the churches, for the time of inevitable reward is declared to be at hand (v. 10-11) both for the righteous and the wicked, when the present opportunity shall be ended.[585] The opposite direction, it will be noticed, was given concerning the Book of Daniel (ch. 12:4, 9), which was commanded to be “shut up and sealed till the time of the end”, because as had been previously explained, “it belongeth to many days to come” (Dan. 8:26). But this book is to be given at once to men, an evident indication that its contents were

not regarded as secret or veiled, but were intended to be read and understood by all.

3 The Promise of Christ to the Victors, Ch. 22:12-16

"Behold, I come quickly;[586] and my reward is with me," is the gracious promise of recompense to be given to the faithful, for he will "render to each man according as his work is"—a fundamental principle of the final judgment that is everywhere emphasized throughout the book. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End", is a recapitulation of these three comprehensive titles descriptive of Christ which have hitherto been used separately (chs. 1:8, 17; 2:8; 21:6), but are now massed together in impressive solemnity. It is the equivalent of saying, "I am the Source, and through me will be the Consummation, of all that which is and was and shall be the ages through"—an affirmation of absolute supremacy in the universe.[587] The declaration of the next verse (v. 14), [pg 236] "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city", is the seventh and last of the wonderful Benedictions of the book (see App'x C). In contrast with these that are blessed, are all the wicked of every class who are left without, including "every one that

loveth and maketh a lie". He who sent his angel to testify to these things is Jesus (v. 16), once born of the family of David, the bright and morning star, the glorious harbinger of the day of redemption.[588] The words are in the form of direct address, and are undoubtedly from Christ himself, though as there is no apparent indication of a change of speaker from verse six, where the voice is clearly that of the angel, we may regard them either as given by the angel who repeats what Christ has said, or as personally spoken by Christ himself.[589] It is well for us at this point to remember the interesting fact, generally known by students of the Greek Testament, that in verse sixteen, "at the word 'David', the manuscript 1, from which Erasmus compiled the Textus Receptus, ends. In order to supply the remainder, which is deficient, Erasmus retranslated the Vulgate Version into Greek. The Greek, therefore, of the Textus Receptus from this point onwards is the Greek of Erasmus",[590] and hence lacks the authority of the original text.

B The Closing Testimony of John, Ch. 22:17-20

These verses contain the final witness, warning, and exhortation of the Apostle, which is given to the churches before the

book is closed, concerning all the things which are written therein.

[pg 237]

1 A Last Universal Invitation of Grace, Ch. 22:17

"Come!" "Come!" "Come!" A thrice repeated call to all men to come to Christ for the free gift of life eternal, is fervently uttered before the book is closed forever. The beloved disciple with ardent zeal sends out this final call to the unsaved, and thus the message of judgment throughout the book reaches a fitting close in a full, free, and urgent invitation to all men of every class to accept the offer of salvation. This certainly appears to be the natural meaning of the passage, as is made clear by the appeal in the latter part of the verse, which would otherwise lack coherence, viz. "And he that is athirst let him come: he that will, let him take of the water of life freely." The verse is, however, regarded by many as belonging to the words of Christ just preceding (v. 12-16), though it is more likely, but we cannot say certainly, spoken by John. Either connection is possible, and does not materially affect the sense. Another, perhaps the more common though less likely interpretation, makes the word "Come", repeated in the first half of the verse, a call to Christ to come again, referring to his promise

in the twelfth verse; and regards the passage either as the words of Christ affirming the witness of the Spirit and the Bride who entreat him to come, or as an answering cry from John on behalf of the church.[591]

2 A Last Impressive Warning of Exhortation, Ch. 22:18-19

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away ... God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city." These are the authoritative words of a messenger conscious of divine authority, and are intended to preserve the integrity of his message.[592] They are similar in form to the warning given in Deuteronomy (Deut. 4:2; [pg 238] 12:32), guarding against the deliberate falsification, or misinterpretation, of a divine message.

3 A Last Assuring Promise of Hope, Ch. 22:20a

"Yea: I come quickly" is the final and repeated assurance of Christ to the church of his personal coming. The promise of the Lord Jesus that he will come again quickly, which

was introduced almost at the beginning of the book, and which recurs at intervals throughout, is thus solemnly emphasized and repeated once more at the close, a clear indication of the place which it occupied in the mind of the Apostle. As before it is not "quickly" in the earthly sense, else Christ would have come long since, but from the divine point of view, for God's plan is never slow in its accomplishment.[593]

4 A last Ecstatic Prayer of Yearning, Ch. 22:20b

"Amen: come, Lord Jesus", is the Apostle's closing rejoinder of rapturous faith and hope. "In this final assurance of the Lord, 'I come quickly', the Book of Revelation finds its keynote again, and so sinks to rest with the acquiescent [and triumphant] reply of faith, 'Amen: come, Lord Jesus.' "[594]

C The Author's Benediction, Ch. 22:21

The apostolic blessing of the human author of the Apocalypse is added as a final word to the message of the book, invoking the grace or favor of the Lord Jesus, the divine Saviour, upon all the saints, the usual closing words of

the New Testament Epistles. The benediction, though unusual in apocalypses, is here no doubt added because the book was intended to be read in the churches. And thus in words familiar to every believer is brought to a close the great Apocalyptic writing of the Christian church, the last message of the glorified Christ to his faithful disciples upon earth, a deep and soul-inspiring view of the past, the present, and the future, beheld in the light of Apocalyptic vision. Moved by its manifold lessons of faith and hope, we surely cannot but join with fervent accord and repetition in its last word of appeal and blessing,

AMEN AND AMEN.

[pg 240]

Appendix A: Some Fundamental Conceptions of the Apocalypse

(The Conditions of the Present Age)

I A Duality of Forces in the Moral World

The Good ... vs... The Evil;
... or ...

The Kingdom of God ... vs... The Counter-Kingdom of Satan.

II A Triple Antagonism of Moral Life

1 Between God and Satan, the Evil Angels, and The Men of the Earth.
2 Between Good Angels and Satan, Evil Angels, and The Men of the Earth.
3 Between The Saints and Satan, Evil Angels, and The Men of the Earth.

III A Trinal Antithesis of Moral Character

1 Of the Lamb and the Dragon, i. e. of Christ and Satan, or in the Greek Ἀρνίον and δρακων. The same antithesis is implied between the Lamb and the two Beasts to whom the Dragon gives his power, as shown by the Greek names Ἀρνίον and θηρίον.

2 Of the Bride and the Harlot, i. e. of the True Church and the Faithless World, or in the Greek Νύμφη and Πόρνη.

A like antithesis also exists between the Woman (cf. ch. 12) and the Harlot, Γυνὴ and Πόρνη.

3 Of Jerusalem and Babylon, i. e. of the Holy City and the Unholy or the Great City, Ἱερουσαλὴμ and Βαβυλὼν.

The full antithesis is found in the final contrast between the New Jerusalem and the Old Babylon, the City of God and the City of Sin, or the Redeemed Church and the Godless World.

IV A Threefold Theocratic Method in Man's Redemptive History

1 By Moral Conflict—the Evil against the Good;

2 Through Divine Preservation—God Caring for his Own;

3 Unto Christian Triumph—the Victory of the Redeemed.

[pg 242]

Appendix B: Current Questions of Divided Opinion

I The Four Schools of Interpretation

1 The Preterist, or Contemporaneous-Historical School;

2 The Progressivist, or Continuous-Historical School;

3 The Futurist, or Future-Historical School;

4 The Symbolist, or Spiritual School.

The wide diversity of prevailing opinion is well indicated by the existence of four separate schools of interpreters, who represent as many different viewpoints that are currently attributed to the prophecy, and that are based upon two fundamentally different methods of regarding its purpose, viz. the Historical which *specializes*, and the Symbolical which *idealizes* the message of the book, conveniently referred to as the

Historical and Symbolical Schools.

II The Seven Shibboleths of Interpreters

1 The Personal Anti-Christ;
2 The Emperor Nero;
3 The Roman Church;
4 The Mohammedan Power;
5 The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine;
6 The Time, Purpose, and Circumstances of Christ's Second Coming;
7 The Personal Millennial Reign of Christ on the Earth.

These are the main subjects of disagreement among interpreters, and mark the dividing lines of opinion. The Historical School, in its various forms, usually makes one or more of these central to the thought of the book; while the Symbolical School, for the most part, does not regard any of them as either distinctly indicated, or certainly implied. It is fortunate, however, that the main teaching is not materially affected by the view we may take concerning these subjects of disagreement.

Appendix C: Heptachords of Song and Blessing

I The Seven Choral Symphonies of the Revelation

1 The Creation Chorus Ch. 4:8b-11
2 The Redemption Chorus Ch. 5:9-14
3 The Salvation Chorus Ch. 7:10-12
4 The Victory Chorus Ch. 11:17-18
5 The New and Incommunicable Chorus Ch. 14:2-3
6 The Adoration Chorus (of Moses and the Lamb) Ch. 15:3-4
7 The Hallelujah Chorus Ch. 19:1-7

II The Seven Benedictions of the Revelation

1 The Benediction upon the Receivers of the Book Ch. 1:3
2 The Benediction upon the Holy Dead Ch. 14:13
3 The Benediction upon the Watchers for their Lord Ch. 16:15
4 The Benediction upon the Guests at the Marriage Supper Ch. 19:9
5 The Benediction upon the Sharers in the First Resurrection Ch. 20:6
6 The Benediction upon the Keepers of the Prophecy Ch. 22:7
7 The Benediction upon the Purified Ch. 22:14

[pg 244]

Appendix D: The Formal Series of Sevens

I The Initial Series of Seven

(Messages of Christ to the Church Universal)

1 A Message to the Church when Declining, as in Ephesus:—"Remember ... and Repent."

2 A Message to the Church when Suffering, as in Smyrna:—"Fear not ... Be Faithful."

3 A Message to the Church when Impure, as in Pergamus:—"Repent, or I Come with the Sword."

4 A Message to the Church when Struggling, as in Thyatira:—"Hold Fast till I Come."

5 A Message to the Church when Dying, as in Sardis:—"Stablish the Things that Remain."

6 A Message to the Church when Steadfast, as in Philadelphia:—"Hold Fast ... That No One Take thy Crown."

7 A Message to the Church when Self-Deceived, as in Laodicea:—"Be Zealous ... and Repent."

[pg 246]

Appendix E: The Symbolism of Numbers

(A Key to Scripture Interpretation)

The value of the symbolism of numbers in the general interpretation of Scripture is variously estimated, but its importance in interpreting the Revelation is almost universally conceded, for without it we cannot understand aright the symbolic teaching of the book. The attentive student will not fail to notice the wide use of numbers throughout, and the effect of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, upon the symbolism of the simpler numbers. The author believes that a cautious use can often be made of numbers in the interpretation not only of the Revelation where their use is so manifest, but of many other parts of Scripture, if not too much stress be laid on the symbolic meaning, for the Hebrew mind delighted itself in symbols. The value of this knowledge lies in the fact that an additional thought may often be caught in this way that would otherwise escape our attention, though it is usually subordinate and does not occupy so prominent a place as in the Revelation. The symbolism of the numbers used in the book is concisely stated in this appendix for the convenience of the

reader.

ONE (a unit), the Primary Number. The symbol of that which is single, alone, or representative. One hour, and one day, in the Revelation stand for a relatively short time, and a half-hour for a clearly limited period, even though these may not be actually short from the human point of view. The fractions one-half, one-third, and one-fourth do not represent definite parts, but in a general way portions less than the whole, that which is of limited extent in relation to the whole.

TWO (a pair), the Lowest Plural Number. The symbol of confirmation, of added strength and surety, especially the number of confirmation in witness-bearing. The Two Witnesses in chapter eleven, and the Two Beasts in chapter thirteen, it will be seen, serve to strengthen each other.

THREE (a triad), the Divine Number. The symbol of the Trinity; of the spiritual as contrasted with the [pg 247] material; of blessing in the Old Testament. A small total that is deemed sufficient; a limited plurality; spiritual completeness. The smallest number with a beginning, a middle, and an end—a fact that impressed the Jewish mind.

THREE AND ONE-HALF (one-half of seven), a Broken Number, the half of the Perfect Number. The symbol of the finite or undetermined; a broken and uncertain period without a fixed limit; a shortened period of time when applied to duration, and usually

one of tribulation; a period of trial and judgment. Three and a half years is the period of the church's conflict in the Revelation, the age of the church militant, the church-eon; and three and a half days is the short and indefinite period of world-triumph in which the church suffers oppression—the equivalent of the half-week in Daniel. Three and a half years, the period of drought in Elijah's time, of the little horn in Daniel, and of Christ's public ministry, is introduced four times in the Revelation, viz. it is the period of the Two Witnesses (ch. 11:3), of the Woman in the wilderness (ch. 12:6, 14), of the Dragon's rage (ch. 12:14), and of the power of the Beast (ch. 13:5), each of which is a time of tribulation.

FOUR (the four corners or sides of a square), the Earth Number. The symbol of the physical creation, having relation to this present world which is usually thought of as evil; also used of world-wideness, universality of extent, as all parts of the earth without any moral significance.

FIVE (one-half of ten), an Incomplete Number. The symbol of the indefinite, the uncertain, with the suggestion of smallness; as a measure of time an incomplete period.

SIX (one less than seven; and one-half of twelve), an Imperfect Number. The symbol of evil, of incompleteness of quality, or of imperfection; Satan's number, the signature of non-perfection; the representative of that which is earthly as opposed to that which is heavenly; falling short of the fulness of seven,

the perfect number, and but the half of twelve, the church number.

[pg 248]
SEVEN (the number of days in a week; also four plus three), the Perfect Number. The symbol of perfection, or completeness of quality; of totality of kind, fulness, or universality. A sacred number with the Jews; the number of the covenant in the Old Testament; the ethical number, for it often has a moral significance, and, as will be seen, is composed of the earth number (four) added to the divine number (three). The number seven occurs *fifty-four* times in the Revelation, indicating that it occupied an important place in the mind of the writer, and should receive special attention.

EIGHT (seven plus one), a Reinforced Number. The symbol of culmination, of resurrection, or of a new life or period begun.

TEN (the ten digits; the ten commandments), the Complete Number. The symbol of completeness of all the parts, of totality of portions, entirety, and absoluteness; a finite number as contrasted with infinity; in its larger multiples implying indefiniteness and magnitude. Ordinarily used of things that are earthly, though not necessarily implying any moral significance. It is a relevant fact, however, that nothing which is described in heaven is ten in number, though its multiples are constantly introduced. The combination of seven with ten in the seven heads and ten horns of the Dragon and the Beast, is unusual

and has an evil significance throughout, which is probably intended to indicate that that which was originally designed for moral perfection (seven) has been prostituted for earthly ends (ten), as is signified by joining one to the other.

TWELVE (the twelve sons of Jacob; four multiplied by three), the National Number of Israel. The symbol of the covenant nation, the church number—the number of the earth (four) multiplied by the number of the divine (three) becoming the sign of God's people divinely chosen out of the earth. By some it is interpreted as the number of world-witness for divine truth, as the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, putting the purpose of the church first.

TWENTY-FOUR (twelve multiplied by two), the National Number Doubled. The symbol in the Revelation of the church of both Dispensations united, the Jewish and Christian, the church of all the ages. The glorified [pg 249] church in heaven is ideally represented by the four and twenty elders that are before the throne, i. e. the elders represent one phase of that life.

FORTY (ten multiplied by four), the Probational Number. The symbol of temptation, or of the power of the earthly; often connected with the divine test of character, the earth number (four) multiplied by the complete number (ten) signifying the complete power of the earthly which is ever testing men. Also, as forty years was regarded

as the period of intellectual maturity in man, it sometimes stood for a full period, a complete epoch, especially a complete period of stress or trial.

FORTY-TWO (twelve multiplied by three and a half; or seven multiplied by six), a Broken Number. The symbol of the church-historic period of trial, the world-age, the duration of the rule of wickedness. Three and a half years in months,—the source from which this number is derived in the Revelation,—serves to indicate the incomplete period of the church (twelve multiplied by three and a half), and also the full or complete period of evil (six multiplied by seven).

SEVENTY (ten multiplied by seven), the Cosmopolitan Number. The symbol of world-wideness; of a two-fold completeness that is all embracing and comprehensive, comprising both seven and ten; the number of the nations. [The numbers forty and seventy, strange to say, do not occur in the Revelation, though forty is common in the Old Testament, and occurs also in the New, and the square of forty (1600) is found in chapter fourteen (v. 20); seventy also had a well-known meaning to the Hebrew mind, especially from the period of the Captivity which lasted seventy years, and was also the number of disciples sent forth by our Lord for wider service during his Perean ministry. It is quite probable, however, that these numbers are not used in the Revelation, where so much stress is laid on the symbolism of numbers, simply because their symbolism was not

needed, just as one hundred is not used except in combination with other numbers].

ONE HUNDRED (ten multiplied by ten), the Complete Number Squared; ten multiplied by itself. The symbol [pg 250] of a multiple completeness that is usually applied to the earthly.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR (twelve multiplied by twelve), the National Number of Israel Squared. The symbol of the completeness of the redeemed church—the multiplying of a number by itself conveying the idea of a multiple fulness or completeness; Israel, God's people, made complete.

Six Hundred and Sixty-six (six hundred, plus sixty, plus six), the Number of the Beast. The symbol of the threefold form of the world's evil which culminates in the Second Beast. Six, the number of imperfection (one short of the mystic seven), thrice repeated, six, six, six, (666), represents the combined force of the Dragon, the First Beast, and the Second; or, differently stated, six hundred may be taken as the symbol of the Dragon, sixty as the symbol of the First Beast, and six as the symbol of the second, which gives a total of six hundred, and sixty, and six, representing the combined power of evil incarnated in the Second Beast. In this symbolism there may also be included the thought of a triune power in antagonism to the divine Trinity—a trinity of sin.

ONE THOUSAND (ten multiplied by ten

multiplied by ten), the Cube of Ten. The symbol of multi-completeness; a number that is great but indefinite in its symbolism, and often used of the heavenly. The thousand years of chapter twenty is a great period of time of unknown length, stretching out to untold generations, the millennium of the church's history, the period of the church's triumph and victory.

TWELVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY (forty-two multiplied by thirty; or twelve multiplied by three and a half and this again by thirty), the Time Number. The symbol of the indefinite period of present-world duration; the age of persecution. Twelve hundred and sixty days are equivalent to forty-two months of thirty days each, or three and a half years of three hundred and sixty days each, the symbol of the incomplete period of trial during which the church suffers oppression. To this may perhaps be added the combination of twelve multiplied by five, representing the incompleteness of the church as one factor, and seven multiplied by three, representing [pg 251] the completeness of the divine as the other factor, these multiplied together equalling twelve hundred and sixty and symbolizing God working out perfect results through the incomplete period of the church.

SIXTEEN HUNDRED (forty multiplied by forty; or one hundred multiplied by sixteen), the Square of Forty; or the Square of Ten multiplied by the Square of Four. The symbol of that which is coextensive with the created world. Forty is composed of four, the earth

number, multiplied by ten, the number of completeness; and sixteen hundred, the square of forty, is the sign of completeness so far as this world is concerned. The square of four multiplied by the square of ten gives the same result, and conveys the same idea of world-completeness.

SEVEN THOUSAND (one thousand multiplied by seven), the Number of Multi-Completeness, one thousand, multiplied by seven, the Number of Fulness or Perfection. The symbol of a great number that is fully complete; the number of those put to death in the fall of the great city (ch. 11:13).

TEN THOUSAND (one thousand multiplied by ten; the square of one hundred), the Superlative Number. The symbol of innumerability, or of an innumerable multitude. This is the highest *single* number in the system of notation used in the New Testament; ten raised to the fourth power, a myriad (μυριὰς).

TWELVE THOUSAND (one thousand multiplied by twelve), the Number of Multi-Completeness (one thousand) multiplied by the Number of the Tribes of Israel (twelve). The symbol of the complete number saved out of Israel from each tribe; or, as others interpret it, the complete number saved out of all the nations, included here under the twelve tribes, twelve thousand from each tribe; also the measure of one side of the wall of the New Jerusalem which is multi-complete and encircles the redeemed of Israel.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND (one thousand multiplied by one hundred and forty-four; or twelve thousand multiplied by twelve; or the cube of ten multiplied by the square of twelve), the Number of Redemption. The symbol of the multiple completeness of the redeemed church, whether applied to the redeemed [pg 252] from the Old Dispensation, or by synecdoche to those from all ages and nations.

TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND (ten thousand multiplied by ten thousand), the Number of Multi-Completeness (one thousand) multiplied by the Number of Completeness of Parts (ten), and this again multiplied by itself; the Square of a Myriad, one hundred millions in number. The symbol of an innumerable multitude which is made more intense by squaring it; the multiple and innumerable number of the angels in heaven.

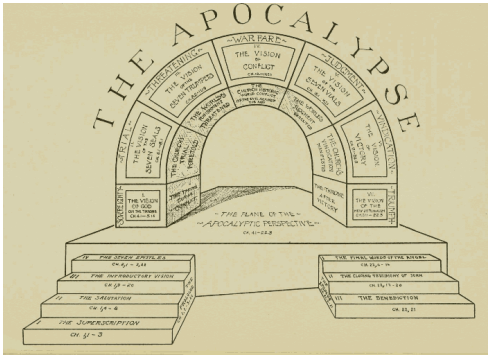
TWICE TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND (ten thousand multiplied by ten thousand, and this again doubled), the Double Square of a Myriad, two hundred millions in number—the largest multiple number in the book of Revelation, and the largest number mentioned in the Bible. The symbol of an innumerable multitude made more intense by multiplication, becoming thereby an *innumerably* innumerable multitude, and this again doubled. The countless number of the vast invading army of horsemen under the sixth trumpet which destroy a third part of men from the earth; the world-forces which under direction of the world-rulers of the

darkness work world-ruin among men—a significant figure of the mighty power and destructive agency of the heathen world as it appeared to John's mind in the great Apocalyptic vision.

[pg 253]

Appendix F: The Literary Structure of the Apocalypse

A Diagram showing the relation of its several parts.



The Literary Structure of the Apocalypse

[pg 254]

Appendix G: The Apocalyptic Literature[595]

The Apocalyptic Literature is a characteristic

product of Jewish national and religious thought. It was a favorite literary method of a particular age, and was born of a travail of soul which strove to find expression for those new currents of thought and feeling that came to the surface in later Judaism. Following the decadence of prophecy it belonged to the period of Jewish oppression, and voiced the heart-cry of a people true to God in the midst of national distress. Though anticipated in fragmentary parts of earlier prophecies, as in Ezekiel and Zechariah, the style of Apocalyptic first found definite form in the book of Daniel, which became the type of all subsequent Writings of this class that flourished so abundantly in the two centuries preceding and the century following the beginning of the Christian era. Couched in language that is characteristically figurative and symbolical the literary form is at once marked and significant, and reached its highest development in the canonical Apocalypse which has given name to the whole class. The essential limitations of this class of literature are clearly recognizable; its ideas move within a narrow range, its point of view is sombre and unequal, and its center of interest is mainly eschatological. It occupies a sphere peculiarly its own, a world of pious and often fantastic dreams—"for prophecy as it lost its footing on the solid earth took refuge in the clouds";[596] it wrote the word mystery large across its page, and revelled in the weird and shadowy; but beneath its peculiar phantasy lay a profound religious motive—it sought to stay the troubled souls of

men in time of storm, and in its deeper purpose strove to reconcile the righteousness of God with the sufferings of his people. In the form of strange and sometimes even grotesque symbolic visions—thought couched in symbols burning and vivid, which no other figure of speech could so well convey—and under the name of some hero of the past, it sketched in [pg 255] outline a history of the world, the origin of evil, the future victory of righteousness, and the final consummation of all things through which alone, according to the Apocalyptic view, the providential rule of God could be vindicated.

There still exists a not inconsiderable remnant of this very interesting literature, though the greater portion has perished in the wreckage of time. The principal books still extant are the *Apocalypse of Baruch*; the *Ethiopic* and *Slavonic Books of Enoch*; the *Ascension of Isaiah*; the *Book of Jubilees*; the *Assumption of Moses*; the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*; *Second Esdras* (known also as *Fourth Ezra*); the *Psalms of Solomon*; and the *Sibylline Oracles*. The late recovery of some of these from apparent oblivion is a matter of history, and their recension and translation by European and American scholars is not without interest to the general student. The study of this literature as a distinct class is one of the notable contributions to knowledge by the modern critical school. These Jewish Apocalypses were widely read in their day, and they both partook of and leavened the thought of their time, for they incorporated

and expressed the current mysterious hopes and beliefs of the people. Their influence is distinctly traceable in the diction of the New Testament, and the *Book of Enoch* is obviously quoted in the Epistle of Jude. These works ranked very high with the primitive Christians, and this led to their being reedited by early Christian writers, and, it is generally thought, to the interpolation of later ideas. There is, however, a very wide variation of opinion concerning the extent to which changes have been introduced, and this is one of the puzzling questions that confronts the textual critic. Then, also, beside these changes in the older books, a new series of Christian Apocalypses sprang up, influenced no doubt by the *Apocalypse of John*. A considerable number of these have survived, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter*, *of Paul*, *Thomas*, *Stephen*, *Cerinthus* and others, but the greater portion have been lost, and those we have are decidedly inferior both in style and conception to the earlier Jewish works of which they are a feeble imitation.

It is difficult for us to conceive the conditions of mind and thought that gave rise to such a literature. [pg 256] In itself it affords an interesting psychological study. The Oriental is a mystic by nature, and many of his ways of thinking can never be quite clear to the Western mind. The Jew in times past was the great figure of the Orient, as he has also been well named “the most commanding figure in history”; for whatever he may now be, the Hebrew which we find in his literature is

enveloped in the atmosphere of the East. The Hebrew writers as a class are unique. Although devoid in a large measure of the humanistic idea of literature for its own sake, they yet subserved the truest aim in that they brought to the surface and made verbal those deeper tides of thought and feeling which move and flow in the universal heart, those wide-spread and enduring currents which they instinctively felt were shared by the men of their own generation. Writing only for a religious purpose, and because they had a message for life, the development of their thought-forms was more or less incidental, and was the product alike of the man, his religion, and his environment. So that while we especially emphasize the national conditions which contributed so largely to the birth of this literary form, we should not forget that behind all that which was temporary and passing lay the Semitic mind and the Mosaic cult.

The rise of Apocalyptic marks a transition stage in the development of Hebrew thought that is of momentous significance, for it led to clearer views of immortality, and truer conceptions of God's relation to the world of men, as well as to a distinct clarifying of the Messianic hope. Its deeper roots are found in the failure of prophecy. No living voice was heard among the people speaking for God as in former days. Prophecy had grown senile and was in decay; it had become a thing of the past, and in its place had followed the scholastic work of the scribes, mechanically

interpreting the messages of old. But, as is pointed out by Charles, “Scribism could not satisfy the aspirations of the nation: it represented an unproductive age of criticism, following a productive age of prophetic genius.” And Apocalyptic was the spontaneous outcry of a heart-hunger which refused to be fed on the barren husks of labored interpretation served up by the scribes. It was in the true line of succession to prophecy, [pg 257] and though it fell far behind the prophetic message both in its form and content, and was even feeble in comparison, yet, as Charles has said, “It attested beyond doubt the reappearance of spiritual genius in the field of thought and action.” There is assuredly something that is profoundly pathetic in this deep heart-cry of the Jewish people which rings mournfully out of the far past; for even at this remote distance of time and space we cannot read without emotion their enduring record of sorrow and suffering, of longing and hope, if we share at all in the wider world of religious experience.[597]

The apocalyptists were evidently conscious that they had no new message for their generation, and this conviction led to certain well-defined results. First of all they fell back upon the old message for most of their ideas; but with singular skill they contrived to present them in new form. The essential elements of their thought were taken from the Old Testament prophecies, while the material framework was drawn from without. They

attempted in their own way to develop an esoteric meaning in the prophecies of the past, and for this purpose called to their aid the bold and striking imagery of the Eastern mind. They laid under contribution the luxuriant symbols of Babylon, Persia, and the surrounding nations; they gathered the rarest figures from the accumulated stores of poetry, art, and religion; and then with a fertile fancy they interwove these all in the fantastic fabric of their dreams. Then, again, they hid their own personality, and masked under the name of some great religious hero of the past. Enoch and Moses, Isaiah and Baruch, served as a thin disguise for the real authors who remained unknown,—for the Apocalyptic writings are all pseudonymous so far as known, with the apparent exception of the *Apocalypse of John*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*,—and yet we cannot say that there was any real motive of deception in this, if we take into account the views of authorship which then prevailed, for "the ethical notion of literary property is a plant of modern growth".[598]

The fashioning of Apocalyptic was influenced by many different causes, but the most marked and significant [pg 258] of them all is to be found in the existing national conditions of the time. By the captivity in Babylon Judah had been brought within the sweep of the great tide of history; the world became vaster; prophecy had a new and broader outlook, and its thought was forever after interpenetrated by an element of Apocalyptic. The strange

figures of Babylonian imagery were absorbed by the Hebrew mind, and enshrined in their subsequent literature. On the other hand the nation itself was in decay; the power of the past had been broken and destroyed; and "it was terror and oppression", in good part at least, as Stevens has well said, "that gave this new trend to their thought". They had drunk deeply of the bitter cup of national distress; the encroachment of the world-empires had envenomed the past, embittered the present, and overshadowed the future; the glorious promises of God had thus far failed of any substantial realization, and the contrast between promise and fulfilment was too wide to be overlooked. But the Hebrew with sublime courage did not lose faith in God because of the delay. Apocalyptic voiced his answer to the problems of the time, and it, like Prophecy and the Wisdom Literature, was rooted in certain ethical conceptions which are fundamental to its thought, such as that God is holy, that the world in which we live is a moral world, and that righteousness must win.[599] And this gave to the apocalyptist his theme:—the Fortunes of the Kingdom of God, and how they are to be reconciled with all that God has said; for God must be vindicated, he is forever true, and his word cannot fail. This thesis was maintained in two ways. *First*, by attempting a wider view of the problem of sin and righteousness. That became the question no longer of a single nation, but of the whole race—for under the stimulus of new and wider conditions, a great enlargement of the Hebrew spirit took place.

There must be a providential and moral order in the universe which if sought out will give the true meaning of history. The divine purpose must be interpreted through the broader sphere of the world's life. This standpoint had now become possible through the wider world-view produced in later Judaism by contact and intercourse with other nations. And thus Apocalyptic came to express [pg 259] both a deeply wrought theodicy and a Semitic philosophy of history. *Second*, the apocalyptist completed his vindication of God by shifting the center of attention from the present to the future. The more certain it became that no present realization of his hopes was possible, the more surely he turned to a future age that would abundantly recompense all the pain and disappointment of the past. It was this that made the outlook of Apocalyptic essentially eschatological. Beginning with the history of the past veiled under the form of prophecy, the apocalyptist rushes on to predict the future, for there he finds the victory. The End! The End! is his cry,—the End that victory may come—for God is to be vindicated only by the consummation of all things, and history can only be read aright in the light of its finality. The answer of the End is the key that Apocalyptic offers to the mystery of all that “which was and is and is to come”; and it is this persistent effort to read the mind of God concerning the future that gives to Apocalyptic an element of peculiar interest. For though it is often like the voice of “an infant crying in the night * * * * and

with no language but a cry", it has yet a deep significance all its own; it was a form of thought by which God led his people into clearer views of truth, and to new and larger vision.[600] Upon the other hand the shifting-point in every apocalypse from history to prediction can usually be made out without essential effort; for beneath the form of symbols and symbolic actions can ordinarily be discovered the chief actors and principal events of the past and present which correspond to history; while the things of the future which are predicted, reach out at once to extravagant proportions. Thus each Jewish apocalypse by its content and movement, serves to mark out its own horizon and reveal its own environment.

The general prevalence of the Apocalyptic form in the period in which it was used may be accounted for [pg 260] partly by its suitability to the theme which it treated, and partly by the prevailing conditions of national surveillance. Its visions and symbols and dream-movement were peculiarly adapted to meet the conditions of a writing which did not dare to make plain its bitter reproaches of the foes of Israel. Its hidden meaning, also, answered well to hint darkly what lay in the future; and its fantastic imagery appealed to the imagination.[601] The pervasive element of mystery served to invest these writings with a subtle charm that all the intervening lapse of centuries and even the present temper of a scientific age have wholly failed to dissipate. The effort of most modern Jewish scholars to

attribute the Apocalyptic Literature to Essenism cannot be sustained; neither can we accept the gratuitous assertion of Montefiore, that “the Apocalyptic writings lie for the most part outside the line of the purest Jewish development”. Schürer and Charles reflect the opinion of the majority of Christian scholars in maintaining its nearer relation to Phariseeism, though admitting it to be “a product of free religious thought following older models”, and showing distinctive marks of Phariseeism in some of its parts and of Sadduceeism in others. At the same time most authorities are willing to grant the probability of Wellhausen's suggestion, that “the secret literature of the Essenes was perhaps in no small degree made use of in the Pseudepigrapha, and has through them been indirectly handed down to us”.

The value of Apocalyptic is increasingly recognized as a storehouse of Jewish and Jewish-Christian thought in the age preceding and in the early part of the Christian era. It forms the necessary connecting link between the Old Testament and the New, and is especially rich in messianic and eschatological conceptions. It is the chief source of information through which we can trace the changes that occurred in Jewish belief, and the later development of Jewish thought, in the period immediately preceding the time of Christ. It carries us back, in effect, to the thought-world of the first century, and enables us, as Schürer aptly says, “to reconstruct the thought, the aspiration, and

the hopes of pious Jews [pg 261] in the generation that first heard the gospel, and even of the Apostles themselves; for however Christ's thought transcended the thought of his time, that of the Apostles did not, except so far as the Holy Spirit illumined them for special ends." And, as Charles remarks, "If the Apocalypses were edited later they only reflect more fully the thought of that age, and they exhibit what is subsumed throughout in Christ's teachings." We can see in these writings not only a transition stage in Judaism preparatory to the gospel, but how this modified Jewish thought fits in with the gospel teaching. They show, for example, how the Old Testament idea of the future life grew in depth and compass in those centuries which precede the Christian era; and how this advance was retained and enlarged, modified and exalted, by Christ himself and by the Apostles; and how, also, the expansive growth of the messianic hope, which was sometimes almost wholly submerged, but which always contrived to reappear with increasing clearness, contributed to that popular expectancy, though in some degree also to that general misapprehension, of the Messiah's mission which the New Testament everywhere reveals. And they enable us to appreciate how the divine method of gradual advance in spiritual knowledge was operating during those prevening centuries which have so often been regarded as barren and fruitless; and how this advance contributed its due proportion to the marvellous results attained in the life of our blessed Lord and in the

period of the apostolic church. The force of this conclusion is, of course, partially annulled if we assume, as has been done by some, that many of the clearer messianic references in the Apocalyptic writings are Christian interpolations. But the present tendency of critics is toward a less destructive view than formerly prevailed. Charles, for example, maintains that the possibilities of Jewish thought should be given full scope, and nothing attributed to Christian interpolation, or to Persian or other external origin, except that which cannot be reasonably accounted for from Jewish sources. The general independence of Israel's religious development has certainly come out more clearly from the investigation. As has been pointed out by Fairweather, "With the exception of certain modes of thought and expression, [pg 262] including the visionary style so much employed by Ezekiel, the patriotic Jew apparently brought back with him from Babylon no new literary possession.... Many scholars explain the eschatological development of the Apocryphal period on the theory of the contact of Judaism with foreign systems of thought.... But, as Nicolas has said, 'Ideas do not pass ready made and complete from one nation to another like the fruits of industry which are transported in caravans.'... There may be, however, stimulus without transference, and this appears to be what really happened in the case before us."[602]

The Apocalyptic Literature undoubtedly

served a splendid purpose, for its effects were both wide-spread and in many respects beneficial. It served to rebuke sin, to maintain righteousness without any present prospect of reward, to keep alive the rich hopes of the future, to comfort God's children in the midst of distress, and to cultivate a patriotic spirit that cherished the nobler ideals of the past; while at the same time it formed a secure depository for those new concepts of truth that sprang up during the long era of preparation for the Messiah, and it thereby contributed a rich quota of thought and phrase to that greater future which was then drawing near to its birth. “In general Apocalyptic furnishes the atmosphere of the New Testament. Its form, its language, and its material are extensively used.... The simplest way to describe the relation is to say that Jesus and the writers of the New Testament found the forms of thought made use of in Apocalyptic Literature convenient vehicles, and have cast the gospel of God's redemptive love into these as into moulds. The Messianism of the apocalyptists has thus become unfolded into the Christology of the New Testament.”[603] But upon the other hand Apocalyptic reveals a type of thought that can scarcely be regarded as healthful. It had no deep or abiding sympathy with the great overshadowing world-sorrow which it measurably apprehended, and it proposed no present remedy for the unhappy fortunes of Judaism. It dealt too largely with the future hopes of the nation, and did not like prophecy address itself to the immediate possibilities of

the present; [pg 263] and it thereby robbed life of one of its chief incentives to action, viz. the hope of present success. For it gave up hope of the world as it was, and thereby produced a world-despair that could not be counteracted by the prospective world-joy which glowed in the messianic promise. According to Apocalyptic perspective, "the present served mainly as a back-ground of shadow for developing the richer light of the coming age;" and, "the proper design of the world was to be found in its ending and not in its longer continuance." Even with the wider world-view which the apocalyptists possessed, history lost its value; for they at least partially misread the providential order of the world. As Stevens has forcibly said, they "viewed the method of God as ictic and sudden, and not detailed and patient",—the very opposite of the divine method in history. And such an interpretation of life produced its inevitable results in dreams of an hallucinary but impossible future. It developed and cultured a form of mysticism that has left a permanent impression upon the Christian church—a mysticism that takes refuge from present evils, and from worse that are deemed impending, in the hope of an ultimate and protracted future of blessing wrought by cataclysmic revolutions, and leading up to a new manifestation of the divine Person upon earth, and to new conditions of life in the world of nature.[604] For it is in Apocalyptic rather than in Scripture that we find the source of that pessimistic view which has prevailed in various circles of the church in

all ages, that looks for the world to grow continually worse as the centuries go on, until by a great climax of the future a new order of things shall be introduced that is essentially different in its divine manifestations and in its spiritual ordering from all the past. But notwithstanding the many defects of this class of writings, and their manifest extravagancies, they were yet divinely used, and evidently filled an exceptionally large place in the far-reaching providential plan of God for the education of the Jewish nation, and through them of the world, just as God is ever using human and imperfect means for wise and beneficent ends.

[pg 264]
The importance of some knowledge of Apocalyptic to the student of John's Revelation cannot well be overestimated, for it is only in the light of Apocalyptic Literature that it can be rightly interpreted. It reproduces the author's native horizon, and reveals the sources of his mode of thought; it provides the key to the method of vision and symbol and dream-movement; and it makes clear the inevitable limitations as well as the recognized possibilities of this unique style when it becomes the vehicle of a true instead of an assumed revelation. For although the source of much of the imagery of the Apocalypse is to be found in the Old Testament, yet it is often materially changed by passing through the medium of later Jewish thought as reflected in the Pseudepigrapha; and although New Testament

ideas everywhere prevail in, through, and above, those of the Old, yet the whole spirit and movement of the Apocalypse is moulded by certain underlying pre-Christian conceptions that belong to Jewish Apocalyptic. We find, for example, that the divine method in history is uniformly viewed as in the Apocalyptic Literature, and contrary to general experience, as chiefly one of crisis and catastrophe rather than of gradual development—the sudden and striking hiding from view the continued and ordinary. And we cannot but inquire how far this conception is with John the result of literary form and spiritual mood, rather than intended to set forth the intimate nature of the divine method; and how far it is designed to portray vividly the effects to be accomplished, rather than to signify the manner of their accomplishment. We find, too, that John, in common with the apocalyptists, dwells more upon the future hopes of the kingdom than upon its present possibilities, keeping his eye ever fixed above the conflict upon the far future of promise. And we cannot but inquire how far this aspect of his world-view was divinely designed as a message of comfort to a people in distress, rather than as a comprehensive presentation of the progressive world-plan of the ages; and how far it is given only as one point of view, rather than as designed to express the fulness of the divine purpose. To these inquiries there can properly be but one answer, the view-point is characteristic of and peculiar to Apocalyptic. It does not present the normal aspect of [pg

265] life; it is the product of adverse conditions and breathes the spirit of pain; its vision is forever saddened by the overwhelming world-sorrow that darkens the horizon of thought. And while all Hebrew literature is essentially grave, and devoid of the element of humor, yet Apocalyptic is abidingly overshadowed by a weight of world-woe from which men seek to escape into another sphere and into new and better conditions of life.

The larger study of Apocalyptic Literature must continue to have its effect upon the interpretation of the Apocalypse which is indisputably its greatest masterpiece. For by attentive consideration of the peculiarities of this form of composition we are gradually led to perceive that only in so far as we invest ourselves with the atmosphere which produced so strange a coloring of thought, can we hope to interpret aright that peculiar view of the world, growing out of the conditions of Jewish depression, which regards it as the arena of an all-pervasive conflict, and involved in prevailing sin and suffering, in order that through these seemingly adverse experiences it may by sovereign control be divinely made ready for the future glory of the Messiah's kingdom. And we are thus amply assured that a correct apprehension of the form and fashion of Apocalyptic thought will undoubtedly guide us in all that pertains to the material framework of the Apocalypse, though certainly we should not forget that we must

always go to the Old Testament and to the New when we would reach its inner heart. The present general consensus of opinion among modern scholars, therefore, seems to be, that having measurably exhausted inquiry concerning the Old Testament references, whatever progress we are to make in the immediate future in unfolding the thought of the Revelation must be through a further study of the thought-forms of the century that gave it birth, which so richly abound in the Apocalyptic writings, but which so long escaped the scholarly and attentive consideration of Christian thought.

[Transcriber's Note: Obvious printer's errors have been corrected.]

Footnotes

1. The principal thought in each quotation has been *italicized* for the sake of emphasis.

2. "To pretend to have found an answer to every question raised by the Apocalypse is the opposite of science." Jülicher, *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 291; also cf. Warfield, art. "Revelation," *Schaff-Herzog Enc.*

3. That meaning for the most part, as Farrar has forcibly said concerning the portion of the book which relates to the earthly and historic future, "is irrevocably lost for us, and in point of fact has never been known to any age of the church—not even to the

earliest, not even, so far as our records go, to Irenæus the hearer of Polycarp, or to Polycarp the hearer of St. John." *Early Days of Christianity*, p. 528.

4.

Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, vol. Rev., notes, p. 192; also cf. Rev. ch. 19. 10, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

5.

"In interpreting symbolism, as in all the higher forms of allegory, the first critical requirement is restraint. Even with such a poet as Spenser it is only a rude exegesis which identifies a particular personage with a definite idea: in the more mystic symbolism of the present poem (Revelation) it is a violation of true literary taste to seek a meaning for every detail of complex presentation." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.* Rev., p. 192, notes.

6.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 2.

7.

Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., Intr. p. xx.

8.

Cf. Davidson, art. "Prophecy", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; also see Scott, on the distinction between "Prophecy" and "Apocalyptic," *New Cent. Bib.*, Intr. to Rev., p. 26.

9.

"The term apocalypse signifies in the first place the act of uncovering, and thus bringing into sight that which was before unseen, hence a revelation.... An apocalypse is thus primarily the act of revelation: in the second place it is the subject-matter revealed; and in the third place a book or literary production which gives an account of revelation whether real or alleged.... The term apocalypse is sometimes used, with an effort at greater precision, to designate the pictorial portraiture of the future as foreshadowed by the seer. (In this sense it denotes the literary style in which the writing is couched).... Thus an apocalypse becomes a form of literature precisely in the same manner as an epistle." Zenos, art. "Apoc. Lit.," Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

10.

Chs. 1.4; 4.8; and 22.8. We may omit ch. 21.2 (following the Revisers) as without sufficient authority.

11.

"The Divine" as a title for St. John ... is certainly as old as Eusebius: (*Praep. Evan.* xi 18), Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 1.

12.

So Lücke, Bleek, Düsterdieck, Jülicher, and others.

13.

Dods' *Intr. to New Test.*, pp. 244-47: Salmon's *Intr.*, p. 2O3f; Bacon's *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 23Of; Swete, *Apoc. St. John*, Intr., p. clxxf; and Milligan's *Discuss. on Apoc.*, ch's. II and IV. Also, see Simcox on Rev., *Cambr. Gr. Test.*, “Excur. III,” for a brief analysis of the theories of composite authorship advanced by Vischer and Volter; Warfield, *Presb. Review*, Ap. '84, p. 228, in reply to Volter; Moffatt, *Expositor*, Mar. '09, “Wellhausen and Others on Apoc”; and same author, “Intr. to Rev.”, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, vol. V. pp. 292-94:.

14.

The theory current among modern critics of two Johns in Asia, or else of identifying the traditional John of Ephesus with the hypothetical John the Presbyter, has a very slender foundation. “The existence of this second John, the Presbyter, if he really did exist, rests upon a single line of an extract from Papias, a writer of the second century.” Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 16. “Either John (the Apostle) wrote it (the Revelation), or John was never at Ephesus.” Holtzman, quoted in “Intr. to Rev.”, *New Cent. Bib.*, p. 36. For an interesting discussion of “the two Johns,” see “Excur. XIV” in Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*; also Smith,

"Intr. to Ep's of John", *Exp. Gr. Test.*, vol. V, pp. 158-62; and Strong, art. "John, Apostle," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

15.

This view that the Apocalypse is pseudonymous is now, however, for the most part being given up. With the revival of prophecy under the influence of the life and teachings of Christ, "it is only what we would expect when the primitive Christian prophet, a John, or a Hermas, disdains the pseudonymity of his Jewish rivals." Bacon's *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 234; also see *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., Intr., p. 32.

16.

Charles points out the many Hebraisms of the Apocalypse, and says of the author, "While he writes in Greek he thinks in Hebrew, and the thought has naturally affected the vehicle of expression.... He never mastered Greek idiomatically ... to him many of its particles were apparently unknown." *Studies in Apoc.*, p. 82.

17.

Bp. Wescott, "Intr. to John's Gospel", *Bib. Com.*, pp. lxxxiv-vii; cf. Swete's discussion of this view, "*Apoc. St. John*", "Authorship", pp. clxxviii-i.

18.

Prof. M. B. Riddle, unpublished

Class-room Lects. on Rev.

19.

Reynolds, “Intr. to Gosp. of John,” *Pulp. Com.*, p. lxvii.

20.

See Bacon's *Intr. to New Test.*, pp. 136-38; Briggs' *Messiah of the Apostles*, p. 301; and tentatively, Swete, *Apoc. St. John*, “Authorship,” pp. clxxx-xxxi.

21.

Cf. Jülicher's *Intr. to New Test.*, chapter on the “Johannine Problem.”

22.

“More than any other class of writings they show signs of having been edited and modified.” Zenos, art. “Apoc. Lit.,” Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

23.

Holtzmann, quoted in *New Cent. Bib.*; “Substantially it bears the marks of composition by a single pen; the blend of original writing and editorial re-setting does not impair the impression of a literary unity.” Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., Intr., p. 288.

24.

As by Vischer, Harnack, and others.

25.

As by Volter, Spitta, Pfleiderer, Briggs, and others.

26.

As by Weizsäcker, Jülicher, Bousset, Moffatt, and others. For a short consensus of modern theories see *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., Intr., pp. 292-94, which affords a good illustration of wide and extravagant guessing.

27.

This objection to the modern critical view is one of evident force, and deserves thoughtful consideration, Cf. Swete's *Apoc. of St. John*, Intr., pp. xlix and cliii, which maintains the literary unity of the book.

28.

As Porter, Scott, and others.

29.

See Porter's article "Revelation," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and Scott's Intr. to Rev., *New Cent. Bib.*

30.

Cf. Reynolds, Intr. to John's Gosp., *Pulpit Com.*, p. lxvii; Riddle, *S. S. Times*, Jun. 1, 1901; and Burton, in *Records and Letters of the Apost. Age*, notes, p. 229.

31.

"The common opinion has returned to the traditional date, the closing years of Domitian's reign (81-96)." Votaw, "Apoc. of John," *Biblical World*, Nov. 1908.

32.

See Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age*, vol.

ii. pp. 173-205; also *Moffatt's Hist. New Test.*, p. 45f.

33.

Cf. Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, pp. 510-13f.

34.

"Nero's massacre was a freak of personal violence," and "had nothing whatever to do with the imperial cultus." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., Intr., p. 310. Mommsen's view (*Prov. Rom. Emp.*, vol. ii, pp. 214-17 note) is that the historical situation reflected in the Apocalypse indicates that it was written after Nero's fall, and the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the references to persecution imply a regular judicial procedure on account of refusal to worship the emperor's image, a feature quite different from the Neronian period in which the executions on the ground of alleged incendiarism &c., do not formally belong to the class of religious processes at all. He would not, however, date it so late as Domitian, preferring a date somewhere between A. D. 69 and 79, toward the end of the reign of Vespasian. Bartlett puts the probable date about A. D. 75-80 (see his *Apost. Age*, p. 404). Such views of the date are interesting but exceptional.

35.

The book seems to mark a transition in the Roman Empire from tolerance to hostility, when it began to insist upon idolatrous worship, and that more properly belongs to a period later than the time of Nero. Cf. Mommsen's view in the preceding note.

36.

See “Rev. and Johan. Epist.,” by A. Ramsay, *Westmin. New Test.*, p. 8.

37.

See map at the beginning of this volume.

38.

Cf. Dean Stanley's “Sermons in the East,” p. 230, quoted in *Bib. Com.*, Intr., sec. 4.

39.

“The extreme skepticism which denies even the presence of the Apostle in Ephesus (as Keim and others), is purely modern. The tradition of the survival of ‘the beloved disciple’ in Ephesus ‘down to the times of Trajan’ is widespread, uncontradicted, circumstantial ... the counter evidence is trivial” (Bacon's *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 231). “The proof given by Irenæus from Polycarp ... is more than tradition, it is direct documentary evidence” (Weizsäcker, *Apost. Age*, vol. ii, p. 168).

40.

Cf. Reynolds, art. “John, the Gospel of”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; also Lee Intr. to Rev., *Bib. Com.*

41.

For a discussion of this literature see App'x G, also art. “Apoc. Lit.” by Charles, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah*, pp. 3-132; Schürer, *The Jewish People in Time of Christ*, Div. II, vol. iii, p. 44 sqq; Stuart *Com. on Rev.*, Intr. pp. 20-98; Driver, “Bk. of Daniel”, in *Camb. Bib.*, Intr., pp. lxxvi-lxxxv; Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., Intr., pp. 13-34; also art. “Apocalypse” in *Jewish Encyc.*

42.

For a good statement of the present use of the term, see art. “Apocalyptic,” *Jewish Encyc.*, vol. I; also art. “Apoc. Lit.”, Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

43.

See König, art. “Symbol” in Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, vol. v, p. 169f., who says, “What the metaphor is in the sphere of speech, the symbol is in the sphere of things.” Also see remarks by Milligan in *Lect's. on Apoc.*, ch. I, under the head of “Visions and Symbols,” p. 13f. For a fine discriminative view of the place of symbols in Oriental poetry, see Moulton's *Mod. Read. Bib.*, “Bib. Idyls,” Intr., pp. xx-xxif.

44.

It is not meant by this to imply that symbols as a class can ordinarily be presented to the eye, or effectively depicted upon canvas. In fact no symbol in the Apocalypse can be reproduced in scenic form without doing manifest injustice to the thought and purpose of the writer.

45.

Milligan identifies the Apocalypse of John too closely with that discourse, making it mainly a development of its principal ideas. See his *Lect's. on Apoc.*, p. 42f.

46.

Moulton uses the term “rhapsody” in a technical sense to describe the literary form of Hebrew dramatic prophecy, which affords a helpful and convenient nomenclature. See *Mod. Read. Bib.*, vol. John, notes, p. 191, also vol. Isa., Intr., pp. vii-xii.

47.

The Greek words μυστήριον and ἀποκάλυψις are commonly used in the New Testament as correlative terms, signifying the once secret or hidden in contrast with the now discovered or partially revealed. See art. “Mystery,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

48.

Moulton's *Intr. to Litr. of Bib.*, p. 326.

49.

See Append. G, on Apocalyptic Literature.

50.

It belongs to the innermost purpose of Jewish Apocalyptic “to attempt to answer the question how and when the dominion of the world possessed so long by heathen nations, will finally be delivered to the people of God.”, Hilgenfeld, quoted by Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 34.

51.

As Renan, and others.

52.

Purves, art. “Rev.”, Davis' *Dict. of Bib.*; Milligan, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 153f.; and Lee, *Bib. Com.*, Intr. to Rev., pp. 491-2.

53.

With correct insight, it has been well said, that “the ancient commentators beheld in the visions of the Apocalypse not a prophetic history of the Christian church, so much as a figurative representation of the contest going on in the world between the evil and the good. And the moral of the book, the end for which it was given, (according to the spirit of these interpretations), was to assure the righteous of their ultimate triumph, notwithstanding the apparent or temporary success of the powers of darkness.” Todd's

"Discourses on Prophecy", quoted in T. L. Scott's *Paragraph Version of Revelation*, opening page.

54.

As Milligan, Plummer, Lee, Riddle, Purves, Warfield, and others.

55.

Dods' *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 244.

56.

Harnack, art. "Rev.", *Encyc. Brit.*; also McGiffert, *Apos. Age*, p. 624; and Porter, art. "Rev.", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

57.

See "Analytical Conspectus" by Randell on p. xxvii of vol. on Rev. in *Pulp. Com.*

58.

Moulton, vol. St. John, notes, p. 195, *Mod. Read. Bib.*

59.

"Most of the prophetic books (in the Old Testament) lend themselves to a seven-fold arrangement.... All that is implied in such a feature of style is an extreme sense of orderly arrangement; and to the Hebrew mind order suggests the number seven" (the number of fulness or completeness of quality), *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Mat., Intr. p. xi.

60.

See also App'x F., diagram.

61.

See Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, vol. St. John, Intr. p. xxii.

62.

See Foreword, p. 9.

63.

"The influence of the *Bk. of Enoch* on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books taken together." *Book of Enoch* (Charles). Gen. Intr., p. 41.

64.

Or, *gave unto him, to show unto his servants the things* &c.

65.

Gr. *bondservants*.

66.

Or, *them*.

67.

Or, *who cometh*.

68.

Many authorities, some ancient, read *washed*. Heb. 9.14; comp. ch. 7.14.

69.

Gr. *in*.

70.

Or, *God and his Father*.

71.

Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*. Many ancient authorities omit *of the ages*.

72.

Or, *he who*.

73.
Or, *stedfastness*.

74.
Gr. *lampstands*.

75.
Gr. *lampstands*.

76.
Gr. *became*.

77.
Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

78.
Gr. *upon*.

79.
Gr. *lampstands*.

80.
Gr. *lampstands*.

81.
Gr. *lampstands*.

82.
Or, *stedfastness*.

83.
Or, *stedfastness*.

84.
Gr. *lampstand*.

85.
Or, *garden*: as in Gen. 2.8.

86.
Gr. *became*.

87.

Or, *reviling*.

88. Some ancient authorities read *and may have*.

89. Gr. *a tribulation of ten days*.

90. The Greek text here is somewhat uncertain.

91. Or, *stedfastness*.

92. Many authorities, some ancient, read *thy wife*.

93. Gr. *bondservants*.

94. Many ancient authorities read *their*.

95. Or, *pestilence*. Sept., Ex. 5.3, &c.

96. Or, *Gentiles*.

97. Or, *iron; as vessels of the potter, are they broken*.

98. Many ancient authorities read *not found thy works*.

99. Gr. *given*.

100.

The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or to the Creator.

101.

Or, *stedfastness*.

102.

Or, *temptation*.

103.

Gr. *inhabited earth*.

104.

Or, *tempt*.

105.

Or, *sanctuary*.

106.

Or, *come to pass. After these things straightway*, &c.

107.

Or, *glassy sea*.

108.

Or, *before*. See ch. 7.17. comp. 5.6.

109.

Or, *who cometh*.

110.

Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

111.

The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or to the Creator.

112.

Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

113.

Gr. *on*.

114. Or, *between the throne with the four living creatures, and the elders*.

115. Some ancient authorities omit *seven*.

116. Gr. *hath taken*.

117. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

118. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

119. Some ancient authorities add *and see*.

120. Some ancient authorities read *the peace of the earth*.

121. Or, *A choenix* (*i. e.* about a quart,) *of wheat for a shilling*—implying great scarcity. Comp. Ezek. 4.16 f.; 5.16.

122. See marginal note on Mt. 18.28.

123. Or, *pestilence*. Comp. ch. 2.23 marg.

124. Some ancient authorities read *be fulfilled* in number. *II Esdr.* 4.36.

125. Or, *military tribunes*. Gr. *chiliarchs*.

126.

Gr. *bondservants*.

127.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

128.

Gr. *The blessing, and the glory*, &c.

129.

Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

130.

Gr. *have said*.

131.

Or, *sanctuary*.

132.

Or, *before*. See ch. 4.6; comp. 5.6.

133.

Or, *at*.

134.

Gr. *give*.

135.

Or, *for*.

136.

Gr. *hath taken*.

137.

Or, *into*.

138.

Gr. *one eagle*.

139.

Gr. *likenesses*.

140.

That is, *Destroyer*.

141.

Gr. *one voice*.

142. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

143. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

144. Some ancient authorities omit *and the sea and the things that are therein*.

145. Or, *time*.

146. Gr. *bondservants*.

147. Or, *concerning*. Comp. Jn. 12.16.

148. Gr. *saying*.

149. Or, *sanctuary*.

150. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

151. Or, *sanctuary*.

152. Gr. *cast without*.

153. Or, *Gentiles*.

154. Gr. *lampstands*.

155. Gr. *carcase*.

156. Gr. *names of men, seven thousand*. Comp. ch. 3-4.

157. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

158. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

159. Gr. *bondservants*.

160. Or, *sanctuary*.

161. Or, *sanctuary*.

162. Or, *Gentiles*.

163. Gr. *inhabited earth*.

164. Or, *Now is the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom, become our God's, and the authority is become his Christ's*.

165. Gr. *tabernacle*.

166. Some ancient authorities read *I stood*, &c. connecting the clause with what follows.

167. Gr. *slain*.

168.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

169.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

170.

Or, *to do* his works *during*. See Dan. 11.28.

171.

Gr. *tabernacle*.

172.

Some ancient authorities omit *And it was given ... overcome them*.

173.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

174.

Or, *written in the book ... slain from the foundation of the world*.

175.

The Greek text in this verse is somewhat uncertain.

176.

Or, *leadethinto captivity*.

177.

Or, *stedfastness*.

178.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

179.

Some ancient authorities read *that even the image of the beast should speak; and he shall cause* &c.

180.

See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

181. Some ancient authorities read *Six hundred and sixteen.*

182. Or, *an eternal gospel.*

183. Gr. *sit.*

184. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

185. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

186. Gr. *mingled.*

187. Gr. *unto ages of ages.*

188. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

189. Or, *stedfastness.*

190. Or, *in the Lord. From henceforth, yea saith the Spirit.*

191. Or, *sanctuary.*

192. Gr. *become dry.*

193. Or, *sanctuary.*

194. Gr. *vine.*

195. Or, *glassy sea*.

196. Or, *upon*.

197. Or, *glassy sea*.

198. Gr. *bondservant*.

199. Many ancient authorities read *nations*. Jer. 10.7.

200. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

201. Or, *sanctuary*.

202. Or, *sanctuary*.

203. Many ancient authorities read *in linen*, ch. 19.8.

204. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

205. Or, *sanctuary*.

206. Or, *sanctuary*.

207. Or, *sanctuary*.

208. Or, *there came*.

209. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

210. Gr. *soul of life*.

211. Some ancient authorities read *and they became*.

212. Or, *judge. Because they ... prophets, thou hast given them blood also to drink*.

213. Or, *him*.

214. Or, *upon*.

215. Gr. *inhabited earth*.

216. Or, *Ar-Magedon*.

217. Or, *sanctuary*.

218. Some ancient authorities read *there was a man*.

219. Or, *Gentiles*.

220. Or, *names full of blasphemy*.

221. Gr. *gilded*.

222.

Or, *and of the unclean things*.

223.

Or, *a mystery, Babylon the Great*.

224.

Or, *witnesses*. See ch. 2.13.

225.

Some ancient authorities read *and he goeth*.

226.

Gr. *on*.

227.

Gr. *shall be present*.

228.

Or, *meaning*.

229.

Or, *there are*.

230.

Gr. *hath a kingdom*.

231.

Or, *prison*.

232.

Some authorities read *of the wine ... have drunk*.

233.

Some ancient authorities omit *the wine of*.

234.

Or, *luxury*.

235.

Or, *clave together*.

236. Or, *luxurious*.

237. Some ancient authorities omit *the Lord*.

238. Or, *luxuriously*.

239. Gr. *cargo*.

240. Gr. *amomum*.

241. Gr. *bodies*. Gen. 36.6 (Sept.).

242. Or, *lives*.

243. Gr. *gilded*.

244. Gr. *work the sea*.

245. Gr. *one*.

246. Some ancient authorities omit *of whatsoever craft*.

247. Gr. *bondservants*.

248. Gr. *have said*.

249. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

250. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

251. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

252. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

253. Some ancient authorities omit *called*.

254. Some ancient authorities read *dipped in*.

255. Gr. *winepress of the wine of the fierceness*.

256. Gr. *one*.

257. Or, *military tribunes* Gr. *chiliarchs*.

258. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

259. Gr. *upon*.

260. See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

261. Or, *authority*.

262. Some ancient authorities read *the*.

263. Some ancient authorities insert *from God*.

264. Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

265. Or, the *holy city Jerusalem coming down new out of heaven*.

266. Gr. *tabernacle*.

267. Some ancient authorities omit, and be *their God*.

268. Or, *Write, These words are faithful and true*.

269. Gr. *luminary*.

270. Gr. *portals*.

271. Gr. *portals*.

272. Or, *lapis lazuli*.

273. Or, *sapphire*.

274. Or, *transparent as glass*.

275. Or, *sanctuary*.

276. Or, *sanctuary*.

277. Or, *and the Lamb, the lamp thereof*.

278.
Or, *by*.

279.
Gr. *common*.

280.
Or, *doeth*.

281.
Or, *the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life*, &c.

282.
Or, *a tree*.

283.
Or, *crops of fruit*.

284.
Or, *no more anything accursed*.

285.
Gr. *bondservants*.

286.
Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

287.
See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

288.
See marginal note on ch. 3.9.

289.
Or, *yet more*.

290.
Or, *wages*.

291.
Or, the *authority over* Comp. ch. 6.8.

292. Gr. *portals*.

293. Or, *doeth* Comp. ch. 21.27.

294. Gr. *over*.

295. Or, *Both*.

296. Gr. *upon*.

297. Or, even from *the things which are written*.

298. Some ancient authorities add *Christ*.

299. Two ancient authorities read *with all*.

300. Bacon, *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 235; and *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 160.

301. As held by Seiss and others, following Heinrich, who make the topic of the Revelation Christ in his Second Advent, contrary to the generally accepted exegesis.

302. Alford, Plummer, Lee, Milligan, and others, as against Düsterdieck, Stuart, and the preterists generally.

303. “It means the revelation which Jesus

makes, not that which reveals him.... Revelation ἀποκάλυψις is a word reserved for the Gospel; no Old Testament prophecy is called a revelation." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 1; also cf. Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 94-95.

304.

"The testimony of Jesus Christ, like the revelation of Jesus Christ, means that which he gave, not that which tells about him." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 2.

305.

Simcox, *Camb. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 41; Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 2; also cf. Moulton, *Intr. to Litr. of Bib.*, p. 312, who says, "A careful reading will show that these words are to be understood, not as a part of the revelation, but as the writer's (or editor's) comment upon the book." This view, it will be seen, does not affect the sense of the verses, but only their origin.

306.

"Understanding can only know what is, has been, or will be. It is impossible for anything to exist for understanding otherwise than as a matter of fact it does exist in those three relations of time." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Watson's "Selections," p. 186; or, in a slightly different translation, Edition of

Meiklejohn, p. 307). It is important for us to note that God is thus presented as comprehending in himself all the possibilities of existence in human understanding.

307.

For the view that the origin of this conception is to be found in the later Jewish literature rather than in the Old Testament, see Scott in *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 126. Swete interprets, "Here the spirits are seven, because the churches in which they operate are seven." *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 6.

308.

R. V. "loosed us from our sins by his blood." "The insertion or omission of a single letter (in the Greek word) makes the difference between the A. V. 'washed' and the R. V. 'loosed.' The manuscript evidence for each is very evenly balanced; the other evidence likewise. On the whole, the old reading, 'washed,' seems more in harmony with the thought of the book and with Johannine diction in general." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 127.

309.

"The continuous return (the coming of the Lord in the power of the Spirit) prefacing, heralding the full manifestation of his might and glory, is the grand theme of the

Apocalypse." Reynolds, *Pulp. Com.*, John's Gospel, Intr., p. lxxxvi.

310.

This title, Παντοκράτωρ "the Almighty," is used nine times in Revelation, and only once elsewhere in the New Testament (II Cor. 6:18).

311.

Tribulation is the pervading undertone of the whole book. "The moving spirit of the vision in the Apocalypse is the sufferings of the church" (Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 295). "The ethical keynote is patience" (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 129).

312.

See notes on "The Place" in the Introduction to this volume.

313.

"The earliest use of the name (the Lord's day) is in this passage," Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 130; Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 5.

314.

See Scott, art. "Rev.," Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

315.

"The vision of the Divine Christ in Rev. 1 dominates every subsequent paragraph in the Apocalypse." Reynolds, art. "Gosp. of John," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

316.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 7; also see Thayer's *Gr. Lex. of New Test.*

317.

"The association of angels with stars was a common Semitic idea." (Moulton). Each star was conceived of by the Jews as having its angel, as also every force and phenomenon of nature had its separate angel. It is not strange, therefore, that John grouped them in his thought.

318.

Milligan, *Internat. Com.*, vol. iv, Rev., p. 36; also Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev. p. 8. For the other view see Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 589; Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, pp. 460-1; and Trench, *Ep's to Seven Ch's*, p. 75f.

319.

"This last image is not so strange as it appears at first sight, for the short Roman sword was tongue-like in shape." Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Sword."

320.

An indication of divine power as well as victory; for "it was part of the teaching of the Rabbinic schools that the key of death was one of four (the keys of life, the grave, food, and rain) which were in the hand of God alone." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 133.

321.

"The word mystery is not used in the Bible in the modern sense of 'something that cannot be fathomed or understood,' but on the contrary it indicates either something which is waiting to be revealed or that which when explained conveys understanding. In the latter sense it comes near to our word 'Symbol.' And this is the sense in which it is to be taken here and in ch. xxii. 7." (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., pp. 133-4). In the general and broader sense, however, "The term μυστήριον in the New Testament means truths once hidden now revealed, made generally known, and in their own nature perfectly intelligible." Bruce, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, vol. I, p. 196.

322.

See art. "Rev.", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; also "*New Test. Doctr. of Rev.*" in the same work, vol. V. p. 334e.

323.

Milligan, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 16.

324.

Asia in the New Testament (with the possible exception of Acts 2:9) always means the Roman province of that name, which embraced only the western part of what we now call Asia Minor, and consisted of Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and part of Phrygia, with the islands of the coast,—see the map in the beginning of this

volume. “Asia was one of the most wealthy and populous and intellectually active of the Roman provinces,” Ramsay, art. “Asia.” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

325.

Ramsay, *Letters to Seven Ch's.*, p. 35.

326.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 3; Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, Intr., p. liv, and p. 4.

327.

Milligan, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 38; *Stuart, Com. on Apoc.*, pp. 101-16, and Excur. II, p. 747 in same volume; also see App'x E in this volume on the “Symbolism of Numbers.”

328.

Sayce, Hibbert Lect's on *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 82.

329.

So Milligan, Plummer, and others—see notes in Ch. 20:2f.

330.

“Probably the most striking feature of the Seven Letters is the tone of unhesitating and unlimited authority which inspires them from beginning to end.” Ramsay, *Letters to Seven Churches*, p. 75.

331.

See Ramsay's *Letters to the Seven Churches*, where there will be found

much accurate information concerning the seven cities that is based upon an extended residence in those cities, and careful personal investigation. A more concise account by the same author is given in Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, in the separate articles upon each city.

332.

Moulton's *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 196.

333.

The exhortation to “hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” applies not only to what is contained in the seven epistles, but to the entire Apocalypse which follows. See Ramsay's *Letters to Seven Ch's*, p. 38.

334.

Paradise is the word used in the Septuagint for Eden. It occurs but three times in the New Testament. It originally signified a park or garden such as was used by Oriental monarchs for a pleasure-ground, but in Christian usage it becomes a name for the scene of rest and recompense for the righteous after death. See art. “Paradise” by Salmond, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

335.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 59-60.

336.

Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 30.

337.

Pergamus, though a rarer form, is preferable to Pergamos (A. V.), or Pergamum (R. V.) as the designation of the city, owing to its softer sound for the English ear, though the form is otherwise indifferent. See Ramsay's art. “Pergamus,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* “Ἡ Πέργαμος is found in Xenophon, Pausanius, and Dion Cassius, but τὸ Πέργαμον in Strabo, and Polybius, and most other writers, and in the inscriptions; the termination is left uncertain in Apoc. i.11 and ii.12.” Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 33.

338.

“Pergamum was the first place in Asia where as early as the reign of Augustus was erected a temple to Rome and the Emperor,” Salmon, *Hist. Intr. to New Test.*, p. 239. “An allusion to the rampant paganism of Pergamum ... but chiefly perhaps to the new Caesar worship in which Pergamum was preeminent and which above all other pagan rites menaced the existence of the Church,” Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 34.

339.

“The name Balaam does not indicate a sect, but a set of principles.” Briggs, *Mess. of Gospels*, p. 451; also

see *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 143.

340.

This identification is suggested by the present author as a probable one, for jade is the most notable white stone that was in use in ancient times, and it is still highly prized for seals, charms, and kindred purposes in China and the Far East. Dr. Schlieman found implements made from the coarser kinds of it in the immediate region of Pergamus among the relics of the oldest of the cities in the excavations at Hissarlik, the mound of ancient Ilium, near Troas; and a jade celt engraved with Gnostic formulæ in Greek characters is preserved in the Christy collection. See art. "Jade," *Encyc. Brit.*

341.

Trench, *Ep's to Seven Churches*, pp. 178-80. Trench's view, however, that the Urim and Thummim consisted of a single stone is not correct, though his interpretation of this passage is as usual very suggestive. See art. "Urim and Thummim" in Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

342.

See Trench, Stuart, Plummer, Lee, Scott, and others. Lange says concisely, "Two meanings attached to the white stone among the Greeks, viz. acquittal in judgment, and the award of some rank or dignity."

Lange's (*Com. on Rev.*, p. 121). Swete says "The white stone is the pledge of the divine favor which carries with it such intimate knowledge of God and Christ as only the possessor can comprehend." (*Apoc. of St. John*, p. 40).

343.

See art. "Signet," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

344.

Hilprecht, *S. S. Times*, Sept. 10, 1904, art. "Babylonian Life in the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah."

345.

Weizsäcker thinks the new name is "the λόγος of John's Gospel" (*Apost. Age*, vol. II p. 171); but by "new" is more likely meant a hitherto unknown name. Stevens interprets it as "a symbol for the Messiah," (*Theol. of New Test.*, p. 540). On the other hand Scott says, "A new name stands for a new character." (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 143); and Ramsay regards it as "perhaps an allusion to the custom of taking new and secret baptismal names," (art. "Pergamus," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*); also Düsterdieck thinks that the name applies to the Christian (*Com. on Rev.*, p. 148); and Swete holds the same view (*Apoc. of St. John*, p. 40). "White" and "new" as Trench points out, are "key-words" in the

Apocalypse (*Ep's to Seven Ch's*, p. 172).

346.

Ramsay explains, “There had been a Jewish colony planted in Thyatira, and a hybrid sort of worship had been developed, half Jewish, half pagan, which is called in Revelation the woman Jezebel,” (*Paul the Trav. and Rom. Cit.*, p. 215). Scott thinks it “most probable that the reference is to some well-known and influential woman within the church at Thyatira, whose influence on the Christian community was parallel to that of Jezebel upon Ahab—a self-styled prophetess, whose teaching and example were alike destructive of Christian morality,” (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 147). Schürer also holds that Jezebel denoted a definite woman, (Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, art. “Thyatira”). Plummer finds in the name a unity of symbolism with other parts of the book, thus, “Jezebel anticipates the harlot of ch. 17, as Balaam anticipates the false prophet of ch. 13” (*Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 66).

347.

Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 42.

348.

“To become acquainted with ‘the depths,’ (i. e. the deep things of divinity, as they would say—called

here ‘the deep things of Satan’ in irony) was an essential pretense of the Gnostics.” Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 152.

349.

“I will grant him to see the Morning-star”. Moffatt, *New Trans. of New Test.*

350.

“The word used is κλέπτης a ‘thief,’ and not λῃστὴς a ‘robber,’ showing that secrecy, not violence, is the point of the similitude.” Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 108.

351.

“The word ‘white’ (λευκὸς), excepting in Mat. 5.36 and Jn. 4.35, is in the New Testament always used of *heavenly* purity and brightness,” Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 109.

352.

The “book of life” is mentioned seven times in the Revelation, an indication of the place it occupied in the writer's thought.

353.

Ramsay, *Letters to Seven Ch's*, pp. 377-78.

354.

Milligan, *Internat. Com.*, Rev., p. 48.

355.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 136.

356.

Ramsay, art. “Sardis,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

357.

Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 53; and Ramsay, art. “Philadelphia,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

358.

Bousset's inference is scarcely justifiable:—“It is the tone of immediate expectation of the end; the last great struggle throughout the whole inhabited world is at hand; the storm is drawing near; already the seer beholds the lightning flash”. (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., pp. 153-4). Swete also interprets similarly, as referring to “the troublous times which precede the Parousia,” and adds, “This final sifting of mankind was near at hand.” (*Apoc. of St. John*, p. 55).

359.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 113; Wordsworth, quoted in *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 547.

360.

Ramsay, art. “Philadelphia,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and his *Letters to Seven Ch's.*, p. 400.

361.

“The word ‘Amen’ is here used as a proper name of our Lord; and this is the only instance of such an application.... The ‘faithful and true

witness' is an amplification of the Amen". Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 114-15.

362.

"The origin of God's creation." Moffatt, *New Translation of New Testament.*

363.

"Laodicea was the one famous medical centre in Phrygia.... The description of the medicine here mentioned is obscured by a mistranslation. It was not an ointment but a kollyrium, which had the form of small cylinders compounded of various ingredients, and was used either by simple application or by reduction to a powder to be smeared on the part." Ramsay, *Letters to Seven Ch's.*, p. 429.

364.

See art. "Laodicea" by Ramsay, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, pp. 61-2.

365.

See App'x F, "The Literary Structure of the Apocalypse."

366.

See Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Stones, Precious;" also the separate arts. in the same work on the names of precious stones which we find in the Revelation. Plummer regards the jasper, which is further described in

ch. 21:11 as being "clear as crystal," to be the modern diamond, while Cheyne thinks it the opal, and Scott identifies the sardius with our carnelian.

367.

The A. V. reads, "*there was* a sea of glass"; the R. V. renders, "as it were a glassy sea"; and the Am. R. V. gives, "as it were a sea of glass." The Revisers evidently regarded the phrase as a figurative way of describing the quiet of the sea. Alford, however, and Swete interpret literally as "a sea of glass."

368.

Cf. Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 625.

369.

See *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 164.

370.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 145; Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 68.

371.

"Throughout the vision no past tense is used. The vision represents the worship of heaven (so far as it can be presented to human understanding) as it continues eternally." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 145.

372.

Bleek, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 199; Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 145.

373.

New Cent. Bib., Rev., p. 163.

374.

New Cent. Bib., Rev., p. 163.

375.

For Bleek's view of the arrangement see notes on “The Lamb in the Midst of the Throne,” under ch. 5:6-8a.

376.

“No one can authoritatively affirm that created beings of a lower order than man will not in some sense share in the future life.” A. A. Hodge, unpublished *Classroom Lectures*.

377.

See in Am. R. V., I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2; II Ki. 1:9-15; I Chr. 13:6; Ps. 80:1, 99:1; Isa. 37:16; Ezek. 10:1-20.

378.

Fairbairn regards the cherubim as typifying “Earth's living creaturehood, especially man, its rational and immortal head”. See his *Typology*, vol. 1, pp. 125-208. Plummer similarly interprets the living beings as symbolical of all animal life, and suggests that the human face of the cherubim represents “humanity as distinct from the church (which is represented by the four and twenty elders), and appears to indicate the power of God to use for his purposes and his glory that part of mankind

which has not been received into the church." *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 146. Also see art. "Cherubim," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and for an apocalyptic description of the cherubim, *Bk. of Enoch* (ed. Charles), 14:11, 18; 20:7; 61:10; 76:7.

379.

Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, p. 515; also cf. Düsterdieck, and Plummer. Other definitions, though differing in statement, have a general similarity. For example, "The Book of Destiny" (Bacon, *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 284); "The Book of Doom" (Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev. p. 382); "The Book of History" (*Temple Bib.*, Intr. to Rev., p. xxxvii); or, better still, "The Book of God's Counsels" (Lee, *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 563). Faussett, following De Burgh, makes the book "The Title-deed of Man's Inheritance Redeemed by Christ" (J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 602). Seiss accepts this interpretation and explains further by reference to Jewish customs of land tenure (*Lects. on Apoc.*, vol. i, p. 266f.). The definition preferred in the present volume is "The Book of God's Plan for the Ages."

380.

"A Roman will, when written, had to be sealed seven times in order to authenticate it, and some have argued that this explains the

symbolism here" (*Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev. p. 383); but this suggestion is of doubtful value when the Hebrew use of seven was so well established.

381.

See Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 207.

382.

"The ability to open was a consequence of a former act of victory, viz. the redemption." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 164.

383.

"The kingship of Christ is more clearly set forth in the Revelation than in any other part of the New Testament, though not in any single text, but by the representations of the book throughout," Riddle, unpublished *Classroom Lectures on Revelation*. Also see Pfleiderer, *Influence of Paul on Christianity* (Hibbert Lect., 1885), p. 130.

384.

"John looked to see a lion and beheld a Lamb," the change of symbol seeming to indicate that "the might of Christ is the power of love." See Stevens, *New Test. Theol.*, p. 542. "The name which most expresses what Christ is to the Christian is the 'Lamb.'" "This is used twenty-nine times in the book." Porter, art. Rev., Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* "This is a dramatic way of expressing the truth

that the efficient factor of history is gentleness." Dean, *Book of Revelation*, p. 103.

385.

See Bleek's *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 200f.

386.

Cf. Bisping, quoted by Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 167.

387.

"This description of the glorified Lord, sublime as a purely mental conception, becomes intolerable if we give it outward form and expression." (Trench, *Ep's to Seven Ch's*, p. 64). In fact, "No scene in the great Christian Apocalypse can be successfully reproduced upon canvas; the imagery ... is symbolic and not pictorial," (Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, Intr., p. cxxxiv.) "Symbolism does not appeal to the pictorial sense at all, but rather to some analytic faculty, or conventional association of ideas." (Moulton, *Bib. Idyls*, Intr. p. xx). The incongruity of many of their symbols from the aesthetic point of view does not seem to have occurred to the Hebrew mind, for with them the religious idea was predominant. Many of the events recorded in the Revelation are manifestly impossible except in a vision.

388.

"Here we have the ideas of ch. 1. 5

repeated (i. e. of the love and redemption of Christ) with the further thought that love like that displayed in Christ's death for man's redemption is worthy not only of all praise, but of having all the future committed to its care. It is really a pictorial way of saying that redeeming love is the last reality in the universe which all praise must exalt and to which everything else must be subordinate." Denney, *Death of Christ*, p. 246.

389.

Moulton's *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Psa. vol. i, Intr., p. xxxiif.

390.

The call is most naturally understood as a call for the vision to appear. Simcox so interprets: "Each of the living creatures by turns summons one of the horsemen." (*Cambr. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 85); Scott, also, holds the same view (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 176); and Moffatt, prefers it (*New Trans. New Test.*, footnote). Plummer, however, says the call is addressed to John,—perhaps a more common view; on the other hand Alford, Milligan, and Swete, say the call is to Christ to come. The view that the call is addressed to the rider is more likely correct, though the interpretation of the seals is not materially affected by the view we

may take of this part of the symbolism. In any case, “Each living being invites attention to the revelation of the future of that creation of which they are all representatives.” *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 185.

391.

“*Conquering, and that he may conquer.* This is the key to the whole vision. Only of Christ and his kingdom can it be said that it is to conquer ... only of Christ's kingdom shall there be no end.” Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 184.

392.

New Cent. Bib., Rev., p. 179; also see Mommsen's *Provinces of Rom. Emp.*, vol. ii, p. 1 (note), Swete regards the first seal as “a picture of triumphant militarism.” *Apoc. St. John*, p. 84.

393.

“White is always typical in the Revelation of heavenly things,” Plummer, (*Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 183). “If any other than our Lord is he that goes forth conquering and to conquer, then, though the subsequent interpretation may have occasional points of contact with truth ... the true key of the book is lost.” (*Alford, Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 249).

394.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 185.

For a different interpretation see Milligan, *Expos. Bib.*, Rev., p. 91.

395.

"*A choenix of wheat for a denarius* &c. The choenix appears to have been the food allotted to one man for a day; while the denarius was the pay of a soldier or of a common laborer for one day." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 185.

396.

The oil and the wine are interpreted by some (as Wordsworth, and Milligan) to mean spiritual food which will not be lacking in time of famine; but this opinion is not sustained by anything in the text. Swete understands the vision to forbid famine prices, and to refer only to relative hardships—an unusual view.

397.

It is doubtless true, as pointed out by Ramsay, that according to the usual custom in celebrating a triumph "the Roman generals were borne in a four-horse car" (*Letters to Seven Churches*, p. 58). This, however, does not seem to have been necessarily or always the case, and even when so, the horses were white. Cf. Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 84; and Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 177.

398.

It is interesting to note that God is

here described (v. 10) as ὁ δεσπότης an absolute ruler, a word implying the divine might and authority, which occurs but once in the Apocalypse, and which is translated "Lord" in the A. V., and "Master" in the R. V. This term, it should be understood, is "strictly the correlative of slave, δοῦλος, and hence denotes absolute ownership and uncontrolled power." (Thayer's *Gr.-Eng. Lex. New Test.*) In its present use "it would seem to convey the idea of personal relationship, as Paul speaks of himself as the *slave* of Christ (δοῦλος)." (Strong, art. "John, Apostle," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*)

399.

For an interesting parallel passage in Apocalyptic literature see *Ascension of Isaiah*, 9.7-18, where the saints, as here, receive a preliminary reward; also, *Bk of Enoch*, 22:5f, where the voice of the spirits of the children of men who were dead "penetrated to heaven and complained."

400.

"The day of the Lord" is a notable phrase in the New Testament, and should receive our careful attention, though it only occurs twice in the Apocalypse (ch. 6:14; 16:14). As Davidson interprets it, "The day of the Lord is an eschatological idea;

the phrase therefore cannot be rendered ‘a day of the Lord,’ as if any great calamity or judgment felt to be impending might be so named: the day is that of final and universal judgment.” (See art. “Eschatol. of Old Test.”; Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*). This view, however, must not be applied too strictly; for while it is clear that the final day is usually the thought in mind, yet through long and continuous use the phrase “the day of the Lord” seems to have acquired a wider application, and to have been applied to any striking crisis in the history of the world, each day of the Lord being, however, a type of the final and great day. (See Rawlinson, *Pulp. Com.*, Isa., p. 228).

401.

Cf. *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 124.

402.

See App'x G, “Apoc. Lit.”

403.

The view here given, limiting the contents of the seventh seal to the first verse of the eighth chapter, is upon the whole the preferable one (Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 229; Wordsworth, *The Apoc.*, p. 155; and Vaughan, *Lect. on Rev.*, pp. 204-5), though it is disputed on exegetical grounds by Düsterdieck and others (Meyer's *Com. on Rev.* p. 261f.). It

will be found, however, that it is amply sustained by a broad view of the context. This verse (ch. 8:1) might well have been included in chapter seven, at the close of the episode of the sealed ones where it properly belongs.

404.

Lee, *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 595.

405.

Riddle, unpublished *Classroom Lect. on Rev.*

406.

"Three kinds of significance appear to be attached to sealing in the Scriptures, viz. (1) to authenticate; (2) to assert ownership; and (3) to assure safety. The significance of sealing in Revelation seems to combine both the latter ideas." (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 191). Possibly all senses of the term may be here included, which gives a very forcible meaning. In Charles' view the sealing in Revelation is to secure the servants of God against the attacks of demonic powers, or against the Antichrist. See his *Studies in Apoc.*, p. 130.

407.

The omission of the tribe of Dan in the enumeration of the twelve tribes of Israel has been accounted for in various ways; but most likely it occurred as suggested by Ewald by

an error of transcription, MAN, (the abbreviated form of Manasses) being substituted for ΔAN, the correct reading. In favor of this suggestion is the fact that the correct order of birth of the sons of Jacob would thereby be followed, except that Joseph is placed before Reuben because of the prominent place he occupies as the ancestor of our Lord. See Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 207-8.

408.

Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, vol. V, pp. 394-6; Jülicher, *New Test., Intr.*, pp. 287-8; and Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 192.

409.

“Perhaps no passage in the Apocalypse has had so wide an influence on popular eschatology.” Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 98.

410.

For a like passage where the sealed wear white garments, see *II Esdr.* 2.34-42.

411.

As Trench, followed by Milligan.

412.

Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 605; also Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 242-50, who aptly says, “The number 144,000 there (v. 1-8) although not literal but schematic,

furnishes the idea of *numerability*, while here (v. 9) the *innumerability* of the great multitude is especially emphasized."

413.

As Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev. p. 207, who says, "Here, as elsewhere, it is the spiritual Israel which is signified."

414.

"Saved by our God, who is seated on the throne, and by the Lamb!" Moffatt, *New Trans. of New Test.*

415.

"Where an explanation is made of visions which refer to the church, the active part is taken by the elders, while angels introduce visions of which the signification is unexplained." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 209.

416.

"These verses (v. 16, 17) are full of reminiscences of the O. T. Perhaps there is no passage in the whole of literature that so combines simplicity of language and sublimity of thought as these two verses." Dean, *Book of Revelation*, p. 119.

417.

Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 100; Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 195.

418.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 230.

419.

For the first view see Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 238; for the second view see Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 264-5; also Lange, *Com. on Rev.*, p. 204.

420.

Vaughan, *Lect. on Rev.*, p. 207; and Stuart, *Com. on Rev.*, p. 564, where they are described as "presence-angels;" also cf. *Tobit*, 12:15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints, and who go in and out before the glory of the Holy One"; and *Bk of Enoch*, 91:21, "And the Lord called those seven first white ones, etc." These instances serve to show how the Apocalypse of John reflects the current usage of Apocalyptic literature in his time.

421.

Cf. I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:52; and *II Esdr.* 6.20, 25.

422.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 398; also compare with ch. 14:7, where these terms are apparently used as the sum of creation.

423.

Cf. Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. 4, Rev., p. 638.

424.

Cf. Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8; and *Apoc. of*

Bar. 77.19-22.

425.

Cf. ch. 20:1-2; also see arts. “Abyss”, and “Pit”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and *Bk of Enoch,* 21:10; and 18:11.

426.

Some find in this name a reference to Apollo, the pagan deity, and point out that the locust was one of the symbols of his cult, certainly a curious coincidence, but apparently not anything more than a coincidence. See *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 208.

427.

“The balance of authority seems in favor of retaining τεσσάρων ‘four,’ although the Revisers omit it. The altar of incense had four horns projecting at the corners.” Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 265.

428.

Light is thrown upon these perplexing figures by a passage in the *Apocalypse of Ezra* quoted by Bousset: “And a voice was heard: let these four kings be loosed which are bound beside the great river Euphrates, which shall destroy a third part of mankind. And they were loosed, and there was a great commotion.” Also in the *Bk of Enoch* (56:5), “The angels gather themselves together, and turn eastward to the Parthians and

Medes, and stir up their kings," as the four angels do here. John's conception is thus seen to be a reflection of existing apocalyptic material. See *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 208.

429.

See *Bible Com.*, Rev., p. 617.

430.

"The master thought of the whole Revelation." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., Intr. p. xxvi. "The realization of the kingdom of God ... is the end in the light of which God's purpose in Christ is to be read." Orr, art. "Kingdom of God". Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

431.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 226; also cf. *II Macc.*, 2.1-8; and *Apoc. Bar.*, 6.7-10.

432.

"The episodes are interposed to give us an insight into the inner aspects of the life of the church in the midst of persecution and distress." Ballentine, *Mod. Am. Bib.*, Rev., p. 275.

433.

Cf. Plummer and Alford.

434.

New Cent. Bib., Rev., p. 216.

435.

Some, as Milligan, take this angel for

Christ himself; but “throughout the book angels are everywhere distinct from the divine persons”, (Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 649)—a general rule that is never deviated from and should not be forgotten. “In no passage of the book is our Lord represented under the form of an angel”, (Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 231).

436.

“The Jews were accustomed to call thunder the seven voices, and to regard it as the voice of the Lord.” Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 274; also cf. Ps. 29:3f; 77:18; and 104:7.

437.

Humphries, accepting the modern composite view, says, “The eating of the little book recounted in ch x. 10 suggests that borrowing from a previous source is to be looked for in what immediately follows.” *St John and Other New Test. Teachers*, p. 96.

438.

See commentaries of Westcott, Reynolds, and others on the Gospel of John.

439.

See Thayer's *Lex. New Test. Greek* for the distinction between the use of ναὸς and ἱερὸν; also art. “Temple”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, at the beginning. The word ἱερὸν, it will be noticed, is never used in the

Apocalypse.

440.

Plummer thinks that the heavenly temple is indicated, because "nowhere else in the book do Jerusalem and the temple signify the earthly places",—a view that deserves weighty consideration.

441.

"The outer court of the temple was the addition of Herod.... The Gentiles might come there, though they might not pass into what was especially the temple, and which was sacred to Israelites only. And so it represents here all those outer-court worshippers, those mixed multitudes which are found associated with God's true people everywhere—of them, but not truly belonging to them." *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 300-01.

442.

Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, p. 590; and Lange, *Com. on Rev.*, p. 223, who somewhat differently regards this as a picture of "the inner and outer church", a thought that may perhaps be included; also see Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 288, who says, "The temple is here used figuratively of the faithful portion of the church of Christ ... placed in antithesis to the outer court, the faithless portion of the visible church, which is given over to the Gentiles—the type of all

that is worldly." Scott, *Par. Ver. of Rev.*, p. 33 says, "The inner shrine alone of the house of God is truly his, and abides forever"; and Ballentine, *Mod. Am. Bib.*, following Bp. Carpenter, says, "As Jerusalem and Babylon ... so here the Temple and the court of the Temple are symbols. The gospel has elevated the history and places of the past into a grand allegory. It has breathed into their dead names the life of an ever-present symbolism."

443.

See Mommsen's *Prov. of Rom. Emp.*, vol. ii, pp. 214-17, note.

444.

On the return of the Jews to Palestine, expected by many as a fulfilment of prophecy, see the very satisfactory remarks of Davidson, art. "Eschatology", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, vol. i, pp. 737-8.

445.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 289; Faussett, J. F. & B., *Com. on Rev.*, p. 613; Wordsworth, *The Apoc.*, lect. viii; and others.

446.

Cf. ch. 1:12f, where the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.

447.

See Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 289f, who is remarkably clear on this

passage.

448.

"The two martyrs represent the martyr church as sharing the royal priesthood of the Messiah, and as endowed with the gifts of prophecy and miracle-working like the prophets of old," Briggs, *Mess. of Apost.*, p. 318.

449.

Pulp. Com., Rev., p. 291; *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 639; Vincent, *Word Stud. in New Test.*, 1 c.; also Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 661.

450.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 234.

451.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 310.

452.

In a footnote of the Revised Douay Version, however, the interpretation there given is, "The church of God. It may also, by allusion, be applied to our blessed Lady"—an interpretation to which no objection can properly be made.

453.

"This threefold description (i. e. 'the Old Serpent, he that is called the Devil, and Satan') gathers up the primitive, the prophetic, and the New Testament conception of the supreme Power of Evil." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 230.

454.

See Thayer's *Gr. Lex. of New Test.*

455.

See Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, p. 527; and Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, pp. 627-8.

456.

Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 619; and Maurice, *The Apoc.*, p. 181.

457.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 312; Wordsworth, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 200, "St John now reverts to an earlier period."

458.

Lee says, "Verses ten and eleven commemorate by anticipation the victory of believers." *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 662; Plummer, favoring a similar view, suggests that, "The song of the heavenly voices may be intended to end with the word 'Christ' (v. 10), and the following passages may be the words of the writer of the Apocalypse, and may refer to the earthly martyrs." *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 312.

459.

Bleek, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 268; Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, p. 623.

460.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 312.

461.

Charles, art. “Bk of Secrets of Enoch”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* “The underlying conception here probably is that the Dragon and his angels attempted to storm the highest heaven, and in the end were cast out of heaven altogether.” *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 230.

462.

Sayce, *Hibbert Lect's.*, (1887), p. 102.

463.

Gunkel, *Schopfung und Chaos*, 1895.

464.

Porter, art. “Rev., Book of”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

465.

“To read the ideas of Rev. xii into the scattered Babylonian allusions, in order to get the Marduk myth, is too fragmentary to be relied upon as a basis for such a theory;” Moffatt, *The Expositor*, Mar., '09, art. “Wellhausen and Others on the Apoc.” For a statement of Gunkel's tradition-historical view see art. “Rev.” in Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; also art. “Apoc. and Recent Criticism”, Barton, *Am. Journ. of Theol.*, Oct. '98. Delitzsch in his first lecture on *Babel and the Bible* (1902) regards all references to the Dragon in Scriptures as echoes of Babylonian mythology. Davidson in art. “Angel”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, regards such passages containing accounts of

conflicts between God and other powerful beings as “reminiscences of Cosmic or Creation myths.”

466.

Moffatt supports the reading, “I stood” (A. V.), and in this view he is supported by Ramsay.

467.

See *Apoc. of Baruch*, 29.4 and *II Esdr.* 6.49.

468.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 221.

469.

Düsterdieck, Plummer, Faussett, and many others. Milligan is especially clear in his exposition of this passage, *Internat. Com.*, vol. iv, p. 105.

470.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 331.

471.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 331-2.

472.

Scott makes the sea out of which the first Beast emerges to be “the Mediterranean, from beyond which the empire of Rome rose before the eyes of the Jews”; and the earth to be the domain of “the Roman empire, from which came the priests of Caesar-worship—a priesthood native born”, which constituted the

second Beast. (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., pp. 235 and 239). Plummer says, "The sea is the type of instability, confusion, and commotion, frequently signifying the ungovernable nations of the world in opposition to the church of God.... The other beast pertains to the earth, thus dividing the whole world between them." (*Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 330 and 334).

473.

Cf. *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 341-43; Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 621; and Vaughan, *Lect. on Rev.*, p. 342; also Bp. of Ripon's "Excur. on Rev.", *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., pp. 582-85.

474.

The identity of the Second Beast with the False Prophet of chs. 16:13, and 19:20, can scarcely be doubted when both contexts are considered, though some historical interpreters have identified the False Prophet with Mohammed, the false prophet of Islam, apparently without any special reason except that Mohammed is the most noted of all the false prophets of history, whereas the False Prophet in Revelation is the representative of all false religions in all time, an admirable symbol.

475.

We should not forget the great lesson of history here emphasized, that the

natural religions of men are always intertwined with the civil power in heathen lands; and, also, how often in the past, even in Christian nations, the professed faith in Christ has been inwrought to its great undoing with the authority of the nation.

476.

Salmond, *Hist. Intr. to New Test.*, p. 245; Bousset, *Bib. Encyc.*, art. "Apoc".; also Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 239.

477.

The first is Alford's view, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, pp. 675-79; the second is Moulton's *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., pp. 207-09.

478.

For a further discussion of the symbolism of the Second Beast see notes on ch 17.

479.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 336.

480.

"Philo reproached Jewish apostates for allowing themselves to be branded with the signs of idols" (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 191), an allusion evidently to the same practice as that referred to here in Revelation, and showing that the language used is something more than merely a figure of speech.

481.

"In apocalyptic writings the interpretation, if added, is only a less obscure form of the enigma, and not a solution of it". Schürer, *Hist. Jewish Peop.*, part II, vol. iii, p. 47.

482.

"It is difficult to understand why all this mystery should be about the name of a dead emperor who was no favorite with Jew or Roman, or why the name should be written in Hebrew for the Christians of Asia, or how so prominent a name should so soon be forgotten, especially in view of the expectation of his return, which obtained so long." (Dean, *Book of Revelation*, p. 151.).

483.

See Salmon, *Hist. Intr. to New Test.*, p. 23Of.; also Milligan, *Expos. Bib.*, Rev., p. 235; and Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 337. Farrar's interpretation (following Reuss, Hitzig, and others) is *Neron Kesar*, using Hebrew letters in the spelling and omitting most of the vowels, as follows (see *Early Days of Christianity*, p. 540), viz:—

N = 50
R = 200
O = 6
N = 50

N(E)RON = 306
K = 100

S = 60
R = 200

K(E)S(A)R = 360

This interpretation is the one now generally accepted by the advanced school of commentators in the present day. On the other hand if the last letter of the name (N) be dropped we have the value of 616, which is the alternate reading in some manuscripts. Moulton, however, says the number contains "probably a temporary allusion of which the point is now lost" that gave a clue to the general significance, viz. "world-religion and superstition in contradistinction to world-force." (*Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 209). "The non-identification of Nero with the 666 by any early writer is significant." (Cowan, art. "Nero", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*). "Surely not 'Nero Kaisar,' but 'Ashhur-Ramman'!" Cheyne, *Fresh Voyages on Unfrequented Waters*, p. 171—1914).

484.

Porter, art. "Rev., Bk. of," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

485.

Following the Hebrew custom of offering the first fruits to God, the term is probably used in this figure

as the symbol of that which is given to God, though it may possibly refer to those who share in the first resurrection.

486.

"Παρθένοι 'virgins,' is a word equally applicable to men or women," Plummer, *Pulp. Com., Rev.*, p. 347; also Swete regards the word "virgins" as a metaphor for purity, as most interpreters; cf. Thayer's *Gr. Lex. of New Test.*, for the secondary use of the term. It is evident that the phrase "These are they that were not defiled with women"—or "among women"—may properly be interpreted as applying to men who were not so defiled, though it here apparently represents a class, whether men or women, who are declared to be free from impurity, a phrase that in such a book as the Apocalypse is more likely to refer to that which is spiritual than to that which is physical. Alford, however, (*Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 685), and Moffatt, also, (*Exp. Gr. Test.*, vol. v, p. 436), both interpret literally as "virgins."

487.

"The writer is controverting a fear that at the advent of the Messiah those who survived on earth would have some advantage over those who had already died.... John, however,

does not share the current pessimistic belief that death was preferable to life ... but affirms that if death came in the line of religious duty it involved no deprivation." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., pp. 439-40.

488.

"In Jewish Apocalyptic writings ever since Daniel, a Son of Man had been spoken of who would come to judge the world in the clouds of heaven," (Pfleiderer, *Hibbert Lect.* (1885), p. 34. An early messianic interpretation was given to the term, apparently because of its fitness, though in Daniel's vision "the son of man," a figure in human form, is understood by most late interpreters to be used as a symbol of Israel, whose higher qualities are set in contrast with the four beasts, and its messianic use is believed to have arisen later, though, perhaps, soon after that period. For an instructive discussion of this familiar title, "the Son of Man", so difficult to adequately interpret, see Charles' edition of the *Bk. of Enoch*, app'x B; also art. "Son of Man" in Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and Sanday's art. "Jesus Christ" in the same; together with art. "Son of Man" in Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

489.

"*Another angel*; i. e. in addition to

those already mentioned, and not implying that he who sat on the cloud was an angel", Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 350.

490.

For the first view see Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 350; Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 691f; and Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 187. For the second view see Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 250; and Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., pp. 441-42.

491.

Cf. *Bk. of Enoch*, 100.3.

492.

Moulton's *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 210.

493.

See Intr. to Johan. B'ks., *Temple Bib.*

494.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 3.

495.

"The whole of God's wrath in final judgment is not exhausted by these vials, but only the whole of his wrath in sending plagues on the earth previous to the judgment." Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 693.

496.

Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 198. Lange suggests that "the crystal sea may appear as though illuminated and reddened by the

fiery glare of the Anger Vials." (*Com. on Rev.*, p. 290); Alford thinks the fire in the sea is significant of judgment, (*Gr. Test.*, vol iv, p. 693); and Swete says, "The red glow of the sea spoke of the fire through which the martyrs had passed, and yet more of the wrath about to fall on the world which had condemned them." (*Apoc. of St John*, p. 191).

497.

So Düsterdieck, Faussett, Plummer, Alford, and others; for the Greek preposition ἐπὶ with the accusative, see Thayer's *Gr. Lex. of New Test.* Swete, however, regarding the sea to be of glass, interprets "on the sea itself, which forms the solid pavement of the final approach to the throne," (*Apoc. of St John*, p. 192), a view which scarcely accords with our idea of a sea.

498.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., pp. 253-4. Also see Westcott and Hort in *App'x to Gr. Test.*, "Notes on Select Readings," p. 139, who favor the Revisers' view (λίθον); and Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 195, who supports the former reading (λίνον).

499.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 254; Plummer says, "The reason of the employment of the term 'vial,' or 'bowl,' is most likely to be found in

the expression ‘cup of God's anger,’ in ch. 14.10.” *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 392.

500.

The term “the angel of the waters” reflects the apocalyptic style of thought, for it is not unusual in apocalyptic writings to assign a presiding spirit to natural phenomena. Cf. *Bk. of Enoch* (ed. Charles), 60.16-21; also Intr. to same, p. 34. In the Apocalypse of John, just as in other writings of the same class, we find that “angels are associated with cosmic or elemental forces as fire and water which they direct.” Davidson, art. “Angel,” Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* Also cf. chs. 7:1; 9:11; and 14:18; in connection with 16:5.

501.

“A figure possibly drawn from the action of Cyrus in diverting the waters of the river when he took the city of Babylon.” *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 721.

502.

Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 419; also Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 700. For a different view see Milligan, *Internat. Com.*, Rev., p. 122; and Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, p. 395.

503.

“All is over”. Moffatt, *New Trans. of New Test.*

504.

See *Ascension of Isaiah*, ch. 7, where the firmament is the abode of evil spirits; also cf. Eph. 2:2, in which Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air," apparently reflecting the thought of the time, which regarded the air as the abiding place of evil spirits.

505.

"Every Apocalyptic writer painted the final catastrophe after the model of the catastrophes of his day, only on a vaster scale and with deepened shadows." Harnack, art. "Rev.," *Encyc. Brit.*; also see *Assumption of Moses*, 10.8.

506.

Twentieth Cent. New Test. in Modern English, ch. 15.1; the Am. R. V. reads, "In them is finished the wrath of God".

507.

Frogs which were unclean to the Hebrews become here a fitting type of unclean spirits.

508.

See art. "Har-Magedon," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

509.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 396. "The final world-combat." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 212. See note on ch. 19:11-21, where this

same event is again referred to.

510.

See division made by Purvis in art. “Rev.”, Davis' *Dict. of Bib.*; also the analysis given in the introductory part of *Twent. Cent. New Test.*, vol. iii, Rev., “Table of Contents.”

511.

“The comparison of Rome to Babylon underlies much of Jewish apocalyptic literature.” Chase, art. “Babylon, in New Test.”, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

512.

Plummer gives a different idea of Babylon, interpreting it as “The degenerate portion of the church of God ... all the faithless of God's church in all time”, an interpretation that is not accepted by most commentators. *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 413.

513.

See App'x A, Division V; also “Excur. on Rev.” by Bp. of Ripon, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 582.

514.

“This practice was customary with harlots” (Juv., “Sat.”, vi. 123; Seneca, “Controv.”, 1, 2). *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 415.

515.

“The City of the World, the ideal concentration of all this world's

splendor and wealth and might.... The Evil-World-Metropolis." Scott, *Paragraph. Ver. of Rev.*, pp. 1-2. For a convincing presentation of this view, see Lee, *Bib. Com.*, Rev., pp. 734-45. "The Anti-Church",—i. e. the world in antithesis to the church, Seiss, *Lect. on Apoc.*, vol. iii, p. 112. "By Babylon the whole ungodly, anti-christianized world is intended ... an ideal city, embracing all of anti-christianity." Lange, *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 278-303. "Under this one name (Babylon) ... the whole adverse force is concentrated." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 212. In this view of the interpretation which is adopted in the present volume, the Harlot is the anti-christian world, the perpetual Babylon.

516.

For other views see *Pulp. Com.*, J. F. & B., *Com. on Rev.*, and *Internat. Com. in loco*.

517.

As with Milligan and others.

518.

This description of the Woman as "the great Harlot that sitteth upon many waters" is evidently taken from the Prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 51:13), where the many waters refer to the many canals of Babylon. Here the phrase is used figuratively, referring to the "many peoples" (v.

15) that are subject to Babylon in the Apocalypse, and affords a good example of the Apocalyptic use of Old Testament symbols in a sense that is somewhat different from their original meaning.

519.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 417; Faussett, J. F. & B., *Com. on Rev.*, p. 630; and many others. This is the common view with the symbolist interpreters. It should be remembered that the identification of the particular kings or kingdoms that were first in mind in this symbolism,—for there probably were such,—is not important; the special thought is that of *all kingdoms in all time*.

520.

"The absence of the article before ὄγδοος 'eighth,' shows that this is not the eighth in a successive series, in which the kings already mentioned form the first seven." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 417.

521.

"The Beast is the sum total of what has been described under the form of five kings, then one king, and then one king again." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 416f. "This eighth is the Beast himself in actual embodiment. He is ἐκ τῶν ἑπτᾶ—not 'one of the seven', but the

successor and result of the seven, following and springing out of them." Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv. p. 711. Also, see Milligan, *Internat. Com.*, Rev., pp. 127-8. To regard the Beast that is "an eighth," and, of the seven, as a reference to Nero is an anomalous interpretation that is without parallel in the book, and cannot, therefore, be sustained.

522.

"*One hour* denotes 'a short time' (i. e. a time that is relatively short in the measure of eternity). The Bible in this way constantly describes the period of the world's existence, especially that period which intervenes between the time of the writer and the judgment-day (cf. Rom. 16:20; I Cor. 7:29; and Rev. 6:11; 12:12; 22:20, etc.)." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 417.

523.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 417.

524.

See art. "Rev.", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* vol. iv. pp. 257-8.

525.

Cf. Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 333.

526.

Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 212.

527.

"Rome never has been, and from its very position never could be a great commercial city." Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 718. By the universal nature of the figures employed it is evident to most readers, that "the whole passage points not to any single city, at any one single period, but to the World-City throughout all time." Lee, *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 770.

528.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 432.

529.

See Chase, art. "Peter (Simon)", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

530.

It is to be regretted that the Hebrew word "Hallelujah" is not used in our Revised Version of the Old Testament as it is used in the New, instead of the translation "Praise ye Jehovah," especially as it occurs in the Book of Psalms where its use is so fitting. It is now a well-known English word, and is entitled to a place in our Scriptures, like the Hebrew word "Jehovah" which is recognized by all.

531.

"It has been supposed by some that we have in this incident (which is repeated in ch. 22.8) a protest against the incipient worship of angels which was creeping into the church." Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev.,

p. 275.

532.

"The book is filled with echoes of prophecy—mystic words through which break memories of the past—that only attain their full significance through the more perfect teachings of Christ." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*

533.

"The testimony of Jesus is the sum of the revelation made by him, the holding of which is so often in this book the sign-manual of the saints.... That deposit of truth rather than deny which Christians were prepared to die.... The testimony of Jesus thus becomes in turn the burden of his servants' testimony." Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 275f.

534.

Davidson, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Eschatology."

535.

"The Word" as a name for Jesus here introduced, though it occurs but once in the book, is used elsewhere in the New Testament only by John (Jn. 1:1 and 1:14; I Jn. 1:1), and seems to point to the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse. The Jews in the time of Christ used the Greek term λόγος "The Word", as a name for a class of phantasmal beings whom they regarded as existing between God and man, and

through whom God was supposed to speak; for to their thought, God was so exalted and transcendent that he could not speak directly to men. But John uses “The Word” as a personal name for Jesus who is both God and man, and through whom God has indeed spoken, thus bringing God near to men and revealing his truth and love. John took their own term and gave it a new application and a real meaning, and thereby furnished a new thought of Christ as the revealer of God. Cf. Thayer's *Gr. Lex. of New Test.*; and Burton and Mathews' *Life of Christ*, pp. 17-18.

536.

“John takes us to the unseen and heavenly side of things, and we see the hosts of God marshalling themselves in defence of His weak and persecuted people, God Himself standing within the shadow, ‘Keeping watch above His own’.” Humphries, *St. John and Other Teachers*, p. 105.

537.

“The word of Messiah's mouth is the sole weapon of his victory.” Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 468.

538.

Bib. Com., p. 607.

539.

For a strong confirmation of this opinion see Stevens, *New Test. Theol.*,

p. 555; also, supporting the same view, R. D. Wilson in unpublished *Princeton Classroom Lectures*.

540.

The fact of the resurrection is constantly emphasized in the New Testament, but it is entirely unnecessary for us to inquire into the manner of the resurrection for that is nowhere revealed. It is quite enough for us to know that there will be a resurrection, and that the new body will be a spiritual body.

541.

"Those who reject the idea of a physical resurrection are obliged therefore to think of a resurrection from hades to heaven, taking place at the close of the martyr age, and introducing those who are thus specially honored into a state of heavenly blessedness, which continues till the close of human history." Brown, art. "Millennium", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, referring to Briggs' view in *Mess. of Apost.*, p. 357.

542.

For the use of μετᾶ with the genitive, see Thayer's *Greek-English Lex. of New Test.*

543.

"If the twelve hundred and sixty days symbolize the duration of the triumph of heathenism, the thousand

years as clearly symbolize the duration of the triumph of Christianity", Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 263.

544.

A. A. Hodge in unpublished *Classroom Lectures*.

545.

For a more complete statement of the premillennial view see Faussett, J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*; Seiss, *Lect. on Apoc.*; and Alford's *Gr. Test.*, *in loco*.

546.

De Civ. Dei, xx, 7-9. For the prevalent symbolist view see Milligan, *Expos. Bib.*, and *Internat. Com.*; Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*; and Lee, *Bib. Com.* Against this view it is ably contended that "the interpretation of a symbolic resurrection (as that of Israel in Ezekiel), or of a spiritual resurrection (as in regeneration), is rendered untenable by the explicit reference to the martyrs (cf. ch. 6.9-11, and 19.9)." Brown art. "Millennium," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

547.

A careful study of this view, even when presented by so eminent a commentator as Plummer, will convince most readers that it fails to properly satisfy the statements of the text.

548.

See Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, pp. 463-4; and Brown art. "Millennium", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; also, most late authorities.

549.

Purves, art. "Rev.", Davis' *Dict. of Bib.*

550.

Salmond, art. "Eschatol. of New Test.", Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

551.

Cf. *II Esdr.* 7.28-32; and *Bk. of Enoch*, 91-104; also the *Slavonic Enoch*, "in which occurs the first mention of the millennium", (Charles).

552.

"The Talmud has no fixed doctrine on this point, but the view most frequently expressed there is that the messianic kingdom will last for a thousand years: e. g. 'In six days God created the world, on the seventh he rested. But the day of God is equal to a thousand years (Ps. 90:4). Hence the world will last for six thousand years of toil and labor; then will come a thousand years of Sabbath rest for the people of God in the kingdom of the Messiah.' This idea must have already been very common in the first century before Christ." Harnack, art. "Millennium", *Encyc. Britan.*

553.

Fairbairn *On Prophecy*, p. 45Of.; also Gloag's *Intr. to Johan. Writings*, ch. on "Millennium"; Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, pp. 702-03; and many other authorities.

554.

"That the world's history will terminate in the culmination of evil, becomes from the time of Daniel a permanent factor in Jewish Apocalyptic." Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 121.

555.

"Jewish tradition makes use of these names to indicate those nations which are expected to war against Jerusalem in the last days and to be overthrown by the Messiah." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, p. 473. "In later Apocalyptic literature these are conventional symbols for the world hostile to Israel, or to the people of God." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 284.

556.

"The whole delineation is symbolic, and embodies spiritual truths under material emblems." Plumptre, *Pulp. Com.*, Ezek., vol. ii, p. 306. "The Invasion of Gog, a discourse of Ezekiel which stands by itself, is not to be interpreted as a specific prediction of an historical event, nor on the other hand as merely a parable; but under the typical names of Gog, Meshech, and Tubal,—

suggestive of the dimly known confines of the earth—are suggested hostile forces however distinct, which after the many days of a future however prolonged, may be massed in opposition to a purified people only to fall in the holy soil by a destruction from on high, and to trouble Israel with no more than a notable burying." Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Ezek., Intr., p. xiii. Also cf. Plumptre, *Pulp. Com.*, Ezek., chs. 38-39; and Fairbairn, *Ezek. and Book of his Prophecy*.

557.

See Bleek, *Lect. on Apoc.*, p. 339: also Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, Rev., p. 732, who is very clear and convincing as to the literal nature of both resurrections; and Stuart, *Com. on Apoc.*, pp. 704-10, with Excur. vi in same volume.

558.

See Salmond, art. "Eschatology of New Test."; Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*; and Bernard, art. "Resurrection" in same work.

559.

Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 282. In fact this view, in some form, finds a place with many modern interpreters who do not accept the usual symbolic interpretation of the book. Alford with his accustomed vigor has well said, "If in such a passage the

first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave, then there is an end to all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything." *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv. p. 732.

560.

"No part of the doctrine of the New Testament has been so inadequately developed by the church as that pertaining to Eschatology." A. A. Hodge in unpublished *Classroom Lectures*.

561.

"There is a stern simplicity about the whole description, and just enough pictorial detail is given to make the passage morally suggestive." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 477. For Apocalyptic conceptions of the judgment, see *Bk. of Enoch*, 51.1f.; 91.15f.; *II Esdr.* 7.32f.; and *Test. of XII Patriarchs*, Judah 25, Benjamin 10.

562.

See Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 165; also Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 151, who says, "This idea of a book kept in heaven plays a great part in Jewish Apocalyptic literature, in which it is developed to include the deeds as well as the names of God's people in the

heavenly record." The passage before us, however, evidently keeps the two separate, for the book of life is distinguished from the books of record, and is mentioned seven times in the Revelation, indicating that it held an important place in the Apocalyptist's thought.

563.

The time of the End is God's secret, but the fact of the End is clearly revealed as the point toward which all history tends.

564.

Alford places ch. 21:1-22:5 subsequent to the millennium and the final judgment, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 736; and Faussett, who also holds the premillennial view, aptly says, "Now is the church: in the millennium will be the kingdom; and after that the new world wherein God shall be all in all". J. F. & B. *Com. on Rev.*, p. 640.

565.

"The biblical doctrine of salvation reaches its climax in the conception of the redemption of the universe." Brown, art. "Salvation," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.* "The fact that the heavens and the earth here spoken of are new, does not imply that they are now first brought into being. They may be the old heavens and the old earth; but they have a new

aspect and a new character adapted to a new end." Milligan, *Expos. Bib.*, Rev., p. 362; also *Internat. Com.*, Rev., p. 151.

566.

"The description of the heavenly city is probably the most magnificent passage in all Apocalyptic literature.... It is an ideal pictorially described, a symbolic picture of the better day seen in prophetic vision, and cherished with persistent hope and trust." Stevens, *New Test. Theol.*, p. 562. "The Revelator used a redeemed city to symbolize heaven—the Kingdom fully come." Strong, *Challenge of the City*, p. 199. That heaven as an actual city is, of course, only a dream of the baldest realism.

567.

Moulton, *Mod. Read. Bib.*, Rev., p. 215.

568.

"The plural 'peoples' seems to point to the catholic nature of the New Jerusalem, which embraces many nations (cf. v. 24)." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 510.

569.

The idea of a New Jerusalem coming down from heaven is a familiar one in Jewish Apocalypses. Cf. *Bk. of Enoch*, 90.28, and 29, note by Charles; also *II Esdr.* 7.26; and *Apoc. of Bar.* 32.2.

570.

As Milligan, *Expos. Bib.*, Rev., p. 368; Scott, however, says, "Though described as a city, it is really the figure of a people, and the 'condition localized' in which they dwell." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 287.

571.

"*He that overcometh shall inherit these things* (v. 6), i. e. the promises just enumerated. These words show the reason for the words of ver. 6; and may be called the text on which the Apocalypse is based; for though the words themselves do not often recur, yet the spirit of them is constantly appearing." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 511.

572.

See Reynolds, art. "John the Apost.," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, who says, "The speaker is now, probably for the first time in the book, God himself;" also see Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 275.

573.

Verses 11-21 describe the *exterior*, and verses 22-27 describe the *interior* of the city, while verse 22f.-ch. 22:5 further describe the *life* of the city.

574.

"These stones are not arranged in the same order as in the breastplate of the highpriest. Instead of this St. John has most ingeniously disposed them according to the various shades

of the same color ... showing a technical knowledge and a minute acquaintance with the nicest shades of color of precious stones only possessed by persons with a practical knowledge of their nature." King's *Nat. Hist. of Prec. Stones*, quoted in *Bib. Com.*, Rev., p. 832.

575. "12,000 furlongs or stadia amounting to 1378 English miles". Dean, *Book of Rev.*, p. 185.

576. For the first view see Alford, *Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 741, for the second view Milligan, *Internat. Com.*, Rev., p. 154.

577. "A cube was symbolical of perfection to a Jew as a circle is to ourselves." Moffatt, *Expos. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 483.

578. See Smith's *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Babylon"; and Swete, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 285.

579. "Life in each case is ζωή, the vital principle which man shares with God. not Βίος, the life which he shares with his fellowmen." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 52.

580. "In the old Paradise there was but

one such tree, in the new one there are many." *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 297. For a similar idea, not of twelve crops of fruit but of twelve trees with divers fruits for Israel, see *II Esdr.* 2.18.

581.

"By oriental usage, no condemned or criminal person was allowed to look on the king's face" (Esth. 7:8). Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 488.

582.

"The whole meaning and value of the New Jerusalem lies in the presence of God with men which it guarantees." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 480.

583.

Düsterdieck, Meyer's *Com. on Rev.*, p. 490; and Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 546. "The Revelation is begun (ch. 1.17-20) and ended (ch. 22.16) by Christ himself; but the main portion is conducted by means of his angel." *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 2.

584.

"In the seventh verse, with the affirmation *Behold, I come quickly*, the narration passes into the words of Christ himself, just as in ver. 12 and ch. xi. 3." Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 546.

585.

"The present era, which is 'a day of

salvation', is so nearly at an end that there is hardly room for change.... The principle which underlies the whole verse (v. 11) applies only to the moment before the Judgment breaks, the point when the Bridegroom comes and the door is shut, when choice is sealed and opportunity ends," Scott, *New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 300f.

586.

"All history from the redemptive point of view is summed up in the three sentences, He is coming, He has come, He will come again." Ottley, art. "Incarnation." Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

587.

"When Christ claims this title for himself, it is plainly announced that the revelation of God in Christ, in what he was and what he did, is the key to the issues of human life. Christianity is final." Ross, art. "First and Last." Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.* "The first title is symbolical; the second is borrowed from the Old Testament; the third is philosophical. The sense is, 'I am He from whom all Being has proceeded, and to whom it will return;—the primal Cause and final Aim of all history;—Who have created the world, and Who will perfect it.'" Lee, *Bib. Com.* Rev., p. 840. Also cf. the view of Bacon, art.

"Alpha and Omega," Hastings' *Dict. of Chr. and Gosp.*

588.

"The Apocalypse thus closes, as it began (ch. 1.5-6), with a note of ringing emphasis upon the eternal significance of Christ in the divine plan and purpose." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., p. 491.

589.

Alford says, "The speech passes into the words of Christ reported by the angel." (*Gr. Test.*, vol. iv, p. 746). Scott however, may be right in his comment on verse sixteen (*New Cent. Bib.*, Rev., p. 302), when he says, "The figure which has been behind the angel from the beginning of the visions (ch. 1.13-17) ... now steps forth, as it were, to authenticate the angel's testimony." Swete says, "Now at length Christ speaks in his human personal name" (*Apoc. of St. John*, p. 305). Plummer's comment is made with apparent reserve, "The words are spoken as by Christ himself" (*Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 547), though elsewhere he says more definitely, "The Revelation is begun and ended by Christ himself" (*Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 2).

590.

Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 547.

591.

Plummer says, "These words are best

understood as uttered by the writer." *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 547; in Swete's opinion "It is the answer of the church to the voice of John in verse twelve." *Apoc. of St. John.*, p. 306; Milligan suggests that the first clause is the answer of the church moved by the Spirit, the second is the words of John, and the latter half is Christ himself speaking—"an interchange of thought and feeling between Jesus and his church" *Internat. Com.*, Rev., pp. 160-161. There is, however, nothing in the context that implies a change of speaker.

592.

"This is the fulfilment of the duty laid upon St. John in ch. 1.1, not an announcement of our Lord himself", Plummer, *Pulp. Com.*, Rev., p. 548. Swete, however, regards these as the words of Jesus himself, *Apoc. of St. John*, p. 307.

593.

"It becomes a serious evil when the magnificent confidence and certainty of St John as to the speedy accomplishment of all these things is distorted into a declaration of the immediate coming of the Lord and the end of the world. Time was not an element in his anticipation. He was gazing upon the eternal, in which time has no existence." Ramsay, *Letters to Seven Ch's*, p. 113.

594.

New Cent. Bib., Rev., p. 304.

595.

For a list of authorities on Apocalyptic see note under heading of "The Form," in the Introduction to this volume. At this point the author feels constrained to say that the account of Apocalyptic Literature here given reflects so largely the opinions of others that it must be regarded, like much else in the book, as an effort to present concisely and in his own way the best that has been said upon the subject by many others who are more qualified to speak.

596.

Bacon, *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 232.

597.

"It has been too readily assumed that these books are wholly without 'evidences of the Divine Spirit leading on to Christ.'" Fairweather, art. "Development of Doctr. in Apoc. Period.," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, vol. 5.

598.

Jülicher, *Intr. to New Test.*, p. 52.

599.

"The fundamental idea is the moral one ... the basis of the religious is ethical." See art. "Eschatol." by Davidson. Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

600.

"If we could grasp the underlying faiths that have clothed themselves in these strange forms, faith in the kingship of God, and the sure triumph of good over evil, and the heavenly blessedness of those who hold to God's side amid whatever shame and abuse and in the face of death; if through the peculiar imagery and obscure symbolism of the books we could feel the power of the unseen world and gain a fresh sense of its reality, then this use, call it literary, or call it devotional, would be the best use to which the books could be put, and even most in accordance with the highest mood and real purpose of their writers." Porter, *Mess. of Apoc. Writers*, Pref., p. xiii.

601.

"In this weird world of fantasy, peopled by a rich Oriental imagination with spectral shapes and uncouth figures, where angels flit, eagles and altars speak, and monsters rise from sea and land—in a world of this kind many Asiatic Christians of that age evidently were at home, and there the prophet's message had to find them." Moffatt, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, Rev., Intr., p. 301.

602.

See art. "Development of Doctrine in

the Apocryphal Period," Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*, vol. 5; also art. "Zoroasterism" by Moulton, Hastings' *Dict. of Bib.*

603.

Zenos, art. "Apoc. Lit.," Hastings' *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*.

604.

"The *deus ex machina*, an abnormal and effectual interposition of God, is an essential feature of an apocalypse." Humphries, *St John and Other Teachers*, p. 92.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A BIBLE SCHOOL MANUAL: STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be

modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of

this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we

do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright

holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to

the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated

using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

• You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for

the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work

may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee

of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to

provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in

such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

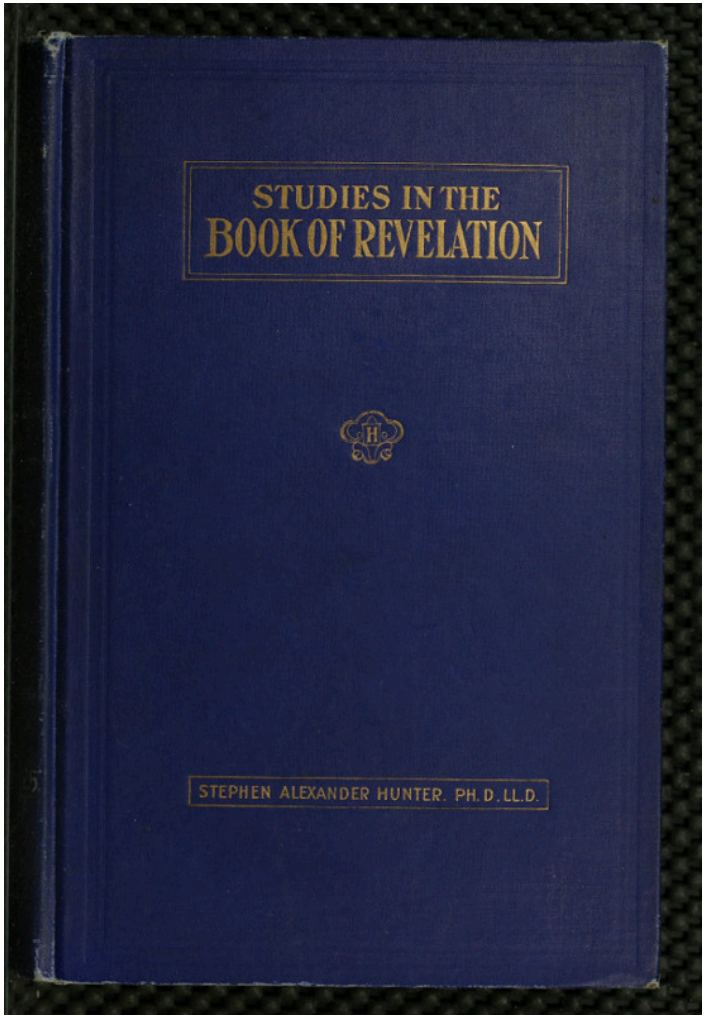
Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in

compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

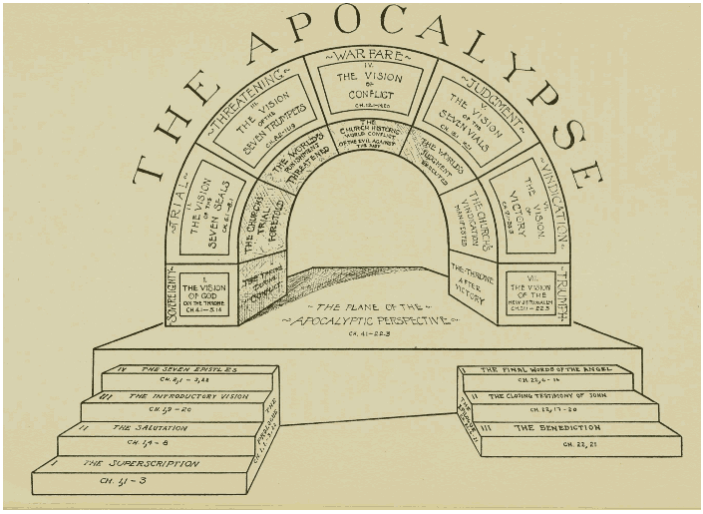
This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.


STUDIES IN THE
BOOK OF REVELATION
STEPHEN ALEXANDER HUNTER, PH.D., LL.D.

back


PROVINCE
OF
THRACE
EUXINE SEA
SEA OF
MARMORA
PROVINCE
OF BYTHNIA
AND PONT US
Samothrace
PROVINCE
OF
GALATIA
MYSIA
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
PHRYGIAN ASIA
PROVINCE OF ASIA
Pergamos
Thyatira
Hermes
Sardis
Smyrna
Philadelphia
PHRYGIAN
GALATIA
AEGEAN
SEA
Ephesus
Laodicea
Meander
Miletus
Patmos
PROVINCE OF
PAMPHYLIA
PROVINCE
OF
LYCIA
Rhodes
CRETE
CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

back


THE APOCALYPSE
~WAR PARE~
IV.
THE VISION
OF
CONFLICT
~THREATENING~
~JUDGMENT~
~TRIAL~
~VINDICATION~
~TRIUMPH~
~THE PLANE OF THE~
~APOCALYPTIC PERSPECTIVE~
I
THE VISION
OF GOD
ON THE THRONE
CH. 4.—5:14
VII
THE VISION
OF THE
NEW JERUSALEM
CH. 21:1—22:5
IV THE SEVEN EPISTLES
CH. 2, 3 — 3, 22
III THE INTRODUCTORY VISION
CH. 1:9 — 20
II THE SALUTATION
CH. 1:4 — 8
I THE SUPERSCRIPTION
CH. 1:1 — 3
I THE FINAL WORDS OF THE ANGEL
CH. 22, 6 — 19
II THE CLOSING TESTIMONY OF JOHN
CH. 22, 17 — 20
III THE BENEDICTION
CH. 22, 21

back