

Elijah James.

COMMENTARY

ON

THE APOCALYPSE.

BY

MOSES STUART,

PROFESSOR OF SACRED LITERATURE IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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Elijah James.

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well as to its rebukes, unless they believed that all came from proper authority? I do not say that the factitious composition was impossible, but I cannot refrain from the conviction that it is highly *improbable*.

The result is plain. Those who believe with me, that the evidence on the whole is strong in favour of the position, that John the apostle wrote the Revelation, must of course regard this work as belonging to the books fully and in the highest sense canonical. In it I find no *doctrines* that are wholly unique or absolutely new, but only new modifications, or additional views, in various respects, of doctrines elsewhere taught.

§ 27. *Historical sketch of the Exegesis of the book.*

I make no adventurous assertion when I say, that there was a time, when the Apocalypse was read and rightly understood by the more intelligent class of readers. I can form no conception of an undertaking by a sensible man in sober earnest, to write a book which would be unintelligible to those to whom it is addressed. What object could he have in view? Supposing him to be, as I have said, in sober earnest, he of course would wish to impart his feelings and views to others, with whom he acted and for whom he sympathized. But how could he do this, in case he wrote in a manner unintelligible?

The original readers of the Apocalypse, then, it would seem nearly if not quite certain, understood the Apocalypse. I do not mean to say that *all* Christians belonging to the seven churches of Asia understood it. The nature of the book—it being a series of symbols with a great abundance of tropical diction—would of course elevate it above the ready understanding of the ignorant and the uninstructed in the Scriptures. It requires some experience and taste and a portion of critical discernment, to read at any time such a book as the Apocalypse in an intelligent manner. But this belongs to the Apocalypse in common with all, or at any rate with most, of the prophetic books. The books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and indeed nearly all of the Hebrew prophets, made similar demands upon readers. The *Paradise Lost* of Milton, and many other poetical works in our language, may indeed be read by all who can read English, and many things in them can be understood and appreciated in a good measure, even by the middle and lower classes of readers. But to comprehend the whole—the plan, the execution of it, the diction, the allusions to classic and other lore, the tropical expressions, and other things of a like nature—this lies within the province of only a few.

Something like to this, must we suppose the case to have been with the Apocalypse and its original readers. It is not a book of simple history and plain didactics. It is poetic in its very nature; and its poetry

belongs to that class which is the most difficult of all to be understood and rightly appreciated, except by readers who are familiar with the Hebrew prophetic idiom. None can doubt or deny, that it is deeply tintured with Hebrew colouring. Of course it is not to be fully understood and fully appreciated, except by such as have attained to some good degree of familiarity with this colouring.

Let me not be misunderstood, I do not say, that there are not very many things in this book, which every reader of common sense can peruse and understand, and by which he may be profited. Plainly there are. The great Christian virtues which it inculcates, of warm attachment to the Christian religion, of unshaken fidelity to it, of persevering confidence in its promises, of awful dread of its threatenings, of patience and quiet submission under persecution, of holy resolution to suffer and even die rather than forsake the cause of Christ, of ardent love to Christian brethren and sympathy with them—all these virtues are plainly and obviously commended by every part of the book, and the commendation and enforcement of them cannot be mistaken by any candid reader. But beyond the great and obvious ends of the book, there lies, under its abounding and magnificent drapery, many an idea which can be fully understood and appreciated, either in respect to its limits, true shape, or aesthetical value, only by the more informed reader.

Some such readers John must have had, among all the churches whom he addressed. In them all were doubtless more or less of those who were native Hebrews. John then could reasonably count upon being understood by some, who belonged to those churches which were addressed; and this was all that could be expected in regard to such a composition as the Apocalypse, and indeed all that was necessary. Such readers could explain the book to others.

Thus much the very nature of the case teaches us. We cannot, indeed, make out the history of apocalyptic exegesis in the apostolic age, i. e. during the first century, from any written documents; for such we do not possess. We only know, that very soon after this age, readers of the Apocalypse began to explain some parts of it in such a literal manner, as to throw in the way great obstacles to the reception of the book as canonical.

It seems more than probable, that Papias drew his *millennial* views from the Apocalypse, i. e. he gave to chap. 20: 2—4 a literal sense, and maintained a literal terrestrial reign of Christ and the saints. But however this may be, it is clear enough that Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, interpreted the Apocalypse, in regard to this matter, in a way which was substantially literal. The two former regarded the descriptions of the thousand years' reign on earth, of the first resurrection of the dead, of the new Jerusalem, of Antichrist, etc., as designed to be

literally interpreted in order to elicit the true meaning of the Apocalypse; and they combined also with the various predictions of this nature, in the second portion of the Apocalypse, various prophecies of the Old Testament, in particular many of those in the book of Isaiah. Whoever wishes to see the manner in which those fathers represent these subjects, and how they argue, may consult Justin, *Dial. cum Tryphone*, c. 81, and Irenaeus, *Contra Haeres.* V. c. 25—36. The latter is not destitute of some fine remarks, although he manifests occasionally much credulity and very fanciful modes of interpretation. Justin has said but little in relation to this subject; but that little shows that all the Christians of his day were not Chiliasts, in the sense in which he was.

As to Tertullian, the reader will find passages that give his views in his *De Cultu Fem.* 12 seq. *Contra Marc.* III. 14. 24. *De Corona Mil.* c. 15. *Adv. Judaeos*, c. 9. *De Resurrect. Carnis*, c. 26. More spirit, life, and aesthetical discernment, will be found in him than in Justin and Irenaeus. He had, with all his peculiar Latinity, a turn of mind essentially poetical and oratorical. His main book on the reign of Christ, viz. his *De Spe Fidelium*, to which he himself appeals for a full exposition of his views, is lost beyond the hope of recovery. It would be a book of great interest to the history of exegesis. Tertullian was a Chiliast. Of course, as a Montanist he would be one. But probably he would have been one without Montanism. He has developed his views sufficiently for us to see, that while he has more of the elements of taste and spirit and eloquence than Irenaeus or Justin, yet he seems to have differed from them only in his manner of interpreting particular texts. His general scheme of exegesis elicited from the Apocalypse the same leading ideas, that are advanced by those two writers.

All that we have, however, in the works of these fathers, gives us nothing more than a few of their opinions respecting the Apocalypse; and these are only of the most generic kind. They comprise in the main, also, only such views as are deduced from the latter part of the Apocalypse. How they disposed of chap. iv—xii, we do not know with any certainty.

The general interpretation which the Montanists also gave to the latter portion of the Apocalypse, is quite plain from the extravagance of their Chiliasm. No doubt these so-called heretics have been but partially represented to us, by those who were opposed to them. Had we Tertullian's defence of them, we should be better able to understand their true position. As it is, we must content ourselves with the knowledge, that they gave to some leading parts of the Apocalypse, respecting the coming and kingdom of Christ, a literal sense; perhaps a more extravagant one than Justin, Irenaeus, or other fathers gave, who were Chiliasts. Yet scarcely anything could be more extravagant, than some portion of Irenaeus' views.

Near the commencement of the third century, Hippolytus, bishop of Portus Romanus, and a pupil of Irenæus (as Photius asserts), wrote, as Jerome declares, a commentary on the Apocalypse, as well as on many other portions of Scripture. Andreas and Arethas quote his commentary on the Apocalypse; but the book is lost, and we know of Hippolytus' opinions only through the medium of these quotations, and by what he has said in his book concerning Antichrist. Antichrist is, with him, the grand solution of the leading problems in Daniel and in the Apocalypse. The fourth beast in Daniel and the first in Apoc. xiii. are regarded as one and the same, and Antichrist is the antitype, and the grand agent who plays all the important parts. As a specimen of his mode of handling symbol and trope, we may advert to his remarks on Rev. 12: 1 seq. 'The woman is the church; the sun which encompasses her means the word of God; the moon under her feet indicates that her splendour is celestial; the crown of twelve stars indicates the twelve apostles; the woes of parturiency show that the church at all times is bringing forth the word of God, which suffers persecution by the world, etc.' In the sequel he says, that 'by the two eagles' wings, given to the woman in order to aid her flight, we are to understand a belief in Christ, who on the cross spread out his two hands like wings, for a protection to his followers.' These will show the reader at once the position of the commentator. Curious indeed the commentary must have been, which came from such a hand as is here developed. Ex ugue—leonem!

Hitherto all in the exegesis of the Apocalypse is fluctuating, arbitrary, and of course uncertain. No idea of any regular plan and connection throughout this book, seems to have suggested itself to the minds of the writers of that day. But let us turn for a moment to the Alexandrine School, and see what they did in regard to the interpretation of the Apocalypse.

Origen would have had no difficulty with this book. He had none as to its canonical authority. His mode of allegorizing would easily have enabled him to steer through the most difficult parts of the Apocalypse, without embarrassment. He could at any time resort to his favourite *anagoge*, i. e. transcendental or spiritualizing exegesis, and go through all obstacles. That he was entirely hostile to Chiliasm in the grosser sense, is well known; and the same is true of the other Alexandrine fathers in general. But he has left no Commentary behind him on the Apocalypse, although he seems to have had one in view; see Tract. 30 in Matt. It was easy for him, and Dionysius, and others of the African School who opposed Montanism and Chiliasm, to disembarass themselves at any time of all trouble about particular passages in the Apocalypse. That they did so, at least that Origen did, there is no

doubt. But of the particular manner in which this was done, we have no specific account.

As yet, we have lighted upon nothing now extant but *fragments*, in respect to the exegesis of the Apocalypse. We come at last to an entire work, devoted to the explanation of this book; imperfect indeed, and doubtless interpolated and altered to a considerable extent, but still preserving such lineaments as will serve to give us an idea, how such a book as the Apocalypse was managed by expositors, near the close of the third century or at the beginning of the fourth.

VICTORINUS, bishop of Petavium in Pannonia, who died as a martyr about 303, wrote a commentary in Latin upon the Revelation, which, nominally at least, is still extant. But doubts have arisen among critics, how far this can be regarded as genuine. Jerome (Catal. Scriptt. c. 18) testifies of Victorinus, that he was a Chiliast, and had interpreted the Apocalypse accordingly. But the Commentary now before us says, respecting the millennial period: "Ergo audiendi non sunt, qui mille annorum regnum terrenum esse confirmant; qui cum Cerintho haeretico faciunt." In fact, the exposition given of the whole passage respecting the reign of a thousand years, although it is extremely arbitrary and indeed a mere conceit, yet shows that the writer was far enough from understanding the Apocalypse here in a literal sense. Besides this, the commentary appeals once to the epitome of ecclesiastical history by Theodorus, which was written in the 6th century; see in Biblioth. Maxima, III. p. 417. B., in which volume the whole commentary may be found. These are palpable evidences of interpolation at least, if indeed the whole work be not supposititious. That it is not, however, is strongly my impression, from frequent consultation of it. It presents some internal evidence of being composed in the Latin church, and not far from the period assigned to it. It makes no reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which at that period was doubted by some of the Latin church, (see p. 415, in the reckoning of Paul's epistles); it adverts to Nero's *reappearance* as Antichrist, (p. 420 D., see also my remarks and Excursus on Rev. 13: 3); it alludes to the Romish Senate as persecuting the church (p. 420 H.), all of which seems to favour the early composition of the work. In fact, there is one passage in it, which seems to have escaped the diligence of emendators, viz.—"in Judaea, ubi omnes sancti conventuri sunt, et Dominum suum adoraturi," (p. 415, D.); which favours the character given of the book by Jerome, i. e. that it was *Chiliastic*. The whole contour of the book corresponds well, in one respect, with what Cassiodorus (fl. 514) says of it, viz., that it undertook to explain only *some* of the most difficult passages. Putting all these considerations together, it would seem probable, that what Ambrosius Ansbertus (fl. 750) says

in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, respecting the work of Victorinus, is true: "Among the Latins, Victorinus first commented upon the Apocalypse. Jerome has followed on in his foot-steps; expunging certain things which the author literally interpreted, and adding some things of his own, he formed the whole into one book;" Bib. Max. XIII. p. 404, E. Probably it is for this reason, that Jerome never wrote any other commentary on the Apocalypse. Passages now in the work of Victorinus, which are later than Jerome's time, may have come from marginal annotations of later readers; and this is the more credible, because there are but few of this nature.

On the whole, we may admit that for substance we have before us a work of Victorinus; but still one which has been *spiritualized* by Jerome, who was much devoted to Origen's views of interpretation with respect to the difficult parts of the Scriptures. But the reader can scarcely form an idea of the execution of this work, without reading for himself. Everything is merely miscellaneous. No plan of the whole work is sought after, or even conceived of; no effort to get at the circumstances and relation of the writer of the Apocalypse and his times, and bring them to bear on the explanation of the book. The work is exceedingly brief; the whole Commentary occupying less than *seven folio* pages in the Bibliotheca. Grammatical and philological interpretation are out of question; and the symbols are explained in the most arbitrary manner. Those that resemble each other, are regarded as mere repetitions of the same subject, although in a manner somewhat different; and so the writer oscillates from one position to another, very much as fancy would seem to dictate. No one can even think of gaining any exegetical satisfaction of consequence, from any portion of the work. Barren of appropriate ideas, and full of conceits, it can serve little other purpose than to remind one, at what a low ebb the science of interpretation stood, when Victorinus wrote this book. Yet it must not be supposed that there is nothing good to be found in his Commentary. Now and then a remark the reader will meet with, which is happily expressed and even striking.

We have seen how matters stood in respect to the Apocalypse, in the Greek churches after the time of Eusebius. It seems to have been generally withdrawn from the books that were to be publicly read in the churches; and by consequence, to have been withdrawn from particular attention, among the interpreters of the Scripture. Hence we find Chrysostom and a Theodoret omitting it in their exegetical writings. Origen had promised a Commentary, but did not live to complete one. We find nothing of this nature among the Greeks, until we come down to the latter part of the fifth century, when we meet with a work, which is a kind of a continuous exegesis of the whole Apocalypse, written in

Greek by ANDREAS, bishop of Cesarea in Cappadocia. It is much of the like cast with the commentary of Victorinus, excepting that it is fuller, somewhat more sober, and has a little more of connection. Still we might well name it *Miscellaneous Remarks*. He refers occasionally to what other writers have said, respecting the book itself, or of certain passages in it, viz., Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Methodius, Epiphanius, and Gregory Nazianzen. But he seems to have had no full commentary on the book before him. Like Origen, he makes a three fold sense, as occasion seems to demand, viz. a literal, a tropological or moral, and an anagogical i. e. spiritual or transcendental, which last alludes to or exhibits the mysteries of the future and of eternal life under the veil of symbols. When one of these methods of interpretation will not satisfy the writer, he resorts to another; so that between them all, he is sure to find some solution of difficulties. As to *times* in the Apocalypse, although the book proclaims that the period of fulfilment is *ἑγγύς*, yet with God a thousand years are as one day, and *vice versa*; so, of course, no embarrassment can come upon his exposition from this quarter. The temple in Rev. 11: 1 seq. he regards as the temple of the Christian church; 11: 13 he regards as relating to a remote future; and chapter xii. with the sequel of the book, he regards as parts of what the seventh trumpet betokens. The number 666 he thinks will be certainly known only at the future appearance of Antichrist; 17: 10 he applies to heathen Rome, the seven kings are seven Roman emperors, the seven heads and hills are seven monarchies of the world, of which that of heathen Rome (when the Apocalypse was written) was the sixth, the seventh began with Constantine, and the eighth will be that of Antichrist. He refers 16: 19 to Jerusalem; and the division of the city into three parts he refers to the population of the city, which consisted of Jews, Samaritans, and Christians. He is hostile to grosser Chiliasm, and refers the thousand years to the abundance and fulness of the knowledge of God, which, after one thousand years from the birth of Christ, will everywhere be diffused. These hints may suffice to characterize the work. No regard is paid to any regular plan of the book, and very little to the circumstances of the writer and the events of the times. Nor must the reader expect anything of a *philological* cast, like that which characterizes the commentaries of the present day. Yet it is a more respectable work than that of Victorinus. But in vain will one search for connection and consistency in it, or for any light except that which a sensible man might throw upon the Apocalypse from conjecture. It is evident that he had not, in general, even tradition to guide his interpretations. But he is somewhat modest and diffident in proposing them, and does not appear in the light of a confident enthusiast.

ARETHAS, a successor of Andreas, and in the same bishopric, wrote

a still more copious commentary on the Apocalypse, and in the same style. He treads closely in the steps of his predecessor, and epitomizes him in some places, while he enlarges in others. Yet he is not destitute of independence of opinion. He gives some hints, here and there, of different views; and more than once seems to intimate that Rev. iv—xi. applies to the Jews and Jerusalem, although he would not exclude an ultimate reference to Antichrist. Here and there, too, he intersperses grammatical remarks, which are not without value.

It is singular that these two works should have made their appearance in that region of the church, where the Apocalypse had most fallen into desuetude. It would seem that the very object of the bishops before us, was again to bring the book into the notice and esteem of the churches, by endeavouring to render it more intelligible. And with their efforts appear to have ceased the labours of the Greek churches upon the Apocalypse. Oecumenius is thought by Montfaucon (Bib. Cois. fol. 277 seq.), to have written a Greek *Catena* on this book. The like is also said of Andreas of Crete, (Montf. Pal. Graec. fol. 231). But if they did write upon the Apocalypse, we have not their works; and the fact itself is uncertain.

In the Latin churches, where the Apocalypse maintained its ground, we should have expected from Jerome or Augustine some explanations of the book in question. But, excepting Jerome's remodelling of Victorinus, we have nothing more than occasional notices; e. g. in Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*. XX. 7—17. Jerome, we know, has said that the Apocalypse has as many mysteries as words, and that particular words have a manifold meaning; *Ep. 53 ad Paulinum*, § 8. He intimates, that Rev. 11: 2 cannot mean the literal Jerusalem, because that had been destroyed when the book was written; the present world therefore must be meant, which is to be renewed and restored to a paradisaical state. We know then, in general, how Jerome would have interpreted such a book.

TICONIUS, the Donatist, a contemporary with Jerome and Augustine, wrote an *Expositio* of the Apocalypse. The work itself has perished; but from the testimony of others, it appears that he rejected all historical exegesis, and applied *anagoge* to every part of the book which appeared to be mysterious. Hence he obtained, of course, only general and undefined results, the offspring of conjecture or imagination.

CASSIODORUS, about the middle of the sixth century, wrote brief explications, or *Complexiones* (as he calls them), of the Apocalypse. He follows in the track of Ticonius; to whom, indeed, he refers his readers for fuller information. Of the same character is the work of his contemporary, PRIMASIUS, bishop of Utica, who declines all historical connection in the Apocalypse, and all special historical relation. Chap. xi.

and xvii, for example, relate only to the state of the world in general, under the image of Jerusalem and of Rome. BEDA and AMBROSIVS ANSBERTUS, of the eighth century, merely repeat what had been before said, in the like style. Beda is particularly partial to Ticonius. He makes no attempt to find a plan and connection in the Apocalypse, but assumes a *parallelism* of visions in several parts, and thus confounds the whole. ANSBERTUS († 767) occasionally seeks for the grammatical sense. He seems first to have noted, that the Apocalypse is occasionally *regressive*. But his maxim, that the true and full sense of prophecy must be *typical* and *mysterious*, must of course mislead him. In commenting he is exceedingly arbitrary, sometimes passing from species to genus, and then from genus to species. The consequence is, that he has strangely commingled mystical, allegorical, and dogmatical meanings. He has drawn largely upon his predecessors, especially upon Primasius; and, on the whole, has made no important advances upon those who had preceded him.

Looking back from the close of the eighth century upon what had been done by commentators in the way of explaining the Apocalypse, we find that no real and solid advances were made. The great truth, that Christ's kingdom would come, and that all the enemies of the church would be subdued, was indeed evident to all the expositors. But how to dispose of all the imagery and symbols; how to unfold the book in a grammatical, rhetorical, or historical respect; how to lay open the plan of the work, to point out its unity, its progress, and its mutual connection; in a word, how to appeal to the circumstances of the writer, of the churches addressed, or of the actors in the scenes who are presented by symbols—all this surpassed the exegetical knowledge of the times. Of course it was impossible but that attempts to explain, without a proper regard to all these things, must turn out to be failures.

From this period on to the dawning of the Reformation, the darkest part of the dark ages, no one conversant with the history of the times will expect anything important in the way of exegesis. The theology of the Schoolmen did indeed, in their way, make some advances during this period. Speculative theologians, of great acuteness in some instances, were not wanting. But whatever of commentary on the Apocalypse appeared, it was for the most part only a repetition of what had already been said, or the suggestion of something more of the same tenor and in the like way. The reader who wishes for an enlarged catalogue of interpreters of the Apocalypse, at this period, may find one in Lücke, p. 613 seq. I deem it unnecessary to repeat it here, as it is rather a matter of mere literary curiosity than of exegetical interest. Instead of this, I would merely suggest the two leading principles which

guided most of the commentators of this period; in accordance with what Lücke has suggested, p. 514 seq.

(1) The position of Andreas, that the *thousand* years of chap. xx. must be counted from the first institution of the Christian church, which in itself was the first resurrection, was generally admitted. Of course the writers who preceded A. D. 1000, and who adopted such views, were looking with great anxiety to the events that would immediately follow the arrival of this period. Antichrist was then to reappear (Gog and Magog were regarded as symbols of him), and the end of the world was speedily to follow. As the period drew near, great excitement naturally prevailed in regard to it; not unlike to that which has several times existed among a limited class of enthusiastic men, in Europe and this country, with respect to the end of the famous period of 1260 years. But when the thousand years had gone by, and things remained in *statu quo*, of course the tone of commentary was changed. The thousand years now began to be viewed as a large and indefinite period, the like to which could be found in other parts of Scripture; so that no one could venture to predict the exact time of their end. This of course gave some check to the development of enthusiasm respecting the Apocalypse; but it did not remedy the other difficulties that lay in the way of a proper exposition of the book.

(2) So late as the 13th century began the far more important and influential error of regarding the Apocalypse as a kind of *nucleus* or *syllabus* of ecclesiastical and civil history, down to the end of the world. "Prophecy," says Lücke with much force, "appeared to be the compass which the divine Spirit had given to the church, on her voyage over the wide sea of time, in order that she might at any moment determine where she was, how long she must still maintain her contest, and whither she should direct her course." The seven churches of Asia came to be reckoned as symbols of so many different states of the church general; and the latter presented to the view of Romish expositors a symbol of the Romish church, as affected by various events and phenomena, during the whole period of her state as the church militant. The anti-Christian power, in the Apocalypse, was specially recognized in the Saracens, and Mohammed was pointed out as the false prophet. The number of the beast (666) was applied to the duration of the Mohammedan power; and pope Innocent III. was able to rouse up nearly all the churches of Europe, and enlist them in a Crusade, by virtue of an appeal to them on such a ground.

On like grounds, the various heresies, (as the Romish church named all opposition to itself), were regarded as having also been included and predicted under the symbol of the false prophet. There never could be any difficulty to an ingenious man, in pointing out many resemblances

between the prediction and the events or persons supposed to be predicted. Boundless scope was given to imagination, conjecture, witty applications of certain expressions in the Apocalypse, and in a word to everything but a truly historico-exegetical mode of exposition. With deep regret I am compelled to add, that while the application of the symbols in the Apocalypse has been greatly changed, in many respects, from that which the Romish expositors maintained, yet the *principle* itself which led to the making of the book a mere syllabus of civil and ecclesiastical history, has been transferred unimpaired to the Protestant church, and remains, down to the present hour, as the current one in England and in America. But the *beast* and the *false prophet* have been applied in a manner very different from that which the inventors of such an exegesis intended; for they are now applied, by most Protestants, to the corrupt Romish church itself and to her false teachers. It is thus that a wrong begun in order to injure others, not unfrequently comes down upon the heads of its inventors and perpetrators.

In the Romish church itself commentators have not been wholly wanting, who have made offensive applications of the Apocalypse to its corruptions. Such an one was the abbot JOACHIM, who in his *Admiranda Expositio Apocalypseos* has given a new and peculiar turn to several things. He divides the world into three states, viz. that of the Father, which continued till the coming of Christ; secondly that of the Son, which was to last until the Millennium; thirdly that of the Spirit, which is to be the great sabbatical period of the world. So far as I have been able to trace the matter, he is the first who made out of 1260 *days*, in Rev. 11: 3, as many *years*, during which the State of the Son was to continue. These years he regarded as then about coming to an end, (fl. cent. XII.), and he urged with great earnestness a reformation upon the churches. His book was not aimed against the pope directly; but when the latter quarrelled with the Franciscans, to which order Joachim belonged, it would seem that they did not scruple to insert passages in Joachim's book, which bore very hardly upon popery.

Other enemies of the Romish church, the Waldenses, the Wicliffites, the Hussites, and others, did not fail to take the hint thus offered to them. Rome, which had so long been endeavouring, by its exposition of the Apocalypse, to put down first the Saracens, then all heretical opposers of its own dogmas, now experienced in her turn a retribution of the same nature. It was not difficult to satisfy such as groaned under the Romish papal yoke, that Rev. xiii—xviii. might, with great propriety, be applied to superstitious and tyrannizing and persecuting Rome.

But did the Reformation itself introduce any new method of interpreting the Apocalypse, on grounds independent of party feeling, and sup-

ported by the essential and now generally acknowledged principles of historico-philological exegesis?

It laid the foundation for such an exegesis, by substantially adopting it in the interpretation of the historical and doctrinal books of Scripture. In the latter, the application was easy and obvious. But we have seen, that not only Luther and his early followers slighted the Apocalypse, but that such was the case with Zuingle and his friends. After the credit of the Apocalypse began to revive and was generally established among Protestants, more attention began to be given to the Revelation. Yet the difficulty was still very great. Even the Hebrew prophets were not, at that period, recognized as proper poets. How could the nature of prophetic symbol, trope, and generally of the prophetic style, be well understood at such a period? And if they were not, how could it be expected that the Apocalypse would be interpreted in accordance with enlightened principles of criticism? In some respects this is doubtless the most difficult of all the prophetic books; and while exegesis was in such an undefined state as at this period, it could not well be explained from the stand-point which the more recent interpretation of the sacred books has assumed. The temptation to make out a meaning from the Apocalypse, which would be appropriate to party and sectarian purposes, was very great; and for a long time, few resisted this temptation. Meanings directly opposite, defended by adverse parties, would of course be the result of such methods of interpretation. Every interpretation not grounded on proper historico-exegetical principles simply, must be variable and shifting from side to side. Yet even to the present hour there are many expositors of the Apocalypse, who do not appear to have any adequate apprehension of this, and who endeavour to supply the lack of principle by confidence of assertion.

Early in the sixteenth century, ERASMUS and LAURENTIUS VALLA in their commentaries, aimed only at explaining occasionally the sense of *words* in the Apocalypse. Erasmus, as we have seen, had doubts about the apostolical origin of the book; and neither he nor Valla pretended to know the meaning of it.

We have seen how decidedly LUTHER rejected it at first; and also how he gradually yielded to giving it some authority, on account of the antipapistical use which could easily be made of it. In 1528 he found and republished the famous and anonymous *Commentarius*, written one hundred years before his time, which applied the predictions of the Apocalypse to the papacy. Finally, in 1534, Luther himself published some comments on the Revelation; which partook in a large measure of the spirit of the age. He assumed that the Apocalypse was an epitome of church-history; and then, at his pleasure, searched for events here and there, which he thought would accord with the apocalyptic descriptions.

For example, the little book in Rev. 10: 10, which was bitter and sweet to John, he applies to the papacy with its great spiritual pretences. The thousand years, chap. xx, he dates from the time when the Apocalypse was written, and extends it to the time of Gregory VII; and then he reckons the 666 in 13: 18, as so many years from that time, during which the anti-christian papacy will continue. Gog and Magog, he says, mean the Turks and the red (?) Jews; and he expects the last judgment to follow closely the appearance of these. Finally, he suggests that the Apocalypse may be used for the consolation of Christians in times of persecution and distress, and also for a warning against the introduction of dangerous and offensive errors into the church.

This work of Luther became a kind of general model for succeeding expositors in the Protestant churches. Down even to the present hour, the idea of regarding the Apocalypse as a compendium of ecclesiastical and civil history, has been eagerly grasped at, and solicitously retained, among far the greater mass of Protestant expositors. It has been kept up by the same circumstances which introduced it, viz., the opposition of Protestants to the Romish church and the papacy, and the ease with which certain portions of the Apocalypse may be applied to them. The fact that some portions of Rev. xii—xix. are altogether incompatible with the idea of any but a *heathen* and *truly idolatrous* power which is opposed to the church, is entirely overlooked, by reason of the many traits of apparent resemblance to the corrupt Romish church, which can be traced without much effort in the remainder.

The general principle of considering the Apocalypse as a compendium of history, foreshadowed by symbol, prevailed not only among the Lutheran, but also among the Reformed churches. To this there are but few exceptions among the Protestant commentators of those times. Such men, for example, as Beza and Camerarius, move very cautiously in respect to the Apocalypse, and limit themselves mostly to the explanation of words and tropes. The *practical* uses of the book were not so widely missed as its general meaning. Consolation amid trials, warning, reproof, above all the repulse of the papal claims, and the glorious hopes of the future, were deduced from the Apocalypse, and were proclaimed in the pulpit and from the press. The long continued and vigorous contest with the papacy gradually drew the attention of the Lutheran divines more and more to the Apocalypse, and reconciled them to it, because they could so easily convert it into a magazine of armour, which might be employed in attacking the papal enemy, or in defending themselves.

It may easily be supposed, that while all was thus floating and uncertain, while every one was at liberty to select facts from history which he might bring into union with the predictions of the Apocalypse, a great

variety of particular modes of explanation would arise. Such was the state of the case. One, for example, dated the 1000 years from the birth of Christ; another from his death; a third from the establishment of a Christian church; a fourth from Constantine the Great, etc. Of course, these considered the prediction of a Millennium as already fulfilled, but only in a *spiritual* sense; while some few looked forward to a terrestrial reign of Christ, at some future period. So long as the *times* of the Apocalypse remained undefined and unfixed, everything of course must be in a floating state, when such a mode of interpretation is adopted. The new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem were more generally referred to a future state of blessedness.

It must of course be a result of applying Rev. xiii—xix. to the *papacy*, that the 1000 years were considered as still future. In general a spiritual view was taken of the meaning of the passage respecting this period, and the gross Chiliasm of ancient times was repelled with much positiveness.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, JOSEPH SCALIGER made the declaration, that he understood the Apocalypse as far as the end of the *seven woes*; beyond this, he could not settle the question, whether it belonged to the past or the future. Later than the time of saying this, he seems to have had doubts about the apostolic origin of the book. It was he that uttered the famous declaration respecting Calvin, who did not comment upon the book of Revelation, which has been so often repeated, and is still often addressed to those who undertake to explain the Apocalypse, viz., "Calvinus sapit, quod in Apocalypsin non scripsit."

It might of course be expected, that the Romish church would not be idle, while the Protestant interpreters were so busy in applying the beast and the false prophet of the Apocalypse to the papacy. Cardinal BELLARMIN especially undertook to show that the Antichrist of the Apocalypse was yet to come; De Rom. Pontif. III. 3. The Spanish Jesuit RIBEIRA († 1591), in his commentary on the Apocalypse (1591), aims, however, more at illustrating the grammatical and historical sense of the book, and seems shy of adopting a mystical sense. The strain of his work is more impartial than was common at that period.

Near the commencement of the seventeenth century (1614), the Spanish Jesuit LUDOVICUS AB ALCASSAR published his *Vestigatio arcani Sensûs in Apocalypsi*; a performance distinguished by one remarkable feature, which was then new. He declared the Apocalypse to be a *continuous* and *connected* work, making regular advancement from beginning to end, as parts of one general plan in the mind of the writer. In conformity with this he brought out a result which has been of great importance to succeeding commentators. Rev. v—xi., he thinks, applies to the Jewish enemies of the Christian church; xi—xix. to hea-

then Rome and carnal and worldly powers; xx—xxii. to the final conquests to be made by the church, and also to its rest, and its ultimate glorification. This view of the contents of the book had been merely hinted before, by Hentenius, in the Preface to his Latin Version of Arethas, Par. 1547. 8vo.; and by Salmeron in his *Praeludia in Apoc.* But no one had ever developed this idea fully, and endeavoured to illustrate and enforce it, in such a way as Alcassar. He applies chap. xiii—xix. of course only to heathen Rome; and finds the fulfilment in its conversion to Christianity. Although he puts the time of composing the Apocalypse down to the exile of John under Domitian, yet he still applies chap. v—xi. to the Jews, and of course regards the book as partly embracing the past.

It might be expected, that a commentary which thus freed the Romish church from the assaults of Protestants, would be popular among the advocates of the papacy. Alcassar met, of course, with general approbation and reception among the Romish community.

In 1618, DAVID PARAEUS, a man of distinguished erudition among the Protestants, published a Commentary on the Apocalypse, which was designed to oppose the views of Alcassar, and to defend the application of chap. xiii—xix. to the papacy. Grammatical and archaeological investigations, moreover, were not neglected by him. It was peculiar to him, that he first advanced and defended the idea, that the Apocalypse is in the form of a *drama*; an idea which Eichhorn has taken great pains to defend and adorn. But although Paraeus was in an error here, yet the internal investigation of the plan of the book was greatly promoted, by thus bringing before the minds of readers questions of this nature. But *antipapistic* commentary found its acme in the exegetical work of HÖE VON HONEGG (1610—1640), which was so violent, that even most Protestants declared it to be “*Classicum belli sacri contra Pontificios*,” and deemed it extravagant; while others of a more enthusiastic temperament praised it very highly.

From this time forward, one particular explanation of the Apocalypse gave place to another, in constant succession. There was no general agreement as to the beginning and end of periods, or of the modes of reckoning them. Days were made into years by some; and *prophetic* days, months, and years, were distinguished from *civil* ones. What helped to increase the confusion was, that Daniel and Ezekiel were brought into parallelism with the Apocalypse, and even Canticles was appealed to by some, for the like purpose. Each one, as is usual, found all others who differed from him to be arbitrary in their exegesis; and they more than suspected him of the same.

In 1627, JOSEPH MEDE published his famous *Clavis Apocalyptica*, which has been so often appealed to by almost all subsequent English

writers on the Apocalypse. The peculiarity of his scheme is, that all the leading events in the book are made to be synchronistic or contemporaneous. The hint was taken from the forty-two months in Rev. xi. and xiii. Having fixed on *sameness* of time for the events in vi—xi, and xiii—xix., of course the exposition must be conformed to this. Accordingly, the seven seals upon the book written within and without (5: 1), are symbols of so many successive states of the Roman empire, from the time of Vespasian. The seven trumpets only serve to explain the complex import of the seventh seal; and the correspondences to these he finds in the continued history of the Roman empire. As the last part of the book is *synchronistic*, it must of course be explained in a manner conformed to this. Nothing, indeed, can be more arbitrary, than his whole treatment of his subject, notwithstanding the good degree of learning which he has displayed. His views were soon called in question; and he defended them with zeal and much sincerity. They were at last fundamentally overthrown by Vitringa, in his *Anacrisis Apocalypseos*, published in 1705, pp. 230 seq. (See a more particular view of Mede's book, in *Comm. Introduct. to chap. vi. seq.*) The main position of *synchronism* in the different portions of the book, is most palpably against the whole tenor of the book, which, with some trifling exceptions, is *progressive* in its plan.

In the sequel, some interpreters fell upon the old plan of supposing that the seven epistles to the seven churches were symbolic of the seven successive periods or states of the churches; and the rest of the book was of course made subservient to this. Some regarded the several *heptades* of the book as synchronistic; others, as successive. Of course every kind of exegesis and of artifice was resorted to, in order to make out a probability for each one's interpretation. Finally, COCCEIUS and his followers undertook to establish *dogmatically* the period-system. Soon, however, WITSIUS and JOHANNES MARKIUS made efforts to oppose and refute his opinions. But the latter, in his *Commentarius*, has adopted the principle of repetition of the same things, in the Apocalypse, instead of a progressive development; and so the whole book is of course brought into confusion.

About the middle of the 17th century, appeared the *Commentary* of GROTIUS. That philological, historical, and archaeological explanations of the language would be found in him, was of course to be expected by all who knew him. But he went further. He adopted, for substance, the outlines of Alcassar's views. The persecuting Jews, and persecuting heathen Rome, were the main objects of chapter iv—xix; then the flourishing state of the church. Yet he hit upon some peculiarities which will not bear examination. For example; the thousand years began with Constantine's edict in favour of Christianity, A. D. 311;

the end of these, in the 14th century, was when the Ottoman power and Mohammedans broke into Asia Minor and Greece. These of course were the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse. But notwithstanding some things of this nature, Grotius has given many a good hint, and made not a few fine remarks on the language of the Apocalypse. On the whole, he helped to prepare the way for further and better efforts in regard to this book.

The theological sentiments among the reigning part of Protestants, at this period, hindered the favourable reception of Grotius' work; but more particularly were Protestants displeased with him, for interpreting the Apocalypse as though its main aim was not against the papacy. Few ventured, for a long time, to follow him in this respect. Among these few, were HAMMOND and LE CLERC; neither of whom, for several reasons, found general favour among Protestants. In various particulars, with regard to the application of some smaller portions of the Apocalypse, these two writers differed from Grotius and from each other. But the main scheme was the same.

In 1696, PETERSEN, by his *Geheimnisse der heilig. Offenbarung geöffnet*, etc., attempted to revive the old idea of a terrestrial reign of Christ on earth. But this met with very vigorous opposition. Even the sober and excellent P. J. SPENER, (who admitted the *antipapal* exegesis, but believed that the Apocalypse has revealed the future conversion of the Jews and the final overthrow of Antichrist), on account of his suspected leaning toward the Millenarians, found but little favour as to his apocalyptic labours.

Among the Romanists, in 1690 appeared the famous work of J. B. BOSSUET, entitled *L'Apocalypse avec une Explication*. The talents, profound learning, flowing and popular style, and winning address, of this celebrated writer, all contributed to procure extensive favour for his work among the adherents to the Romish hierarchy. His general plan is this. The history of the church is divided into three periods; the sorrows of the church are comprised in Rev. v—xix; the dominion of the church, in 20: 1—10; the period of its last trial is comprised in the remainder; and this last trial is immediately followed by the general resurrection and the judgment. The final glorification of the church completes the whole. The first period, chapter v—xix, he divides between the Jewish enemies of the church, v—xi, and heathen Romish enemies, xii—xix. The two witnesses in chapter xi, are Christian martyrs. From this chapter onward, he concentrates all in the persecution of the church under Diocletian; in whose name he finds 666 concealed. It is obvious, therefore, that there must be much in the execution of his plan which savours of the arbitrary. But there is so much talent and tact displayed, in the manner of exhibiting the writer's

views, and there are so many fine thoughts developed in the work, and so much of skilful defence of the papacy, which still does not assume the form of defence or at least of polemics, that no one can wonder at the celebrity which this book of Bossuet speedily obtained, and which it has hitherto maintained, in the Romish church. It is a book which may be read with profit by any well informed reader, even at the present time. The occasional extravagances of it, to call them nothing more, need not prevent this. That such can be found, may easily be shown. The locusts in chapter 9: 1 seq., Bossuet represents as symbolizing the *heretics* of the ancient church; and the end of the 1000 years in chapter xx. he refers to the appearance of the Turks in Europe and to the breaking out of the Lutheran heresy! One can hardly suspect that this is anything more than a mere piece of waggery, in such a man as Bossuet.

But few Romish commentators have written on the Apocalypse since the time of Bossuet. These, however, have all trodden in his foot-steps; and his work remains as a kind of regulative among Papists, in respect to their views of the Revelation.

A few years after Bossuet's work was published, (in 1705), appeared the great work of CAMPEGIUS VITRINGA, entitled *Anacrisis Apokalypsesos*. In appropriate learning, in patient and extensive research, in a wide-spread knowledge of Hebrew, Rabbinic, Greek, and ancient and modern history, he excelled all his predecessors, and probably all his followers. Vitringa did not reject philological, archaeological, or historical sources, in explaining the Apocalypse. He made diligent and extensive use of all; and his book remains, even down to the present time, a rich store-house of information in these respects—one which has not yet been exhausted. Vitringa was dissatisfied with Grotius and with Bossuet. He wrote partly in opposition to both. But his system of interpretation is, in one leading respect, like that of most Protestants who had preceded him. Corrupted *Christian* Rome is, with him, a leading object in the Apocalypse. But he embraces pagan Rome also. His general view of the book is curious. Excepting a short prologue and epilogue, the work is thus divided: The first part, 1: 9—3: 22, indicates, by the seven epistles, etc., the seven different periods or *internal* states of the churches, down to the end of time; 4: 1—22: 3 exhibits the *external* condition and circumstances of the church; the remainder shows the state of the church in both these respects. Then as to the second portion of the Apocalypse, 4: 1—22: 3, it is subdivided into three visions, viz. 4: 2—8: 1. 8: 2—11: 19, and 12: 1—22: 3. The first of these exhibits the external state of the church from the time of Trajan down to the end of the world; the second depicts Rome, heathen and Christian, under the image of Jerusalem; the third is Rome

antichristian, its contest, its fall, etc. It is unnecessary to give a fuller view of his scheme here; and in order to avoid repetition, I refrain from it. The reader will find such a view in the Introduction to chap. vi. in the Commentary.

While we readily concede, then, to Vitringa more learning, ability, and even tact in some respects, than to any of his predecessors, it is still clear, that from the very nature of his plan he must launch widely into the field of boundless conjecture. His supposed repetitions of the same topics, without any regular order; his symbolical views of the seven epistles; his separation of the internal and external history of the churches; his mixture of pagan Rome and apostate Christian Rome; his application of death on the pale horse to the Saracens and the Turks; of the fifth seal to the Waldenses and Albigenses and other modern martyrs; of the sixth seal either to the destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth, or the political changes under Constantine, or the commotions in Europe at the time of the Reformation, or to the destruction of Antichrist, (a rare specimen of guessing); his separating of the seven trumpets entirely from their connection with the seventh seal; his allegation that the half-hour's silence in heaven indicates a long-continued (?) and peaceful and happy state of the church; these, and many more of the like things of which his book is full, show that this great man was making his way hither and thither, with large and unintermitted steps indeed, but often by twilight, and always without any certain compass to guide him. He had, one may concede, a plan of his own, and was true enough to that. But although many commentators who preceded him said more extravagant things than he, yet few if any have on the whole developed a more arbitrary plan. His book may still be consulted with profit. But in recent times, I should doubt whether any can be found who are his real followers. His work is one of the most laboured of all his performances; but it is unlucky in its plan. In one respect he differs widely from a large mass of Protestant commentators. He has no apprehension, that by the *designation of times* in the Apocalypse, any specific chronology is intended. On 11: 2, 3 he remarks, that the notation of time is only an Old Testament analogy, and that what is meant by it is, that the time of persecution is one that is definitely fixed by God, and cannot exceed its bounds. "Would that others had been equally prudent in regard to this matter!" exclaims Lücke; and I can heartily unite with him.

Vitringa, from his weight of character, found a ready hearing among Protestants. His book, although very large, went through three editions in less than twenty years. Yet, in the sequel, some began again to revive the discussions about the definite limitation of times in the Apocalypse. WILLIAM WHISTON, at Cambridge, mathematician and

theologian, went in great earnest into this subject. He showed, as he believed, from the book of Daniel, that a prophetic *day* must mean a *year*. In his *Essay on the Revelation* (1706), he assigned the return and coming of Christ to the year 1715. When this time had passed, without any tokens of fulfilment, he renewed his calculations, and brought out 1766. But as he died in 1752, he had no opportunity to correct, for a third time, the dates which he had twice brought out with a kind of mathematical assurance. But the experiment has been renewed nearly every five or ten years since, in the English world, and in the United States. This very year, we, in this country, have passed the boundary assigned by a large number of enthusiastic men, for the coming of the Lord. But all this avails nothing with individuals of an enthusiastic stamp. As soon as one period has disappointed their calculations, they commence *de novo* with a determination to find another. Generally the last period on which they fix, is beyond their probable natural life. In this way they avoid the vexation of another disappointment.

Among others, at this period, who speculated largely upon the designations of time in the Apocalypse, was a follower of Cocceius, ANTHONY DRIESSEN. His *Meditationes*, so far as I know, may claim the credit of the discovery, that the thousand years of chap. xx. mean a period each day of which is a year or 360 days; so that the millennial period is to comprise 360,000 years. Followers here and there he has had; particularly in England and America.

In 1740 J. ALBERT BENDEL published his famous work on the Apocalypse, *Erklärten Offenbarung Johannis*. The designation of *time* is the leading object. Merits the work has of a distinguished exegetical order. The author was one of the most learned, sober, and expert exegetes of his time; and everywhere does he manifest piety and an amiable spirit. Some twenty years did he spend principally on apocalyptic study; and with special reference to fixing specifically the times of fulfilment. His calculations I shall not attempt to detail. The grand key is 666, in 13: 18. The 42 months of the same chapter are, he thinks, of equal extent; so that each prophetic month is equal to 15½ years, and a prophetic day to half a year. With these assumed elements he finally brought out 1836 as the culmination-point—the grand crisis—of the great events predicted in the Apocalypse. He speaks modestly, but yet with entire assurance that there is no error in his calculation. But still he provides for the possibility of failure; and says, that in such a case, one must apply himself diligently to find out the source of the error that has been committed. *We* have passed 1836, and without any suspicion of a *crisis* in the affairs of the church or the world. Of course we now know what to think of Bendel's scheme. But the exhibition of

such a strange mixture of piety, humility, philological acuteness, tact, sound judgment in some respects, and other good qualities, with enthusiasm, mistaken principles as to scriptural designations of time, caprice even in making out the relations of these to each other, confidence in the certainty of his calculations, and deep interest in the successful reception of them, can be presented, I believe, by few other books that ever were written. Pity that so valuable a life should be thus wasted!

Bengel found favour with some; and a part of his apocalyptic works were translated into English, and some into Danish. But he was also opposed by some; specially by J. G. Pfeiffer, in his *Neuer Versuch*, 1788. Yet he had many defenders, here and there; and even down to the present time his work has not ceased, now and then, to be brought before the public as worthy of their attention.

The great mass of the religious public became, at last, wearied out with the extravagances and the errors of apocalyptic interpreters. This prepared the way for ABAUZIT, in his *Essay on the Apocalypse* (see p. 443 above), to broach the idea, that the whole book relates to the destruction of Judea and Jerusalem. His starting point was, that the book itself declares that all which it predicts would take place *speedily*. Hence Rome, in chap. xiii—xix. points figuratively to Jerusalem. Chap. xxi. xxii. relate to the extension of the church, after the destruction of the Jews.

The same ground was substantially adopted by WETSTEIN, in his edition of the New Testament. Chap. xii. and seq. he refers to civil wars in Italy. The 1000 years dwindle down to 50, from Domitian's death down to the end of the Jewish war under Adrian. Gog and Magog are found in Barchocheba and his rebellion; and the heavenly Jerusalem is only a type of the happy state of the church on earth, which will finally take place. (See fuller development in Commentary, Introduction to chap. vi.). In point of extravagance of application, and arbitrary suppositions, scarcely any one can exceed what Wetstein has exhibited.

WOLFIIUS, in his *Curae Philologicae*, collects and criticises upon what others have said; but in passages of difficulty he withholds his own judgment.

HARENBERG, in his *Erklärung*, concentrates the mass of the book upon Jerusalem and Palestine. But from chap. xix. he supposes it goes on to the end of all things. His object was, to unite the older and the more recent method of interpreting the book. But his paradoxical assumptions are so many, that the sober reader, although the author is a sensible man, becomes disinclined toward adopting such interpretations.

SEMLER, who attacked so violently the canonical credit of the book, has given only generalities as to interpretation. He speaks of it as sym-

bolizing changes, calamities, portentous signs, etc. ; and also great prosperity and happiness to the church ; but he did not put an estimate on the book, which would lead him to make much effort for the interpretation of it.

Soon after Semler had made war upon the Apocalypse, and it was threatened with exclusion from the Canon in Germany, HERDER published his *Maran Atha* or Book of the Coming of the Lord, 1779. With all his exquisite and cultivated taste, Herder was not distinguished for ability as a mere exegete or interpreter. On the score of grammatical and historical interpretation, not much ground was won by him for the Apocalypse. But in regard to the rhetorical character of the book and on the score of aesthetics, Herder's work was really the commencement of a new era. Never had the Apocalypse a more enthusiastic and devoted interpreter. Never before was the nature of its poetic representations so fully and finely unfolded. The man who wrote that peculiar book, the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry, must needs be qualified in respect to taste and aesthetical skill to make a right estimate of the Apocalypse. Herder's work is all soul and animation, through and through. It is easy to see, that the commentator entered upon his work and accomplished it with the highest degree of interest and pleasure. The vivid pictures and glowing language which he presented to his readers, served to create more interest in the Apocalypse, and to procure more favour with the public for it, than all the ponderous folios and quartos which had before been published. Nor has the aesthetical judgment of the public been materially changed, since Herder gave it a new direction.

Regarded simply as a book of critical exegesis, Herder's work cannot well be said to claim a high place. He adopted Abauzit's standpoint, and makes everything important in the book relate to the Jewish history. This is a fundamental error, and must of course substantially affect the character of the exegesis. But there is so much of ingenuity and of eloquence, there are such bursts of feeling and flow of heart, in all that Herder says, that his book remains, down to the present hour, with all its errors in interpretation, the most attractive and delightful work that has yet been written upon the Apocalypse. In particular, the skill which he manifests, in showing that "it is a book for all hearts and for all times" (p. 257 seq.), and so is one of an important *practical* character, has not been surpassed, perhaps not equalled, by any other writer. And although he seems to move in a narrow circle, as to the meaning of the book, limiting it so generally to the Jews, yet he makes God's dealings with them, and with his church at that period, symbolical of the circumstances of the church in every age. The kingdom of Christ will ever be victorious over all its enemies.

HARTWIG followed Herder, and wrote three volumes on the Apoca-

lypse, full of learning and the fruits of labour. In his *Apology for the Apocalypse against mistaken Blame and mistaken Praise*, he laboriously defends the genuineness of the book; but in his Commentary, he follows on in the track of Herder. In one respect he differs from him, and accords with Paræus, viz., that the form of the Apocalypse is *dramatic*. Herder's oriental taste secured him against this; but in this respect, Hartwig was lacking.

HERRENSCHNEIDER, in his *Tentamen Apocalypseos illustrandæ*, (1786), a work distinguished for its discrimination and ability, found in the Apocalypse the overthrow of Judaism and of Heathenism, and the universal triumph of the church. This was so ably defended by him, that EICHHORN, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, seems to have made him a model, in regard to general plan. This last work, published in 1791, gave entire new life to apocalyptic study, and for some twenty-five or thirty years seems to have had almost an entire predominance in Germany. It is Eichhorn's ablest work; and although it does not exhibit such ardour and intensity of interest as Herder's book, yet as a work of philology and real explanation of words and phrases, it far exceeds Herder's work. It is indeed the first work which seems to have taken fully the position, that everything in the Apocalypse is to be illustrated in the same way, as in any other work of a similar nature in the Old Testament. The learning and taste of the author enabled him to exhibit many a happy and striking illustration of words and phrases and imagery. He has given an interest to the book, in this respect, which none before him had done. Herder outdid him in glow and eloquence; but Eichhorn is not wanting in taste, and is highly respectable in this work for his philology.

The main features of his exegesis have already been indicated. Substantially they agree with the general tenor of the book. But in the detail, there are some extravagances which will not now find favour. E. g. in 11: 2 seq., Eichhorn finds the *two witnesses* to be the two Jewish high priests, Ananus and Jesus, murdered by the Zealots; while nothing can be clearer, than that the writer produces them as *Christian* witnesses, τοῖς μάρτυσί μου. But Herder had committed the same error; and the real meaning in this case is so difficult, that a mistake is not to be thought strange. Eichhorn's work was found fault with by some, and in my apprehension with good reason, because it places the whole composition of the Apocalypse, on the ground of a mere exercise of the inventive powers of poetic imagination. I do not perceive why more than this may not be admitted; unless indeed, we deny that *inspiration* is a reality. I am aware, to be sure, that very many do deny this. But, while I cannot agree with them, I still admit that the Apocalypse, as to its *form*, has all the *indicia* of art and rhetorical disposition

or arrangement. What objection can there be to admitting, that when God speaks to men, he speaks *more humano*? The alphabetic Psalms, especially Ps. cxix, Prov. xxxi, the book of Lamentations, and many portions of the prophets, afford striking exhibitions of the truth of this. I do not and cannot regard Eichhorn as a believer in Christianity, in the sense in which those are who admit the inspired authority of the Scripture. But I can see no objection to accepting thankfully whatever aid he has proffered, in order to illustrate the words, phrases, and imagery of the Apocalypse. We need not depend on him for our *theology*.

HEINRICHS, in his *Apocalypsis Illustrata*, has added very little to what Eichhorn and Herder had already exhibited; while, now and then, he indulges in some peculiar extravagances. Other commentators, such as Lange, Hagen, Lindemann, Matthäi, etc., are of little significance. The Commentary of EWALD however, (1828), deserves a very different character. The book is small, but full of thought and illustration. Being a philologist of much higher acquisitions than most of those who had preceded him in writing upon this book, he has brought all his Hebrew learning to bear upon it, and often with signal advantage. The outlines of his general plan are these: (1) The day of vengeance on the enemies of the church, or of Christ's coming, is near, chap. iv—vii; vengeance begins and progresses, 8: 1—11: 14; vengeance is completed, 8: 15—22: 5. So he makes no *catastrophe* at the end of chap. xi, and even represents the author as sparing Jerusalem out of partiality for his own kindred. The artificial arrangement of the book he fully sees, in respect to its *heptades*, and in regard to some of its *triads*. But the latter he has only here and there noticed, omitting to bring into view the three great catastrophes; the three heptades symbolic of punishment, i. e. the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials; and also most of the *triplicities*, which, in every part of the book small and great, everywhere develop themselves. Ewald's critical skepticism is too well known to expect from him any acknowledgment of the divine authority of the book, or of real prediction in it. With him, it is of the same order as the *Pollio* of Virgil, i. e. the expression of the earnest wishes and hopes of a warm-hearted but enthusiastic Christian; who, in all probability, believed himself to have been aided by the Spirit of God in the composition of the book. We are not bound to follow him here; but we may acknowledge with thankfulness many an important philological suggestion, many an illustration made fully satisfactory, and many an exegetical error of preceding interpreters corrected.

Other recent writers on the Apocalypse, in Germany, scarcely deserve notice. Of the enthusiastic *Bengelian* order was M. F. Semler, Jung Stilling, Typke, Gerken, Opitz, Leutwein, Rühle von Lilienstern, Sander, etc. The last wrote in 1829, and he finds that the commence-

ment of the Millennium will be in 1847. He has a little the advantage of the recent Millenarians of our own country, who placed it first in 1842; then in 1843; next in April, and then in October, of 1844; and who now conclude, that we ought to live in daily expectation of it until it comes. A more recent work on the Apocalypse by Züllig, of which I have only seen an ample review, has excited some attention in Germany. But from the extravagance of some of its positions, I should not think that it could possibly acquire and maintain a good reputation.

Lücke, who has written so large and able a book in the way of *Introduction* to the Apocalypse, has not yet published a Commentary. Whenever he does, the public have reason to believe that some accession will be made to the exegetical ground already won for the Apocalypse.

In the English world, nearly everything has moved on in accordance with the older Protestant views, viz. that the beast and false prophet are symbols of the Romish papal church. Bishop NEWTON on the Prophecies is a book too well known to need description here. Since the present century came in, some of the leading works in England are the following: Whitaker, on the Revelation, 1802; Galloway, Brief Commentaries on Revelation, 1802; Woodhouse, on the Apocalypse, 1805; Holmes' Revelation of St. John, 1815, 2 vol.; A. Fuller's Expository Discourses, 1815; W. Cunningham, Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets, 1817; Gauntlett's Exposition of Revelation, 1821; Tilloch's Dissertations, 1823; Culbertson's Lectures, 1826, 2 vol.; Croly's Apocalypse, 1827; Woodhouse on the Apocalypse, 1828; Hutcheson's Guide to the Study of Revelation, 1828; The Apocalypse explained (anon.), 1829; W. Jones' Lectures on the Apocalypse, 1829; E. Irving's Lectures on Revelation, 1829; Addis' Heaven opened, or the visions of Daniel and John explained, 1829.

In our own country books designed to be explanatory of the Apocalypse are not wanting. Kinne, Smith, Prof. Bush, and others, have published on this subject. But as their works are well known to readers here, it is unnecessary to characterize them.

Thus have I given a brief sketch of what has been done in past times, in relation to the Apocalypse. That the book has suffered more than any one in the Bible, from extravagant and arbitrary exegesis, no one will deny who is acquainted with its exegetical history. It is to be hoped that some progress may be made in these days of exegetical study, toward a firmer and more satisfactory mode of interpretation. What possible satisfaction, indeed, can ever be felt by a rational man, in any interpretation which rests upon mere surmise or fancy? And such must ever be all those interpretations, which result from considering the book as a mere compendium of civil and ecclesiastical history. But this has been

practised so long, and Protestant feeling is so deeply enlisted against the Romish church, that the chance of substituting a better method of exegesis speedily, is probably but small. Yet it must come at last. It will come, whether we choose or refuse. The radical principles of hermeneutics are every year gaining ground; and inasmuch as they are founded in reason and common sense, they must sooner or later become triumphant.*

§ 28. *Is the Apocalypse designed and adapted for the use of the Christian church in every age?*

This question must be somewhat strictly defined, before a satisfactory answer to it can well be made out.

There are some parts of the Scriptures, which, in one sense, have ceased to be specially useful to the church, as now existing under the Christian dispensation. We might select, for example, the architectural directions for building the tabernacle, and the history of its construction in accordance with them, as contained in the book of Exodus. We might advert to many parts of the Pentateuch, occupied entirely with the minute detail of rites and forms under the Levitical priesthood. We might mention many long and minute catalogues of persons and places, such as the book of Joshua, the first of Chronicles, and also the books of Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit; we might even include many portions of individual history, and the accounts of some apparently unimportant transactions, in the book of Genesis, and in some other books; and perhaps it would not be too much to add, that some of the prophecies respecting small and comparatively insignificant nations, bordering upon the Jews, who have long been blotted from the face of the earth, and in whose destiny we can now have no definite interest, are no longer of

* It is proper that I should acknowledge explicitly, in this place, my obligations to Prof. Lucke for the matter furnished me in his luminous and well arranged *History of the Interpretation of the Apocalypse*, contained in his *Einleitung* pp. 420 seq. In particular, with respect to several of the works which are characterized in the sketch contained in the present Section, I have been obliged to depend solely on him, because I could not procure a sight of the books in question. But the more important ones have been within my reach; and what I have said of them is principally the result of my own examination, although this substantially agrees, for the most part, with the views which he has suggested. The value to the reader of what is said, will not be changed by this statement; but it is incumbent on me to acknowledge my sources, where I have drawn directly from them, for I do not like to incur a just charge of plagiarism. Throughout this work, it has been my constant endeavour to see with my own eyes, and to think for myself, whenever circumstances rendered it possible. But in a case like that under consideration, where works are characterized to which I could not procure access, I have of course been obliged to depend on others.

special moral benefit to the church of Christ. For if the subject should be viewed in the simple light in which this question would present it, viz., What *moral* and *spiritual* edification is now derivable from such portions of Scripture? it would seem that such an opinion might be made up without much difficulty, inasmuch as the *moral* and *spiritual* instruction of such parts of Scripture can be made out by no direct and natural method of interpretation. We must resort to what is called *spiritualizing*, i. e. we must assign a *ὑπόνοια*, or secret and mystic sense, to the words of the sacred writers in order to educe from such parts of the Bible the instruction now under consideration. But such a resort is of itself a confession, that a moral and spiritual meaning cannot be given to those parts of the Bible that have just been named, unless the usual and obvious laws of interpretation are abandoned.

If the question should now be urged: Why then were such writings permitted to be comprised in the Holy Scriptures? it is not so difficult to give an answer, as some who urge it might imagine. To the church of God as formerly constituted, and embodied in the Jewish nation, all these matters were connected with considerations of no small importance. Everything respecting the tabernacle, the priesthood, the Mosaic ritual, the genealogies of the tribes and families, even the private history of the ancient patriarchs, was civilly, socially, or religiously important. Because that tabernacle, ritual, divisions of tribes and corresponding inheritances, and even individual interest in some of the ancient patriarchs have passed away, through the lapse of some thousands of years and the introduction of a new dispensation, how does or can it follow, that the things named were not in former times a matter of concern and interest to the Jewish nation and church as God's chosen people?

Then, moreover, we need not stop even here. When we now come to examine the genuineness of the Old Testament writings, in order to satisfy our minds whether they were actually written by Jews, as they purport to have been, and whether they were received by the Jewish nation, and looked upon as authentic, and revered as such, every particular that I have named above, that may now be regarded as in a good measure destitute of direct moral and spiritual instruction for us, and as superseded in a certain sense by the Gospel, plainly acts an important part; for it gives testimony which cannot well be set aside or overlooked, that the Hebrew Scriptures are the genuine productions of Jewish writers. Every minute personal history, even every special list of the pieces of furniture for the tabernacle, or specific account of rites and forms, and every catalogue of names either of persons or places, goes to establish the verisimilitude of the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole, and to show that they are no work of fiction executed by an impostor.

Placed in this light, then, our question assumes entirely a new atti-

tude; and if we should now be asked, whether those parts of the Old Testament that have been named as destitute in one respect of moral and spiritual instruction adapted to us, are not even of high importance in another respect, as contributing to the credibility of the sacred books in general, and helping to establish their authenticity—if, I say, this question should be now repeated, we may unhesitatingly assume, that *all Scripture is profitable*. And if some parts are not *directly* “doctrine, or correction, or reproof,” they at least serve to confirm those parts of the Bible which teach doctrine and administer reproof.

Paul has given us a very simple, and (I may add) a very instructive, exhibition of the uses to which Old Testament history may now be put. Speaking of what came upon the Jews, during their journey through the wilderness, he says: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and *they are written for our admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come,” 1 Cor. 10: 11. And again, when speaking of their punishments: “Now these things were examples for us, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,” 1 Cor. 10: 6.

The simple principle which lies at the basis of all is, that as God is always the same, and the relations which men sustain toward him are always substantially the same; so, what he did in one age, or at one time, and to one nation, in order to encourage virtue and holiness, or to restrain vice and impiety, he will in substance always do, everywhere and to all nations. In the *manner* of his proceedings there may be, and is, some diversity. The *matter*, as to rewards and punishments, as to requirements and prohibitions, is and must be always for substance the same.

So then the ancient Scriptures may after all profit us; even what was local, and particular, and temporary, and what can never in all respects be repeated or occur again, may sometimes be of no small importance to us at the present day. We may at least learn instructive history from it. We may regard it as a record of God’s providential, or of his retributive dealings; and from these we may learn something both in respect to his nature and his will.

In saying these things, I have had my eye continually upon the Apocalypse. Here is a book, which, if I have rightly unfolded its aim, contains things that relate to the past, the present, and the future. If we should say now that all which respects the destruction of the Jewish persecuting power can no longer be a matter of any interest to us; what is this but to say, that from the *past* we can gather no lessons of importance in respect to the *future*; or that we can discover no ground of encouragement, by the fact that God has fulfilled one prediction, ~~that~~ he will fulfil another? But this we cannot well say, as reasonable and

sober men : and therefore, when the matter is viewed in this light, there can be no difficulty made with the Apocalypse, or serious objection raised against it, because some part of it was specially local and temporary.

But there is another light in which the matter may be placed, that is attended with more apparent difficulty. The book, it may be said, has respect to *persecuting Jews, persecuting Pagan Rome, and Gog and Magog* (enemies yet unknown); and to all appearance, it pertains only to these. If this be so, of what *general* use can it be to the church of God, at the present day, and throughout the world?

Several answers may be given to this question, all of which seem to have some good foundation.

(1) It is not certain, that the second catastrophe, in the *full* extent of its meaning, has yet taken place. Persecuting Rome, exerting her destructive power through pagan emperors, is indeed fallen. The nation and the government, as they existed in ancient times, are no more. But all the consequences of their past existence and actions, have not yet ceased; nor is it certain that the *distant* parts of the empire, distant in the sense of the Apocalypse, have yet come to the great battle of Armageddon. And if this be the case, the church has still a deep interest in the matter of the Apocalypse.

Besides, the 1000 years of peace and rest are yet future. The defeat of Gog and Magog is still to come. The latter days of peace and glory are yet to ensue. And how can all this be matter of little or no interest to the church at any period? But,

(2) There is another and different view not yet taken, and which is the principal one at which I aim in the present discussion. What has been said already, has been designed merely as a preparation for this part of our discussion.

I regard the Apocalypse as containing matter, which is *a rúnos of all which is to happen in respect to the church*. I regard the whole book as particular illustration of a general principle—of a generic truth. My reasons for this may now be briefly stated.

With the apostle Paul we may safely aver, that “Christ must reign, until *all* enemies be put under his feet;” 1 Cor. 15: 25. It is true, it must be true, that God has made him to be “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Let us suppose, now, that this truth was distinctly in the mind of John, who wrote the Apocalypse; and doubtless such was the fact. In what way, I ask, could he exhibit this truth to the church in the most interesting and attractive form? Might he not have taught it simply, and by a single sentence have given assurance of it to the world, and have left the matter there?

Doubtless it was in his power so to do. It was also in the power of David, when he designed to celebrate the deliverance which he had experienced from the hand of Saul and from the hand of all his enemies, to have said this in so many simple words, and then to have closed his lips in silence. But he has not chosen this method of representing a truth so deeply interesting to himself and others. He has given us, therefore, that sublime and beautiful symbolic representation contained in the 18th Psalm; a piece of composition for which thanks will be given to him as long as taste and a power of appreciating the beautiful shall remain in the world.

It was in the power of Isaiah to announce that great Babylon would fall, by the hand of Cyrus and the united hosts of Media and Persia. He might have simply said this, and refrained from any further declaration. But he has not done so. He has given us the approach of the enemy, the onset of battle, the song of victory, and the final prostration and degradation of the great city with its haughty and hostile monarch. The 13th and 14th chapters of his book will be read with wonder and delight, so long as readers of feeling and taste are to be found.

David and other inspired writers might have simply said, as in the book of Genesis, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" or that 'Shiloh would come, and unto him would the gathering of the people be;' and then have rolled up and sealed the prophetic scroll. But these writers have not so done. Witness the 2nd, the 16th, the 45th, the 110th, and other Psalms, and many glowing descriptions in Isaiah, and the other prophets, of the like nature. No one will deny the additional interest which has thus been conferred on the subject of their prophecies. No one will wish a word to be detracted, from all the vivid symbols and glowing descriptions which they have presented us.

Besides this, we should particularly note, when David, for example, brings to view the future king, the Messiah, he invests him with the costume of oriental kings, i. e. with such as it was at the time when he wrote. So too the sons of Korah, in that exquisitely beautiful Psalm, numbered the *forty-fifth*. There we find, first of all, the beauty of the king's person described; then his eloquence is brought to view; next his invincible power and skill in war; his victories on every side; his triumphs; and finally, his retinue of captives, the daughters of foreign kings, and the nuptials which follow. All is in perfect keeping with the time in which the author lived, and with the country in which he wrote.

The application of this, now, to the subject before us is easy and obvious. The theme of the New Testament prophet is the triumph of the church over its enemies and opposers, the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and its final consummation in glory. What course

should the writer take in order best to accomplish his object? He is called to the special consideration of this theme, by the circumstances of the times in which he lived. Himself an exile under the reign of Nero; the church bleeding at every pore; harassed by enemies without and germinating heresies within; apostasies taking place; timid Christians wavering, and the faint-hearted ready to despond; how shall these evils be arrested? How shall the desponding be cheered, the doubting be confirmed, the bleeding martyrs be made triumphant in death, and the great and glorious work of converting the world to the Christian faith move on, amid circumstances like these? The obvious answer is, by opening upon the world the bright and cheering prospects which Christianity has before it, and showing all who become the disciples of Jesus, that the cause in which they are engaged will surely triumph over its persecutors and enemies, and the whole earth be yet filled with the glory of the Lord.

But how shall this be done? Must he write a treatise, which will exhibit a minute history of the church, in all her external relations down to the end of time? Such a composition would be ill adapted to the then pressing wants of the church, and to the times in which he lived. It must be of vast extent, of course voluminous, unwieldy, and expensive. It could be purchased by few; it could be thoroughly read, only by a still smaller number. It would then necessarily fail of accomplishing the objects of its author, in such a manner as he both wished and intended.

Another course, therefore, must be taken. And this was obviously the one which he has chosen. The evils then pressing upon the church must be considered, and the end to which they would come be fully brought to view. Embittered Jews, on the one hand, had assailed the Christian church from its first beginnings; on the other the overwhelming power of Rome had begun to bear upon it. Christians needed assurance that both these enemies would in due time cease to persecute, and that they would become the victims of divine justice and indignation. Assurances that such would be the case, were evidently adapted to answer the special purposes which called forth the composition of the Apocalypse. Those in whose time it was written, i. e. all who gave credit to the writing, must be enabled to see, that the church could not be extinguished by all its enemies, and that it was steadily advancing toward final and certain triumph.

But what of after ages, when the power of the Jews, and of pagan Rome should become extinct? Would they have any interest in the Apocalypse? Was it a book which would live until the world should be no more, and be for the comfort, the confirmation, the admonition, and the encouragement of Christians in every age?

This brings us to the very gist of the writer's plan. The then present circumstances of the church he had in view; for of this we cannot doubt. And so did Paul, when, for example, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, have in view their peculiar circumstances and condition. It is impossible to explain this epistle on any other ground. But is there nothing in it, which is of *present* advantage to us? None will deny this. All the decisions of Paul in respect to disputed or difficult questions; all his precepts, admonitions, threatenings, encouragements, promises, doctrines—all is just as applicable to us, and to all succeeding ages, as it was to the Corinthian Christians, after we have simply abated their peculiar circumstances. So far as our condition and circumstances and duties are like theirs, just so far what Paul said to them belongs to us. *Manente ratione, manet ipsa lex.* And thus may we fairly reason, in respect to all the books of the New Testament.

Let us examine the bearing of the principle here brought to view, upon the Apocalypse. In every age the church has had, and will have, its trials. Jewish or Roman persecution, indeed, will not always rage. But there are other trials. The carnal mind is always enmity against God; and always it will, in some shape or other, display that enmity. There have been, there will be, cold, doubting, hesitating, apostatizing professors of the Christian religion. Is there no instruction, admonition, comfort, hope, to be derived from the Apocalypse, in respect to matters such as these? There is; at least there may be, provided the book be rightly understood.

In a word, is it rational to suppose that such a writer as John believed, that all the evils which the church would experience, would arise from the Jews, the pagan emperors of Rome, and from Gog and Magog? I trust not. 'But why then has he not brought other enemies to view?' This, I answer, would be to compose a work so extensive that few would copy, purchase, or read it, in case a minute and circumstantial history of the church, in all its relations and down to the end of time, should have been undertaken. John, therefore, did what discretion and sound judgment prompted him to do. He has embodied, illustrated, and confirmed, a *principle* in his work, of which the church may and should avail itself, at all times and in all places. It is the simple principle, that *Christ will reign until all enemies are put under his feet.* But in the illustration and confirmation of this, he has selected as examples or specimens, the evils which pressed upon the Christians to whom his work was particularly addressed. How does the principle of composition in this case, then, differ from that which David and other prophets adopt, when they portray the future king Messiah, in the costume of kings who lived at the time when they wrote? Present circumstances were seized upon, in order to convey to their con-

temporary ideas of future things and persons. Could they have been well understood, in case they had adopted a principle of composition different from this?

Has not John taught us, that in the subjugation of the greater and more violent enemies, we have an assurance that all other enemies will be subdued? Will he who goes forth, conquering and to conquer, leave his work undone, or half done? Has he no opponents but Jews and heathen Rome? Will he have none in future but Gog and Magog? Surely if he subdues *one* enemy, because he is mischievous and dangerous to the church, he will subdue *another* of the same temper and character. He will not save the church from the sword, and leave it to perish by famine and treachery. He will not subdue and destroy one enemy, and give up those who have been redeemed by his blood to the fatal power of another.

Considerations of this nature illustrate and confirm what I mean, when I say, that the writer of the Apocalypse has established important and universal principles, respecting the Redeemer's government and his protection of the church. What he has repeatedly done, for her protection and defence, for her extension and confirmation, he will again do, and continue to do, down to the end of the world. If not, then has he shed his blood in vain; at least it has been poured out to accomplish but a narrow and very limited good. Must we adopt a view of our subject that will lead to such a conclusion?

When we are asked, then, whether apostate Christian Rome is included in the design of the Apocalypse; and whether Mohammedism is included in the same; and whether all the heresies of every age are also included in it; our answer may be: Not primarily and immediately; but still in reality all these, and everything else be it what, where, or when it may, which is opposed to Christianity, is included by *implication* in the Apocalypse. In other words, a principle is established in this book, which embraces all enemies of every kind and name. Why should God save his church from one enemy, and give it up to be laid waste and destroyed by another?

As I may reason from the epistles to the Corinthians, that the *principles* established by Paul there, in reference to the particular state and difficulties of that church, are available at all times and in all places; so in the case before us I may say with the same propriety: It is made certain by the Apocalypse, that *Christ will reign, until he shall have put ALL enemies under his feet.*

With such views as these of the book before us, we may well spare all the efforts made to convert the Apocalypse into a Syllabus of history. We need not look for the Pope, or the French revolution, or the Turks, or the Chinese, in it, as being distinctly within the vision of the

prophetic seer. He saw distinctly the enemies then pressing on the church. In describing their fall and ruin, he gives a sample of what must take place in respect to all other enemies and persecutors of the church, of every form and age. This is enough. All the great moral and spiritual purposes of the book are answered by this. The church does not need a minute history of all the external relations in which it will ever stand, in order to be comforted, and warned, and instructed. Enough, when we know that it will come off victorious, at last, from every struggle. Enough that all things will assuredly be put under the feet of its leader, and that it is marching to ultimate triumph and glory.

All this is accomplished by the book before us; accomplished, we may say, in a most admirable and impressive manner. As I have before said, so I say again, that I know of no book in all the Scriptures which contains matter adapted to higher moral excitement than the Apocalypse. Is there any one, which even reaches a point so high in this respect?

Such is the view that I would take of the writer's plan and object. Such the manner in which he has accomplished his design. Can those, who think that thus interpreted he seems to have said and done too little, tell us where he could have stopped, had he gone on to predict individually all the events of interest and importance which were to befall the church down to the end of time? What a book his must have been! How very few could be entitled to *the blessedness of those who read and understand the Revelation!*

If any one still doubts, whether the position is true that has now been taken in reference to the plan of the Apocalypse, viz., the establishment of a general principle by particular illustration; it would be easy to show him, that such is frequently the manner of the Scriptures, in other cases than those already mentioned. Take for example the text in Rev. 21: 8, "The fearful and unconfiding, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Are these then the only classes of sinners who will be sent to the lake? Surely but a small part of them; but then these are named by the writer as falling more immediately within the scope of his book, and they are proffered as a sample of all who have the like spirit.

Take another case from the writings of Paul. In the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans he gives a list of the vices practised among the Gentiles, on account of which they fell under the just sentence of the divine law. But are the vices there named all of which the Gentiles were guilty, and do no others bring upon offenders the condemnation of the law? This question is not a difficult one, and there can be but one answer to it; and this it is not necessary to repeat.

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