INTRODUCTION
TO THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

BY
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TRANSLATED FROM
THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE GERMAN,
AND
CONSIDERABLY AUGMENTED WITH NOTES,
AND A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
ORIGIN and COMPOSITION
OF THE
THREE FIRST GOSPELS.

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CHAP. XXXIII. OF THE APOCALYPSE.

SECTION I.

Previous apology for the author's uncertainty, in respect to the Apocalypse.

I come now to an important, but at the same time the most difficult and the most doubtful book in the whole New Testament. The various questions, which here present themselves for examination, whether they relate to the style of the Apocalypse, or the year in which it was published, or the qualifications, which every man must necessarily possess, who attempts to expound it, depend entirely on the main question, whether it is a genuine work of St. John the Evangelist, or not. And on the main question I candidly confess, that I have not been able to obtain that certainty; which I have obtained in respect to other books of the New Testament: consequently I shall, be frequently obliged to speak of the dependent questions in a manner merely conditional and hypothetical. In the whole of this inquiry therefore I will accompany the reader as far as I think we can go with safety: I will point out to him likewise all the prospects, which lie before him; but when we are arrived at the place, where the path divides, I shall think proper to halt, and leave it to his own choice to take that road, which appears to him the best.

As it is not improbable, that this cautious method of proceeding will give offence to some of my readers, I must plead in my behalf the example of Luther, who thought and acted precisely in the same manner. His sentiments on this subject are delivered, not in an occasional dissertation on the Apocalypse, but in the preface to
to his German translation of it, a translation designed not merely for the learned, but for the illiterate, and even for children. In the preface prefixed to that edition, which was printed in 1532, he expressed himself in very strong terms: but in that which he printed in 1534, he used milder and less decisive expressions. Still however he declared, he was not convinced that the Apocalypse was canonical, and recommended the interpretation of it to those who were more enlightened than himself. If Luther, then, the author of our reformation,

In this preface he says: 'In this book of the Revelation of St. John, I leave it to every man to judge for himself: I will bind no man to my fancy or opinion: I say only what I feel: Not one thing only fails in this book, so that I hold it neither for apothetical, nor prophetic. First and chiefly, the Apostles do not prophesy in visions, but in clear and plain words, as St. Peter, St. Paul, and Christ in the Gospel do: it is moreover the Apostle's duty to speak of Christ and his actions in a simple way, not in figures and visions. Also no prophet of the Old Testament, much less of the New, has in treated throughout his whole book of nothing but visions: so that I put it almost in the same rank with the fourth book of Elisha, and cannot any way find that it was dictated by the Holy Ghost. Besides, I think it too much, that in his own book, more than in any other of the holy books, which are of much greater importance, he commands and threatens, that, if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life; and moreover declares, that he who keepeth the words of this book, shall be blessed, though no one is able to understand what they are, much less to keep them: also there are much nobler books, the words of which we have to keep. In former times likewise many of the fathers rejected this book, though St. Jerome talks in high words, and says it is above all praise, and that there is much mystery therein.' Lastly, he says, everyone think of it what his own spirit suggests: 'My spirit can make nothing out of this book; and I have reason enough not to esteem it highly, since Christ is not taught in it, which an Apostle is above all things bound to do, as he says, Acts 1: ye shall be my witnesses. Therefore I abide by the books which teach Christ clearly and purely.'

In the preface to the edition printed in 1534, he divides prophecies into three classes, the third of which contain visions, without explanations of them, and of these he says: 'As long as a prophecy remains unexplained and has no determinate interpretation, it is a hidden, silent prophecy, and is subject to the advantages, which it ought to afford to Christians: This has hitherto happened to the Apocalypse: for though many have made the attempt, no one to the present
tion, thought and acted in this manner, and the divines of the two last centuries still continued, without incurring the charge of heresy, to print Luther's preface to the Apocalypse, in the editions of the German Bible of which they had the superintendence, surely no one of the present age ought to censure a writer for the avowal of similar doubts. Should it be objected, that what was excusable in Luther would be inexcusable in a modern divine, since more light has been thrown on the subject than there had been in the sixteenth century, I would ask in what this light consists. If it consists in newly discovered testimonies of the ancients, they are rather unfavourable to the cause: for the canon of the Syrian church, which was not known in Europe, when Luther wrote, decides against it. On the other hand, if this light consists in a more clear and determinate explanation of the prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, which later commentators have been able to make out by the aid of history, I would venture to appeal to a fynod of the latest and most zealous interpreters of it, such as Vitringa, Lange, Oporin, Heumann, and Bengel, names which are free from all suspicion, and I have not the least doubt that at every interpretation, which I pronounced unsatisfactory, I should have at least three voices out of the five in my favour. At all events they would never be unanimous against me, in the places where I declared that I was unable to perceive the new light, which is supposed to have been thrown on the subject since the time of Luther.

I admit that Luther uses too harsh expressions, where he speaks of the Epistle of St. James, though in a preface present day has brought any thing certain out of it, but several have made incoherent stuff out of their own brain. On account of these uncertain interpretations, and hidden senses we have hitherto left it to itself, especially since some of the ancient fathers believed that it was not written by the Apostle, as is related in Lib. III. Hist. Ecclef. In this uncertainty we for our part still let it remain: but do not present others from taking it to be the work of St. John the Apostle, if they choose. And because I should be glad to see a certain interpretation of it, I will afford to other and higher spirits occasion to reflect.
preface not designed for Christians of every denomination: but his opinion of the Apocalypse is delivered in terms of the utmost difidence, which are well worthy of imitation. And this is so much the more laudable as the Apocalypse is a book, which Luther’s opposition to the church of Rome must have rendered highly acceptable to him, unless he had thought impartially and had refused to sacrifice his own doubts to polemical considerations.

Before I proceed in this inquiry, I think proper to acknowledge, that in the following introduction to the Apocalypse I have derived several important remarks from a treatise, which was communicated to me in manuscript, bearing the following title, Discours historique et critique sur l’Apocalypse par Mr, d’ A—t•. The author of this treatise is indeed sometimes too severe in his censure of the fathers, and conducts the controversy in a tone, which is too satirical: yet it cannot be denied that the objections, which he has made to the Apocalypse, are of great importance. I have likewise made use of a composition delivered to me by one of my former pupils, when he quitted the university, whose name however I have not the liberty to mention, containing various doubts respecting the Apocalypse, with a request that, if possible, I would remove them. In the removal of some of them I have been successful, though not in the removal of them all: but, as notice will be taken of them in the following sections, perhaps other critics will be able to answer what lies not within my power.

* Mr. D’Aubigné, Public Librarian at Geneva,
SECT. II.

Testimonies of the earliest ecclesiastical writers, both for and against the Apocalypse.

EUSEBIUS, whom I mention first, because he is the principal ancient writer, who has collected accounts of the Canon, expresses himself, after having mentioned the unquestionable books of the New Testament, namely the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John, in the following manner with respect to the Apocalypse. "To these may be added, if one chooses, the Revelation of St. John, on which I shall mention the opinions of the ancients in their proper places. And these are the Homologoumena." He afterwards adds a list of the spurious books (οποία) of the New Testament, as the History of Paul, the Shepherd, the Revelation of Peter, &c. which he distinguishes from an intermediate class containing books of only doubtful authority: and this class of spurious books he closes with the following words. "Further, if one chooses, the Revelation of St. John, which, as I have said, some reject, others reckon among the Homologoumena." It appears then, that Eusebius, after all his inquiries into the Canon, had not been able to discover anything decisive in respect to the Apocalypse, and consequently remained in doubt. But there is another passage in his Ecclesiastical History, where he seems to deliver his own opinion, and in which he comes more to the point. In this passage, after having shewn from the writings


* The whole passage, which is somewhat obscure, I have already quoted at length in Vol. III. ch. iv. sect. 9 of this Introduction.

* Lib. III. cap. 39.
writings of Papias; that beside St. John the Apostle, there lived at Ephesus a Presbyter of the same name, he adds: 'This latter John was probably the person who saw the Revelation, unless it be insinuated on, that it was the former.' Upon the whole therefore Eusebius, who had not been able to obtain any historical certainty on this subject, took a middle road, and neither pronounced it a forgery, nor ascribed it to St. John the Apostle.

It is not to be expected, that we in the present age should be able to obtain the testimony of a greater number of ancient witnesses in respect to the Apocalypse than this first and great collector of materials for ecclesiastical history; and in general we must rest satisfied with the minutes which he has taken. But, as various circumstances may appear to us to be more decisive than they did to Eusebius, and it is better, wherever we can, to examine for ourselves, than to trust to the report of others, we will inquire into the evidence of ecclesiastical writers prior to the time of Eusebius, who have either received the Apocalypse, or have openly rejected it, or have passed it over in such silence, that their silence amounts to a rejection of it.

The most ancient evidence, and who belongs perhaps to the last mentioned class of writers, is Ignatius. For he wrote Epistles to the Christian communities at Ephesus, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, which are three of the seven churches, to which the seven Epistles in the book of Revelation are addressed in the name of Christ. Yet Ignatius, though he particularly reminds the Ephesians of the praises bestowed on them by St. Paul, is totally silent both in his Epistle to the church of Ephesus, and his Epistles to the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, of the praises, which according to Rev. ii. 1-7, 8-11, iii. 7-12, their bishops had received from Christ himself. Under these circumstances may we not conclude, either that the Apocalypse was unknown to Ignatius, or that, if it was known to him, he did not believe it to be genuine? And may we not likewise
likewise infer, that if it was a genuine work of St. John the Apostle, it could not have remained unknown to Ignatius? The old Syriac translator, whom I mention immediately after Ignatius, because in my opinion he lived in the first century, did not translate the Apocalypse: consequently, he either knew nothing of it, or did not believe it to be genuine. It is true, that the Apocalypse was afterwards translated into Syriac: but it never was admitted into the Peshito, or Syriac Vulgate, which forms the Canon of the Syrian church.

Papias, who is represented by Eusebius as a man of great credulity, would be an evidence of the utmost importance against the Apocalypse, if it could be clearly and indisputably proved, that he had never quoted it. For his very credulity, how great soever it might have been, would, in case he rejected the Apocalypse, increase the weight of his testimony. Papias, who lived in the beginning of the second century, was, as is well known, the founder of the Millenarian system among the orthodox. His opinion was, that after the general resurrection, Christ would reign upon earth a thousand years with the faithful: and it was this opinion, which induced Eusebius to ascribe to him the character of credulity. Now it is certain, that in not any one book of the whole Bible the doctrine of the Millennium is taught in express terms, though many Millenarians have pretended, that several of the ancient prophets have spoken of it. But in the Apocalypse, and the Apocalypse alone, this doctrine is discoverable, if we take all the expressions used in the twentieth chapter in a strictly

* Knittel has endeavoured to obviate the force of this objection, in his Criticisms on the Revelation of St. John, p. 15. to which place I refer the reader.

* See Vol. II. ch. vii. sect. 10. of this Introduction.

* A very full account of Papias is given by Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. Lib. iii. cap. 39.

* See what I have said on this subject, Vol. III, chap. iv. sect. 4.
strictly literal sense: and this is the chapter on which all the
Millennarians of modern ages have principally grounded
their opinions. If then Papias, the father of the Millen-
narians, who made it likewise his particular business, to
inquire into what had been said and done by the Apo-
tles, has never quoted the Apocalypse, this silence must
imply, that at the beginning of the second century the
Apocalypse was unknown in Asia Minor, which is equi-
vivalent to its not then existing. For Papias was bishop
of Hierapolis a town not far from Laodicea, to the
angel of which church one of the seven apocalyptical
Epistles was addressed. Could then this prophetical
book have remained unknown to him, if it had then
existed? And if he had known it, would he have re-
jected a work, which would have been the best support
of his favourite doctrine? And would not his very cre-
dulity have contributed to his acceptance of it, without
sufficient examination of it, even though it had not
been genuine.

If Papias then never quoted the Apocalypse, I do not
see in what manner its authenticity can be defended.
However, that he never did quote it is not quite so cer-
tain, as some critics have supposed, though every one,
who reads the account given by Eusebius will naturally
draw this conclusion, and for the two following reasons.

1. After Eusebius has shewn from the writings of
Papias, that beside St. John the Apostle there lived at
Ephesus a Presbyter of the same name, he hazards a
conjecture of his own, that this John the Presbyter was
the person, who saw the Revelation. Consequently
Eusebius found in the writings of Papias this opinion
neither asserted nor contradicted. But it is very extra-
ordinary, that Papias, who made it his particular busi-
ness to inquire of the elder Christians into every thing,
which had been said and done by the Apostles, and
who especially noted the difference between John the
Apostle, and John the Presbyter, should have left wholly
unnoticed, which of these two persons saw the Revela-
tion, if the book itself had been known to him.

2. Eusebius
2. Eusebius represents Papias as grounding his doctrine of the Millennium, not on the Bible, but on certain expressions of Christ and his Apostles, handed down by oral tradition, which Papias understood in a too literal sense. But if Papias had been acquainted with the Apocalypse, he could have been under no necessity of having recourse to oral tradition, since the twentieth chapter of this book, when literally interpreted, would have much better suited his purpose. The words which Eusebius has used on this occasion are as follow.

This writer (Papias) has mentioned several things, which he says, he learnt by oral tradition, such as parables and doctrines of our Saviour not contained in the Gospels, and also some things, which are fabulous. Among these may be reckoned the assertion, that, after the resurrection of the dead, Christ will reign in person a thousand years on earth. I suppose, that he acquired this notion from his inquiring into the sayings of the Apostles, and his not understanding what they had delivered figuratively.

On the other hand, if we may credit the account given by Andrew, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, in the fifth century, Papias gave even testimony in favour of the Apocalypse. For Andrew says expressly in the preface to his commentary on the Apocalypse: 'Of the divine inspiration of this book I need not treat at large, since so many holy men, Gregory the divine, Cyril, and before them, Papias, Irenaeus, and Hippolitus have given their testimony to it.'

To reconcile these two contradictory accounts, we must assume, either, that Andrew considered Papias's defence of the Millennium as a virtual support of the Apocalypse, and that he therefore hastily asserted that Papias had borne testimony to this book, or that Eusebius had not read with sufficient attention the writings of Papias, for whom he had no great respect, and that he overlooked those passages, in which Papias perhaps quoted the Apocalypse in support of his millennial principles. Either of these cases is possible: but which is the true one, it is impossible...
fible to determine with absolute certainty, as the writings of Papias are no longer extant. It will appear however from what will be said in the fourth section of this chapter relative to Gregory of Nazianzum, that the error is probably on the side of Andrew. If Papias really knew and received the Apocalypse, he is by no means an important witness in its favour, because it is a book, to which his millennialist principles must have made him partial: if he knew it not, or if he received it not, he is a decisive evidence against it. If he knew it not, it could not have been written even by John the Presbyter: but on the other hand, this will afford no argument in favour of the opinion, which some have maintained, that the Apocalypse was a forgery of Cerinthus: for if Cerinthus had been the author of it, Papias would undoubtedly have heard of it. The only inference to be deduced from Papias’s total want of knowledge of it, would be, that it was forged by some unknown person about the year 120, between the time when Papias wrote, and the time when Justin Martyr wrote, for the latter was well acquainted with it, and received it also as a sacred work.

The words, in which Justin Martyr speaks of the Apocalypse, are the following: ‘A man among us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, has in a Revelation, which was made to him, prophesied that the faithful in Christ, shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards the general and eternal resurrection and judgment of all men shall follow.’

Melito, who lived about the year 170, wrote a treatise entitled, ‘On the devil, and the Revelation of St. John.’ Eusebius indeed does not declare whether Melito wrote for or against the Apocalypse, and it is not impossible, that Melito, as some other ancient writers have done, wrote in order to confute it. But as I think it not improbable, that this last work was an explanation of the visions in the Apocalypse, I reckon Melito among the witnesses in its favour.

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\* Page 308. of the Cologne edition.

Irenæus undoubtedly received the Apocalypse as a genuine work of St. John the Apostle; and likewise asserted, at least according to the common interpretation of his words, that the visions were seen by St. John, in the reign of Domitian. This last assertion would in my opinion, extremely weaken the testimony of Irenæus, because for reasons, which will be delivered hereafter, the Apocalypse can hardly be a canonical work, if it was written so late, as the time of Domitian. But according to the very probable explanation, which Knittel, in his Criticisms on the Revelation of St. John, has given of this passage of Irenæus, the objection falls to the ground. Indeed the whole testimony of Irenæus in favour of the Apocalypse has been placed by Knittel in so very advantageous a light, that I must recommend to my readers, to consult what he has said on this subject, though he has advanced several opinions, which are directed against those, which I myself have supported.

From the writings of Athenagoras, the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs, as it is called, and the Clementine Recognitions, Lardner has produced single allusions to the Apocalypse, which prove that the authors of those books were acquainted with it, but do not warrant the conclusion that they considered it, as a genuine work of St. John the Apostle. On the other hand, it was undoubtedly received as such by Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian: and with their evidence ends the second century.

But in the same century there existed a sect, called the Alogi, who were acquainted with the Apocalypse, yet denied that it was genuine. It is true, that a contradiction

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*a* Lardner Vol. II. B. I. p. 277, 278. 304.<br>
*b* Ib. p. 338.<br>
*c* Ib. p. 653, 654.<br>
*d* Ib. p. 677.<br>
*e* Ib. p. 366.<br>
*f* Ib. p. 425.<br>
*g* Ib. p. 523.<br>

On this subject the reader will find much valuable information in Köner's dissertation entitled, De auctoritate canonica Apocalypsis ab Alogis impugnata et ab Epiphanió defendit, published at Leipzig in 1751.
tradition on the part of the Alogi, who out of mere antipathy to the word Ἀγγέλος, the name of Christ’s divine nature, rejected the unquestionably genuine Gospel of St. John, and absurdly ascribed it to Cerinthus, is in itself of no great importance: nor was the estimation, in which they were held by their contemporaries, sufficient to inspire much respect for them, in a critic of the present age. Besides, as appears from the accounts, which Epiphanius has given of them in his fifty first Heresy, they appealed not to external but to internal evidence, on which we are as well able to decide as they. One of their objections however, which is of an historical kind, is more deserving of consideration. The fourth Epistle in the Apocalypse ch. ii. 18—29, is addressed to the Angel of the church at Thyatira: and the Alogi declared, that there existed no church at Thyatira. This objection of the Alogi Epiphanius has delivered in the following words, ης εν εικεν εκκλησία Χριστιανών. But these words are ambiguous: for they may denote, either that there was no Christian community at Thyatira, in the time of St. John, or no Christian community there, when the Alogi made their objections. If we ascribe to them the latter sense, the argument is of no importance; for if there was no church or Christian community at Thyatira in the middle of the second century, there might have been a Christian community there in the reign of Claudius, to which period Epiphanius refers the Apocalypse. But Mr. Merkel observes 1 that the Alogi could not well intend to say, that there was no Christian community at Thyatira in their own time: for there existed at Thyatira a com-

1751: and in Merkel’s historical and critical exposition of the controversies of the Alogi, and other writers on the Apocalypse in the second century, intended as an additional proof that the Apocalypse is a forgery. Leipzig 1782.

1 Page 74—98. Mr. Merkel here treats at large of the strange answer given by Epiphanius to this objection of the Alogi: but I have not here sufficient room to make an extract from it. It must be admitted however that the answer of Epiphanius is very confused and uncritical, like most of the other replies, which he has made to the heretics.
a community of Alogi, who certainly considered themselves as Christians, and likewise another sect, who were opposed to the Alogi, and were called Phrygians. He further observes, that this objection has so much the greater weight, as it proceeds from the Alogi, because so many of this sect lived at Thyatira, that they must be supposed to have been well acquainted with the state of Christianity in that place. Now I grant that the argument is of some weight, but I do not admit that it is absolutely decisive. For, if the Alogi really asserted, that there was no Church at Thyatira, in the time of Claudius, it is still possible that they were mistaken in this assertion. There might have been a church at Thyatira in the time of Claudius, this church might have been of short duration, and have been dissolved, before any ecclesiastical accounts were committed to writing, to which the Alogi had access. Very few accounts are on record of the earliest ages of Christianity.

Further, the Alogi themselves have weakened their own cause by pushing their objection further, than it can possibly go: for they went so far as to ascribe the Apocalypse to Cerinthus. This is manifestly false: for Cerinthus, who made a distinction between the Supreme Being and the Creator of the Universe, would never have made the four and twenty elders, Rev. iv. 11. address the Supreme Being in the following words, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created.' Nor would he have made the angel, who stood upon the sea and upon the earth, Rev. x. 6. swear 'by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things, that therein are, and the earth, and the things, that are therein, and the sea, and the things, which are therein.' Nor would he have put into the mouth of another angel, Rev. xiv. 7. the words, 'Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth,
and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' Lastly, it is not probable that Cerinthus, if he had forged the Apocalypse in the name of St. John, would have made St. John write, Rev. ii. 2. 'Thou hast tried them, which say, they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars,' without at least inserting some saving clause for himself. For as St. John and Cerinthus were declared adversaries, such a general description proceeding from the former, must necessarily include the latter.

Mr. Körner likewise remarks (§ 26) that Cerinthus, who considered Jesus as a mere man, would not have given to our Saviour the titles, which are applied to him in the Apocalypse, such as 'the prince of the kings of the earth' ch. i. 5, 'the beginning and the ending, the Almighty' ch. i. 8. and 'the first and the last' ch. i. 11. But in this respect I am not wholly of Mr. Körner's opinion; for though Cerinthus considered Jesus as a man born in the natural way, yet he might have applied to our Saviour after he was raised to glory, the title of 'prince of the kings of the earth,' without doing any violence to his own system, since this title does not necessarily denote the Supreme Being. The title 'Almighty' ver. 8. is in the Greek παντοκράτωρ, which has not necessarily that unlimited and sublime sense which we ascribe to the term 'Almighty.' We may render παντοκράτωρ by 'Lord of all,' or 'the universal king,' and this title Cerinthus, would not have refused to our Saviour in his state of glory. The other titles 'the beginning and the ending' ver. 8. and 'the first and the last' ver. 11. are wanting in most manuscripts of the Apocalypse. And in ch. i. 17. ii. 8, where ὁ πρωτός καὶ ὁ εσχάτος again occurs, the Alexandrine MS. has ὁ προ- τότοκος καὶ ὁ εσχάτος, 'the first-born, and the last.'

Beside the Aligoi there were other adversaries of the Apocalypse, who lived partly at the same time with them, and partly in the beginning of the third century, of whom however we know only of one person by name, and this is the Roman Presbyter Caius, provided the Apocalypse, of which he speaks, is the same as that, which
which is contained in our canon. These adversaries of
the Apocalypse must be carefully distinguished from the
Alogi, for though they agreed in the same manifest error,
that of ascribing the Apocalypse to Cerinthus, yet they
materially differed in this respect, that the former re-
ceived the Gospel of St. John, having no antipathy, like
the Alogi to the term Δαυες, the name of Christ's divine
nature, and rejected the Apocalypse for other reasons,
the principal of which was their disapprobation of the
doctrine of the Millennium: The principles likewise,
which Dionysius of Alexandria ascribes to the former,
are very different from those, which Epiphanius assigns
to the latter.

Of the adversaries of the Apocalypse, which are now
the subject of our inquiry, to whom however I can give
no distinguishing appellation, as they have never been
placed in the catalogue of heretics, the only accounts
now on record are contained in two passages of the Ec-
clesiaitical history of Eusebius, B. iii. ch. 28. and B. vii.
ch. 25. In the former place, which relates principally
to Cerinthus, Eusebius quotes a short passage from the
works of the Roman Presbyter Caius, who lived about
the year 210, in which Caius speaks of an Apocalypse;
but whether he means the Apocalypse contained in our
canon, or some other book with this title, but now lost,
is a question, on which the learned have been divided.
Eusebius then gives a short extract from the writings of
Dionysius, in which certain persons are mentioned, who
lived in Egypt, and ascribed the Apocalypse, by which
is certainly meant the same, as that which is contained
in our canon, to Cerinthus. In the latter place, Euse-
bius gives a more copious extract from the writings of
Dionysius, in which Dionysius mentions several particu-
lars relative to the Apocalypse, and likewise delivers his
own sentiments upon it. This Dionysius was appointed
bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, in the year 247, and
died either in 264 or 265. When therefore he says,
'some, who lived before our time, (τινες τοις πρω ἡμέρας),
ascribed to Cerinthus, the Apocalypse, which bears the
name
name of St. John;' it is not improbable that these ad-
versaries of the Apocalypse were contemporaries of Caius.
But they appear to have lived in Egypt: and as Diony-
fius has not mentioned Caius by name, it is not certain
that Dionysius meant to include him under the general
title 'some, who lived before our time.' Consequently,
though the Apocalypse, of which Dionysius speaks, is
undoubtedly the Apocalypse contained in our canon, yet
his saying, that some who lived before his time ascribed
the Apocalypse to Cerinthus, is no certain proof that
Caius did so: for though Caius ascribed to Cerinthus
the Apocalypse, of which he himself spake, it is at least
possible that he meant some other work, now lost, which
bore the same name. Whether he did, or did not, I
will now proceed to examine.

The passage, in which the sentiments of Caius are
delivered, Eusebius has quoted from a work of Caius,
etitled Ζητησις, in the following words, but has unfor-
tunately left us in the dark with respect to their con-
nexion with what preceded and followed. Αλλα και
Κηρυκος δι' αποκαλυψεως, ώσπερ Αποστόλοι μεγάλη γραμματείας,
τερατολογίας ήμιν ώσπερ δι' αιγελων αυτοι δεδειγμένως θεωρομένος
επεισοδεύει, λέγουν μετά την αιωνίως επίγειον ειναι το βασιλείον
της Χριστος και παλαιων, επιθυμιας και ένδον έκ Ιερουσαλημ την
σαρκα ποιημένην διελευθερών. Και ευφρατος επαρχών των γρα-
φαις της Θεου, αερίθων χειλοποιησάς εν γαρω έστρεψε Θελων πραγ-
ματικα, λέγει γινεσθαι. Here Caius condemns in very warm
terms an Apocalypse, which he describes as a forgery of
Cerinthus. But the question is; does the short descrip-
tion, which Caius gives of this work, warrant the
conclusion, that he meant the Apocalypse, which we
ascribe to St. John, and, consequently that he attributed
our canonical Apocalypse to Cerinthus; or must we con-
clude, that he spake of some other work, bearing the
same title, which he represented as a work forged by
Cerinthus in the name of St. John?

In the Apocalypse, of which Caius speaks, was taught
the doctrine that Christ would reign a thousand years
on earth, and that Jerusalem would be the chief seat of his kingdom. Now that Christ will reign a thousand years with the faithful, is said in our Apocalypse, ch. xx. 4.: and, though no mention is made of Jerusalem by name in this chapter, yet 'the beloved city' ver. 9. which Gog and Magog should encompass, might from a comparison of Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix. where Gog is represented as encompassing the land of Israel, be easily explained of Jerusalem. Justin Martyr really understood it in this sense: and in ch. xxi. a city, called expressly Jerusalem, is described as the seat of God and of the Lamb after the second resurrection. Of festivities and the indulgence of carnal appetites, which, according to the Apocalypse, of which Caius speaks, were to take place in this kingdom of a thousand years, no express mention is made in our Apocalypse: but interpreters in their explanation of a book frequently discover what is not literally contained in it. Besides, there is no necessity for taking the expression 'indulgence of carnal appetites' in its very worst sense, for it denotes, not solely the unlawful gratifications of promiscuous concubinage, but likewise the legitimate pleasures of the marriage state: and commentators do not usually represent the kingdom of a thousand years, which is to take place after the first resurrection, as a kingdom, in which the marriage state will be forbidden. Further, the expression γαμεῖ τῷ ἀρνῃ, ch. xix. 7. 9. though we consider it, as denoting the marriage of the lamb with the church, might suggest to a reader of the Apocalypse, the notion of festivities and enjoyments, which were to attend the celebration of the marriage.

It appears then, that Caius in the passage, of which he speaks of an Apocalypse, has some things, which are not literally contained in our canonical Apocalypse: and we must therefore conclude, either that he substituted interpretation for text, or that he spake of a different Apocalypse from that, which is contained in our canon. Mr. Hartwig, in his excellent 'Apology for
for the Apocalypse," supports the latter part of the alternative, and with great perticuity of reasoning endeavours to shew, that Caius could not have spoken of our Apocalypse in the manner in which he has done. I confess however, that I am still in doubt. For, in the first place, it is evident, that whatever was the Apocalypse of which Caius spake, he was strongly prejudiced against it, and ascribed it to Cerinthus. Consequently, it is not at all extraordinary, that he should be unjust in the explanation of it, and ascribe to it doctrines, which it did not literally contain. And it will presently appear, that some others of the ancients, of whom no doubt can be made, that they meant our Apocalypse, were as unjust in their explanations of it, as Caius can be supposed to have been, and represented doctrines as really contained in it, which were in fact the invention of the Millennarians. Secondly, if Caius really meant an Apocalypse different from that, which is contained in our canon, it must afford just matter of surprise, that he should be the only writer of all antiquity, to whom this other Apocalypse appears to have been known; for not only no fragments of another Apocalypse are now extant, but no other writer has made the least mention of it. I own then, that I am disposed to accede to the opinion of those, who maintain, that the Apocalypse, which Caius attributed to Cerinthus, was no other than that, which we ascribe to St. John: and this opinion is strongly corroborated by the circumstance, that other persons, who were contemporaries of Caius, ascribed to Cerinthus that very Apocalypse, which is contained in our canon. An absolute decision is not to be obtained, since the writings of Caius are no longer extant, and other ancient authors, who had access to his writings, are not sufficiently explicit on this subject. Mr. Hartwig has indeed endeavoured...
endeavoured to shew, that the ancients did not understand Caius, as if he meant our canonical Apocalypse: but, though I grant, that Mr. Hartwig's Apology is in general a very admirable work, his arguments on this point have left me without conviction.

Having examined the sentiments of Caius, I have in the next place to consider the opinion of the 'certain persons in Egypt,' who undoubtedly ascribed our Apocalypse to Cerinthus. The account of them is contained in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, B. vii. ch. 25. where he has given a very important extract, from the 'books on the promises,' written by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria.

At Arsinoe in Egypt the doctrine of the Millennium had gained such ground among the Christians, that it banished from their thoughts the most important precepts of their religion. The principal work, which had been written in that country in defence of the Millennium, was entitled Ἐλεύθερος ἀλληγορία (Conflagration of the Allegorists), and had Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, for its author, who endeavoured to prove this doctrine from the Revelation of St. John. Nepos was already deceased, when Dionysius, in the year 247, was appointed bishop of Alexandria: he lived therefore about the beginning of the century, and consequently at this period the Revelation of St. John was already received in Egypt. Dionysius openly opposed the doctrine of the Millennium, not indeed with that vehemence, which we have sometimes occasion to censure in the ancient fathers, but with a moderation and gentleness, which would do honour to the present age. In a dialogue, written in a very friendly tone, he confuted the above-mentioned work of Nepos in so successful a manner,

1 See what I have said in the review mentioned in the preceding note.

2 An account of this dialogue is given by Eusebius at the end of the 24th chapter of the seventh book of his Ecclesiastical History.
a manner, that he convinced every one, who had adopted the principles of Nepos, that they were erroneous. He then wrote his two 'books on the promises,' from which I will quote the following passage, preferred in the above-mentioned chapter of Eusebius, because it affords a proof of the mild character of Dionysius. 'Since they appeal to a work of Nepos, and ground their opinions upon it, as if it indisputably proved a future kingdom of Christ on earth, I will grant indeed, that in many respects I follow Nepos, and that I esteem him on account of his faith, his labours, his diligence in expounding the Bible, and also on account of his hymns, which many of our brethren still use to their edification; and I have so much the more respect for him, as he is gone to his rest before us; but the truth is dearer and more valuable to me than every thing else.' He then proceeds to mention the great repute, in which this work of Nepos then stood, and after having observed, what injury 'millennarian principles had done, he concludes with the following words. 'I felt myself therefore under the necessity of disputing with my brother Nepos in the same manner, as if he were still alive.' The opinion, which Dionysius himself entertained of the Apocalypse, will be delivered in its proper place, when the order of time brings us to him. At present I shall add only the passage preferred by Eusebius*, in which Dionysius relates how some persons, who lived before his time, and therefore probably about the beginning of the third century, condemned the Apocalypse. 'Some, who lived before our time*, have totally rejected this book. They find something

* B. vii. Ch. 25.

* Tινες των παφοί ἡμῶν. The obvious interpretation of these words is, 'some teachers of Christianity in Egypt, who lived at the beginning of the third, or at the end of the second century.' Whether Dionysius had the Roman presbyter Caius likewise in view, is a question not easily to be determined. As to the word τινες, Mr. Hartwig considers it, as denoting persons very inconsiderable both in number
something to censure in every chapter: they endeavour to shew, that the whole is obscure and unconnected: and they accuse even the title of it of containing falsehoods, since it is neither a work of St. John, nor can be called a Revelation, because every thing in it is concealed under a thick covering of darkness. They consider, not only no Apostle, but no pious member of the church whatsoever, as the author of this book: but ascribe it to Cerinthus, who falsely prefixed a respectable name to a work, which he himself had forged. What this man, sensual and drunken in carnal indulgencies, himself desired, this (they say) he prophesied, namely the satiating of the belly, and the gratification of fleshly lusts, by eating, drinking, marrying, and, in order to render the matter less offensive, by feasts and feast-offerings.' From the preceding description it appears, that some of the reasons assigned by these persons for rejecting the book of Revelation were weak; for instance, the argument, that it cannot be called a Revelation, because it is obscure, which is a mere dispute about words: and moreover, that they found in it what it does not literally contain. But the fact itself, namely, that certain adversaries of the Millennium, at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, denied, that St. John was the author of the Apocalypse, is a matter not to be disputed. They pushed however their objection beyond the bounds of probability in ascribing it to Cerinthus. Before I conclude this paragraph, I must recommend to the reader to consult what Lardner has said on this passage of Dionysius, as he has made some very excellent remarks.

I now number and in consequence. But for my own part, I see nothing contemptible in this expression: at least I myself have frequently used the term ‘some say,’ when the persons, whom I had in view, were men of great reputation, or not inconsiderable as to their number.

I now come to an advocate for the Apocalypse, whose authority contributed perhaps more, than is commonly supposed, to its reception in the church, namely the bishop and martyr Hippolytus, who lived, as is generally believed, in the beginning of the third century, and is supposed, though this is not quite certain, to have been bishop of Aden in Arabia Felix. The whole tendency of his writings appears to have been apocalyptical: at least the title of the books, 'on the Song of Solomon, on Zacharias, on Daniel, on some passages in Ezekiel, on Antichrist,' discover contents, which are closely allied to the Apocalypse. In his book on Antichrist he says expressly, 'St. John saw in the island of Patmos dreadful mysteries, which he taught to others without envy:' and immediately after he addresses St John in the following words, 'Tell me, holy John, thou Apostle and Disciple of Christ, what thou hast seen of Babylon.' Among the writings of Hippolytus, Jerom mentions one, which was entitled, 'on the Apocalypse:' and on the statue of Hippolytus, discovered at Rome in 1551, on which are engraved the titles of his writings, one of them is, 'on St. John's Gospel and Apocalypse.' Lardner supposes, that it was a defence of these two books, because Ebedjesu expressly mentions, that Hippolytus wrote such a work. Lardner however at the same time observes, that Andrew of Caesarea has several times quoted a commentary on the Apocalypse, ascribed to Hippolytus. This Ebedjesu, in the seventh chapter of his metrical catalogue of ecclesiastical writings, mentions among other works of Hippolitus,

Chapters against Caius:
And a defence of the Apocalypse,
And the Gospel of St. John,
The Apostle and Evangelif.

This

Προ τῷ κατά Ιωάννην εὐαγγελίῳ καί αποκάλυψιν.

Lardner's Credibility, P. II. Vol. ii. ch. 35.
This defence must have been opposed to the Alogi, because it relates to the Gospel as well as to the Apocalypse, and the Alogi were the only persons, who rejected both. The Caius, against whom he wrote certain chapters, is commonly supposed to be the heretic Caius, mentioned by Irenæus. But as the Apocalypse was the favourite subject of Hippolytus, it is not improbable, that these chapters were written against the Roman presbyter Caius, and contained likewise a defence of the Apocalypse, perhaps also of the Millennium, and of the doctrine concerning Antichrist. If this representation be just, Hippolytus wrote two defences of the Apocalypse, the one against Caius, the other against the Alogi, who rejected, beside the Apocalypse, the Gospel of St. John.

Further, Jacob, the Syrian, who was bishop of Edessa from the year 651 to the year 710, has quoted in terms of the highest commendation, a commentary on the Apocalypse by Hippolytus. This quotation is in the Syriac works of Ephrem, Vol. I. p. 192. of the edition printed at Rome, where there is a commentary on Genesis, formed partly from the writings of Ephrem, and partly from those of Jacob. In the place in question Jacob explains Gen. xlix. 17. of Antichrist, and says: "The Spirit, which is in the saints, interprets this power as denoting the Roman empire. This was made known by the Spirit, who spake by the mouth of the holy bishop and martyr Hippolytus, when he explained the Revelation of St. John the Divine." Whether this exposition or commentary on the Apocalypse was a separate work, or only interwoven with his defence of the Apocalypse, or his book on Antichrist, it is difficult at present to determine; but this evidently appears, that Hippolytus was highly esteemed by some of the Syrian writers. His works, of which some perhaps were written in Syriac, and translated into Greek,
Greek, must have remained many ages in the East, before they were lost: for they were still quoted in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by Barsalibæus and Barkebræus.

The next writer after Hippolytus is Origen, who, notwithstanding his warm opposition to the doctrine of the Millennium, received likewise the Apocalypse as a work of St. John the Apostle. The words of Origen, as quoted by Eusebius, are as follow. 'What shall we say of John, who leaned on the breast of Jesus? He has left us a Gospel, and has assured us, that he could write more, than the whole world could contain. He wrote likewise a Revelation, in which he was ordered to seal up those things, which the seven thunders uttered: also an Epistle, of a moderate length, and perhaps a second and a third.' Here every one must be desirous to know what reasons induced Origen, who took so decided a part against the doctrine of the Millennium, to receive the Apocalypse without expressing any doubt of its authenticity: but these reasons he has no where assigned. Did the example and authority of Hippolytus, who served in some respects as a pattern to Origen, influence his opinion? or was he actuated by other motives? or did he conduct himself in the same manner, as we have reason to believe his disciple Dionysius did, whose opinion will be examined in the following paragraph?

Dionysius, the modest adversary of the Millennials, was a disciple of Origen, and survived his master only eleven or twelve years. I have already related what Dionysius has said concerning the opinion of certain adversaries of the Apocalypse: at present we have to examine, what his own opinion was. This was a medium between the opinion of those, who ascribe the

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3. Origen died in 253, Dionysius in 264 or 265.
Apocalypse to St John the Apostle, and the opinion of those, who consider it as a forgery of Cerinthus. He assigns very important reasons, which discover a sound critical judgement, for not believing, that St. John the Apostle was the author of it: but he does not reject it as a forgery, for he adds, that it was written perhaps by some other John, who was likewise an holy inspired man. Now this decisive mode of expressing himself on the one side, and his dubious mode of expressing himself on the other, renders it a matter of doubt, whether Dionysius believed in his heart, that the Apocalypse was really a divine work. In his 'two books on the promises,' his great object was to confute the doctrine of the Millennium: if then the Apocalypse was at that time received in Egypt as a divine work, he would have defeated his own purpose, if he had openly rejected it. The only plan, which he could adopt with safety, was to argue from premises admitted by his adversaries, and granting the authority of the Apocalypse, to shew, that not even this book, when properly explained, contained a proof of their doctrine, since the passages, to which they appealed, were capable of a different interpretation from that of a thousand years kingdom of Christ on earth, all which, according to Eulebius, he did very fully and completely. This plan was perfectly consistent with the gentle character of Dionysius, and deserves not so much the name of a pious fraud, as that of an hypothetical confutation. At least I am certain, that, if in a controversy between a catholic and a protestant, relative to a point of doctrine, the catholic appealed to a book of the Apocrypha, which the church of Rome receives as canonical, but the reformed church does not, and the protestant, instead of refusing to admit the appeal, should concede it to his adversary, without entering into its merits, but shew at the same time, that not even the passages appealed to contained a proof of the doctrine in question, no one would accuse the protestant of dissimulation or dishonesty. In fact, Dionysius takes great pains to prove, that the Apocalypse was not written.
written by St. John the Apostle, and his arguments are of great weight: but this point being once proved, the canonical authority of the Apocalypse must totter of itself. For though it should be granted, that the author of it was not an impostor, but that he was a respectable man, and had no intention to deceive, yet what security can we have, that he was not deceived himself; and that he was not hurried away by the force of his own imagination. I accede therefore, to the opinion of Lardner, who says, that Dionysius undoubtedly knew what he was doing, and that it was not without reason, that he took so much pains to shew, that the Apocalypse was not written by an Apostle. On the other hand, the reasons, which Dionysius assigns for his not venturing to reject the Apocalypse, are wholly devoid of importance. One of them is, 'because many of his brethren highly esteemed it;' but this is a motive of mere delicacy, and may be a reason why an author should not openly reject a book, left his brethren should be offended, but it affords no ground of private conviction. His other reason is still more extraordinary, namely, that he was unable to explain the Apocalypse, and therefore could not reject it, but must admire it the more, the less he understood it. Now I grant, that a book containing prophecies is not immediately to be rejected, merely because we do not understand it: for the fault may lie with us, and a prophecy may be unintelligible till it is fulfilled. But when the question is in agitation, whether a book, which lays claim to prophecy, ought to be received or not, the circumstance, that we do not understand it, cannot possibly afford a positive argument for its reception. For at that rate every obscure fanatical composition of the present age, such as Oettinger's terrestrial and celestial philosophy, would be intitled to the appellation of a divine work. Dionysius's own words, in which he assigns the two preceding reasons, are as follow. 'I will not however venture to reject the Apocalypse, because many of the brethren highly esteem it. On the contrary, I apprehend,
hend, that this book surpasses my comprehension, and that it is full of mysterious things. And as I do not understand it, I suppose, that the words have a certain hidden meaning, which I do not pretend to measure, or to judge according to my capacity; but I behold them in faith as things above my comprehension. I do not reject what I do not comprehend, but admire it the more the less I understand it. Now I have not the least doubt, that, if any modern writer should assign these reasons, and these reasons only, for not rejecting the Apocalypse, every man would immediately conclude, that in reality he did not believe it. Much more then are we warranted to draw this inference of one of the ancient fathers, who were accustomed to argue, as it is called, secundum oæconomiam: and d’A—t observes, in his above-mentioned Discours fur l’Apocalypse, that even Athanasius has taken notice of this oæconomical mode of argumentation in Dionysius. All that we can say then of the sentiments of Dionysius, is, that they were a medium between the opinion of those, who ascribed the Apocalypse to St. John the Apostle, and the opinion of those, who declared it to be a forgery of Cerinthus. That it was not written by St. John, he positively afferts; and that he did not in his heart believe it to be a divine work, is at least highly probable, though I grant that in one instance, namely, in an Epistle to Hermammon, he quotes a passage of it as fulfilled in the reign of Valerian.

But whatever was the opinion of Dionysius in respect to the Apocalypse, we must recollect that his reasons for not ascribing it to St. John are not historical, but critical; consequently their importance depends, not on the antiquity of the writer who assigned them, but merely on their own internal strength. Further, since Dionysius


2 On this account I reserve them for the section, in which I shall examine the language of the Apocalypse.
Of the Apocalypse.  CHAP. XXXIII.

Nysius has quoted no historical evidence, or testimony of any more ancient writer against the Apocalypse, this circumstance is in some measure in its favour. For, if it were not written by St. John, we have reason to wonder, that neither Dionysius, nor his predecessors, neither the Alogi, nor Cajus should have alleged against a work, supposed to have been first ushered into the world about the year 120, any arguments like the following: it is not preserved in the archives of the seven Asiatic churches: the oldest persons in those cities have no knowledge of its having been sent thither: no one ever saw it during the life of John: it was introduced in such and such a year, but was contradicted as soon as it appeared. Arguments like these would have at once determined the question in dispute: but since we meet with no such arguments in the writings of the ancient adversaries of the Apocalypse, its very adversaries have given it, I will not say a decisive advantage, but certainly an advantage, which merits consideration.

After the age of Dionysius, the number of ecclesiastical writers, who quote the Apocalypse as a divine work, especially the members of the Latin church, begins to increase. But as they are of less importance than the more ancient writers, and I have little, or nothing to remark on their quotations, I shall content myself with barely mentioning their names, and referring to Lardner, by whom their quotations are collected. According to Lardner then the Apocalypse is quoted by Cyprian, by the anonymous author of a work against the Novatians, by the Novatians themselves, by Commodian, by Victorinus, who was a very zealous advocate for the doctrine

b The advantage is for two reasons not decisive: first, because only a few extracts from the writings of the ancient adversaries of the Apocalypse are now extant, the writings themselves being lost: and secondly, because the ancient advocates of the Apocalypse have likewise not alleged any historical arguments in its defence.

d Ib. p. 812.
e P. II. Vol. III. p. 100.
f Ib. p. 127.
doctrine of the Millennium, and likewise wrote an Exposition of the Apocalypse, by Methodius, the Manicheans, Arnobius, the Donatists, and by Lactantius, who was a contemporary of Eusebius, but by no means equal to him in a critical inquiry like the present. On the Manicheans however I must make one remark, because Beausobre and Lardner are of different opinions in respect to their reception of the Apocalypse. The reason assigned by Lardner for his opinion, that the Manicheans received the Apocalypse as a canonical book, is that their adversaries sometimes confuted them by quotations from it. Beausobre on the contrary contends that the Manicheans could not have received the Apocalypse, because, when their sect was founded, it had not been translated into Syriac, and Manes, the founder of their sect, whose native language was Syriac or Chaldee, did not understand Greek. But though I grant that the Syriac version of the Apocalypse, which we have at present, was made long after the time of Manes, it is possible that a still more ancient version of it existed, from which perhaps Ephrem quoted: and in this more ancient version, Manes, who was born in the year 240, might have read the Apocalypse, though it made no part of the Syrian Vulgate. Further, as it is said that Hippolytus, the most ancient advocate of the Apocalypse, was bishop of Aden in Arabia, and as Scythin, the predecessor of Manes, was a native Arabian, it must appear still less improbable, that the Manicheans were acquainted with the Apocalypse. On the other hand, if they received it merely in consequence of the defence of Hippolytus, their reception of it can hardly be alleged as an additional proof of its divinity.

We now return to Eusebius, with whose opinion I began this section: but I much doubt, whether all the evidence,
evidence, which we have examined has brought us a step nearer to the decision of the main question, than we were, when we set out, or whether we are better able to form a determinate opinion, than Eusebius. That Orig- en, notwithstanding his dislike to the doctrine of the Millennium, received the Apocalypse as canonical, is a circumstance greatly in its favour; but that Papias, the father of the Millenniumarians, knew nothing of it, is a circumstance, which operates at least as strongly against it. And upon the whole, when we place in one scale the few, but important writers, who either knew nothing of it or rejected it, and in the other scale the more numerous but less important writers, who received it, the balance will remain in the same equipoise, in which Eusebius himself appears to have regarded it.

S E C T. III.

Inference deduced from the preceding section.

HAVING examined the evidence for and against the Apocalypse, I must now propose the question: How is it possible, that this book, if really written by St. John the Apostle, should have either been wholly unknown, or considered as a work of doubtful authority, in the very earliest ages of Christians? The other Apostolical Epistles are addressed only to single communities or churches: but the Apocalypse, according to its own contents, was expressly ordered by Christ himself, in a command to St. John the Apostle, to be sent to seven churches: and not only these seven churches were in that part of Asia Minor, where Christianity was in the most flourishing situation, but one of them was Ephesus, where St. John spent the latter part of his life, and con-sequently
sequently where every work of St. John must have been perfectly well known. If St. John then had actually sent the Apocalypse to these seven churches, and that too, not as a private Epistle, but as a Revelation made to him by Jesus Christ, one should suppose that its authenticity could not have been doubted, especially at a time, when there were the best means of obtaining information. We cannot say, that the book was kept secret, or was concealed in the archives, left the prophecies against Rome should draw a persecution on the Christians; for secrecy is contrary to the tenor of the book, and the author of it enjoins, that it should be both read and heard. Under these circumstances the authenticity of the Apocalypse appears to me very doubtful, and I cannot avoid entertaining a suspicion, that it is a spurious production, introduced probably into the world after the death of St. John.

S E C T. IV.

Of the opinions of ecclesiastical writers, who lived since the time of Eusebius.

EUSEBIUS, who was in possession of almost all the information, which has been communicated in the preceding sections, remained, as we have seen, in doubt. Some centuries later, these doubts considerably abated, especially among the members of the Latin church, who at last received the Apocalypse almost unanimously. Here we may justly ask: What new discoveries were made by the church of Rome precisely in the ages of ignorance and barbarism, which enabled it to see clearly what remained obscure to Eusebius? We cannot suppose that

> Ch. i. 3.
that the members of this church had access to ancient documents, which were unknown to Eusebius: nor is it credible that they had so much more critical sagacity, as to enable them from the documents and evidence, which they had in common with Eusebius, to draw a decisive inference, where he remained in doubt, and to detect a truth, to which he was unable to penetrate. I admit that cases may occur, in which later and even less enlightened ages may be better able to determine, whether a book which lays claim to prophecy, be really a divine work, or not, than former and more enlightened ages, because the fulfilling of prophecies affords the best proof of their being divine, and this can be known only to posterity. But, then the prophecies must be so clear and determinate, as to leave no room for doubt, that they really relate to the events, to which they are referred. Now this is so far from being the case in regard to the Apocalypse, that to this very day the commentators are not agreed as to its meaning: and the events, which protestants suppose are predicted in it, could never enter into the imagination of the members of the Latin church, when they admitted it into the canon.

As it would be useless to enumerate all the later writers, who have either received or rejected the Apocalypse, since the time of its composition is so far removed from the ages, in which they lived, that they cannot be considered as evidence, I shall merely refer to the writings of Lardner. That most of the later Latin fathers received the Apocalypse has been already observed: I will proceed therefore at present to examine what was said by the Greek writers after the time of Eusebius, from whom we may reasonably expect more satisfactory information relative to a book addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor.

Epiphanius, who on account of the diligence, which he bestowed on ecclesiastical history deserves to be mentioned the first after Eusebius, though he had neither the same calm judgment, nor the same critical penetration, received the Apocalypse, and defended it, in his fifty
fifty first Heresy, against the Alogi, who rejected both the Apocalypse and St. John's Gospel. But Epiphanius himself does not appear to have been so thoroughly persuaded of the divinity of the former, as he was of the divinity of the latter: for he says, that, if the Alogi received the Gospel of St. John, he would ascribe their rejection of the Apocalypse to their caution not to admit an apocryphal book. Now, when we consider that this declaration, was made by a writer, who was at other times accustomed to speak in rather ungentle terms against heretics, his defence of the Apocalypse as a divine book must appear somewhat inconsistent with so dubious an opinion respecting those, who rejected it.

In the catalogue of sacred writings annexed to the canons of the council of Laodicea, which was held in the year 363, the Apocalypse is totally omitted. Now, if this catalogue be genuine, it is very unfavourable to the Apocalypse, because one of the apocalyptical Epistles is addressed to the bishop of Laodicea, and therefore a council of bishops assembled in that city may be supposed to be competent judges of the question, whether the Apocalypse was sent by St. John to the bishop of Laodicea, or not. But Professor Spittler has, as I think, very clearly shewn, that the whole of the sixteenth canon, which contains this catalogue, is a forgery: and therefore this catalogue cannot be alleged in future as evidence against the Apocalypse.

Cyril of Jerusalem, who was bishop of that city from the year 350 to 386, not only omitted the Apocalypse in his catalogue of canonical writings, but concluded this catalogue by warning every one not to read even in his own house the books, which he had omitted, as being books not read in the church. And he himself, in the very place, where he treats of the doctrine relative to Antichrist,

p The words of Epiphanius have been already quoted in this volume, Ch. xxxi. Sect. 4.

q See his 'Critical inquiry into the sixteenth canon of the council of Laodicea,' published at Bremen in 1777.

r Lardner, P. II. Vol. VIII. p. 270.
Antichrist, appeals to the book of Daniel, to Matth. xxiv., and 2 Thess. ii., without even naming the Apocalypse.*

Gregory of Nazianzum is of great importance in the present inquiry, not so much on his own account, as on account of an inference, which may be drawn from him in respect to Papias. Gregory in his metrical catalogue of canonical writings mentions the seven Catholic Epistles, including therefore even those of which the authenticity had been called in question. Yet he wholly omits the Apocalypse: and concludes his catalogue by saying, that the books, which he has not mentioned are spurious. But notwithstanding this, Andrew of Caesarea in the preface to his Exposition of the Apocalypse has mentioned Gregory among the advocates for the Apocalypse. If Andrew then has made so gross a mistake in respect to Gregory, his assertion that Papias likewise was an advocate for the Apocalypse is entitled to no credit: and we may infer from the arguments advanced in the second section of this chapter that Papias neither quoted, nor even knew of the Apocalypse. How strongly this operates against the Apocalypse has been already noticed in its proper place. On the other hand though Gregory has rejected the Apocalypse from his catalogue of canonical books, yet according to Lardner† he has quoted it in two instances. Since therefore it may be doubted, whether Andrew was so grossly mistaken in respect to Gregory, and consequently whether he made a similar mistake in respect to Papias, I will rather leave the question undecided, that every man may draw the inference, which he thinks the best.

Gregory of Nyssa places the Apocalypse among the apocryphal writings.§

Amphilochius, who was bishop of Iconium about the year 379, says in his metrical catalogue of canonical books, 'Some ascribe the Apocalypse to St. John, but most persons consider it as spurious.' In fact, it was almost

* Ib. p. 274.
almost universally considered as such by the members of
the Greek church at the end of the fourth century.
Hence Jerom, in an Epistle to Dardanus, says that the
Greek church rejected the Apocalypse with the same
freedom as the Latin church rejected the Epistle to the
Hebrews, though he himself regarded the rejection of
both of them as an innovation, which he disapproved:
and Junilius, an African bishop of the sixth century,
says, "caeterum de Johannis Apocalypsi apud Orientales
admodum dubitatur." The authority of the Apocalypse
therefore, instead of gaining, lost ground among the
Greeks: and Lardner acknowledges, not only that the
two celebrated Greek commentators, Chrysostom in the
fourth, and Theophylact in the eleventh century, have
not quoted it, in a single instance, but that Nicephorus,
Patriarch of Constantinople, about the year 806 expressly
rejected it*. All the Greek writers however, after the
time of Eusebius did not reject it: for Cyril of Alex-
andria speaks of it in doubtful terms, and Athanasius,
Dionysius falsely called the Areopagit, Andrew of Ca-
area, Aretas, OEcumenius, and Nicephorus Callist,
received it.

Before I close the catalogue of Greek authorities for
the Apocalypse, I must say a few words relative to the
Greek manuscripts. Some of them contain the Apo-
calypse alone. Now from such manuscripts we are not
authorised to conclude, that at the time when they were
written, this book was received as canonical in the Greek
church of which the copyist was a member: nor does
even the title, or subscription, in which the Apocalypse
is ascribed to St. John the Evangelist prove anything,
flince in the copies of spurious, as well as of genuine
works

* Quod si eam (seu. epist. ad Hebraeos) Lathionem confectudo non
recipit inter scrituras canonicas, nec Graecorum ecclesiae Apocalypsin
eadem libertate sufficiunt, et tamen nos utramque sufficiamus, nequa-
quam hujus temporis confectudinem, sed veternm autortatem sequen-

f Lardner, Vol. XI. p. 298.

works it is usual to retain the titles unaltered. There are other manuscripts, which contain no other book than the Apocalypse, but have it accompanied with a commentary: such for instance is the Codex Reuchlini, which contains the text of the Apocalypse together with the commentaries of Andrew of Cæarea, and Aretas. Such manuscripts prove no more than the preceding, that the Apocalypse was received as canonical in the Greek church, at the time, when they were written. To a third class may be referred such as the Codex Alexandrinus, which contains the whole Bible, and with it the Apocalypse. But then the Codex Alexandrinus contains likewise other books, which are certainly not canonical, for instance, the first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and also several hymns. Consequently we cannot infer, that the writer of this manuscript considered the Apocalypse as canonical: for if we draw this conclusion of the Apocalypse, we must draw the same in respect to the first Epistle of Clement, and the other uncannontical books, which this manuscript contains. The fourth and last class consists of such manuscripts as contain the Apocalypse in company with books undoubtedly canonical, of which the Codex Severianus is an instance. That the writers of such manuscripts considered the Apocalypse as canonical, is very probable: but then these manuscripts are for the most part modern. An enumeration of the several manuscripts, which belong to each of these four classes, would take up at present too much room: and indeed it would be attended with some difficulty as our accounts of several manuscripts of the Apocalypse are very defective.

The fate of the Apocalypse in the Latin church was very different from that, which it met with in the Greek. Both churches deviated from the medium adopted

a See No. 227. in the catalogue of Greek MSS. given in the second volume of this Introduction.

b See No. 228. of the above-mentioned catalogue.
adopted by Eusebius. The Greek church became less favourable to it than he was, though we cannot tell by what arguments unknown to Eusebius the members of this church were swayed: and the Latin church, which was certainly less able to make new discoveries relative to a book addressed to seven communities in Asia Minor, and after the death of Jerom was not very well qualified for critical inquiries, received the Apocalypse as a work undoubtedly canonical. We must conclude therefore that its reception in the church of Rome was rather the effect of accident, than the result of an impartial and deliberate examination. At that time, the Popes and Councils little imagined, that the Apocalypse would one day become a repertory, in which the rebels against their authority would find weapons to attack the church, from which they had apostatized: or they would hardly have canonized a work, from which the Pope was to be proved the Antichrist, and Rome the apocalyptic whore.

Though it would be tedious to enumerate all the Latin fathers, who received the Apocalypse, I cannot pass over in silence the celebrated names of Jerom and Augustin. Jerom received it, without doubt after a more cautious examination, than was instituted by most of his successors: and he appealed in support of its authenticity to ancient testimonies, which certainly existed, and which have been already mentioned in the second section of this chapter. Augustin probably examined the question much less critically than Jerom: yet his authority was so great, not only in the African church, but in the Latin church in general, that his reception of the Apocalypse was what chiefly contributed to its almost universal admission both in Africa, and in the West of Europe. During the life of Augustin, was held in the year 397 the third council of Carthage; and this was the first council, in which the Apocalypse was pronounced


* lb. p. 211. 251. 252.
pronounced canonical*. But this same council, which upon the whole did not display the most acute judgement, placed the following apocryphal books, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees, in the sacred canon: and therefore protestants cannot with propriety appeal to the decrees of this council, not even to that in favour of the Apocalypse. Innocent I. who was elected Pope in the year 402, declared likewise that this book, from which his successors were to be proved the Antichrist, was canonical. Some few persons however, even in the Latin church still doubted of its authority, as appears from the twenty-seventh decree of the fourth council of Toledo which was held in the year 633. In this decree, complaint is made of certain ecclesiastics, who refused to read the Apocalypse in divine service; and they who persist in their refusal, are threatened with excommunication. At the same time the Apocalypse is declared to be a genuine and divine work: and the reason assigned for this declaration is, that it had been pronounced such by several councils, and by several Popes. But the good bishops assembled at Toledo would have been reduced to great distress, if they had been required to name the several councils, in which the Apocalypse had been pronounced canonical: for no other is known, than the above-mentioned third council of Carthage. A short time after the fourth council of Toledo, all doubts in respect to the Apocalypse vanished in the Latin church: and it remained unimpeached till the time of the reformation, when Luther called in question the authority of this book, though it is supposed to prophesy in his favour, and to denounce vengeance against that very church, of which he was an enemy. But in his opinion of the Apocalypse Luther had very few followers.

Having related the fate of the Apocalypse in the Greek and Latin churches, I must now mention the reception with which it met in the Syrian church, a church so very extensive that it comprehended not only all

* Ib. p. 192, 193.
all the Christians, who resided in Syria, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, but likewise all those, who were dispersed in Arabia, Persia, Tartary, and China.

It has been already noted, that the Apocalypse is not contained in the old Syriac version, which is the Vulgate of the Syrian church in general: and yet, as I have likewise observed, the Manicheans, whole original founder, Scythian, was a native of Arabia, and whose second and proper founder, Manes, spake Syriac, but understood no Greek, consequently could read the Apocalypse only in a Syriac version, appear to have received the Apocalypse. In this case we may conclude, that though the Apocalypse made no part of the Syrian Vulgate, it was translated in an early age into that language. But shall we therefore conclude, that the Syrian church admitted, that St. John the Apostle was the author of it: and if they had been persuaded that he was, would not the Apocalypse have made a part of the Syrian Vulgate, or sacred canon? Hassencamp* says in reply, that the Apocalypse was written after the old Syriac version was already made, the former being in his opinion written in the year 96, the latter before that period: and consequently that the Syrian canon omits the Apocalypse, because it was written after that canon was formed. But even if this reply be admitted, we shall render by it no service to the Apocalypse: for on the hypothesis, that the Apocalypse was written so late as the year 96, very material objections may be made to its divinity, as will be shewn in the section relative to the time, when this book was written.

Ephrem, the Syrian, has not only quoted the Apocalypse, but has quoted it as a divine work, of which the following passage in his Syriac works† is a proof. "John saw in revelation a great and wonderful book, which God had written, and which was sealed with seven seals." Other passages of a like import, especially some from those works of Ephrem, which exist in a Greek

† Vol. II. p. 332.
Greek translation, are collected by Hassencamp in the above-mentioned treatise. From the opinion of Ephrem we may argue to that of the Syrian church in general in his time, and conclude that the Apocalypse of which a Syriac translation must already have been made, was not only known to the members of that church, but received by them as a divine work.

In the seventh century a new and very literal Syriac translation was made of the Apocalypse, and taken into the Philoxenian version, which was chiefly used by the Monophysites. Of this version I have treated at large in the second volume of this Introduction: and therefore I shall only observe at present, that as this version was used by the Monophysites, they did not reject the Apocalypse.

In the latter half of the same century and in the beginning of the next lived Jacob, the Monophysite bishop of Edessa. He has quoted the Apocalypse in his commentary on Genesis at ch. xlix. 17. The passage is in the first volume of Ephrem's Syriac works, where is a Catena on Genesis, formed of the commentaries of Ephrem and Jacob. The text of the Apocalypse, which Jacob quotes, I have already collated with the text of the Philoxenian version. In the second edition of this Introduction I observed that Jacob ascribed the Apocalypse to 'one of the saints,' because the words, which he has used, were 'this is the kingdom, of which one of the saints has spoken in a revelation from God:' and I declared that I was in doubt, whether he meant St. John the Apostle, or whether he entertained the same sentiments, as Dionysius of Alexandria. Hassencamp however contends that he really meant St. John the Apostle,

5 Ch. vii. Sect. 10.

b It appears from Assemani Bibl. Orient. Tom. II. p. 337, that he died in the year 1019 of the Greek era, that is, in the year of Christ 708.

1 Pag. 192.  

k Ch. vii. Sect. 10.

1 See Sect. 2. of this Chapter.
Apostle, because presently after, Jacob adds, 'that this relates to the Roman Empire, as the Holy Ghost has taught by the bishop and martyr Hippolytus, where he explains the Revelation, made to John, who speaks the word of God.' But this argument is in my opinion by no means satisfactory: for the expression 'John who speaks the words of God' denotes nothing more than Johannes theologus, as Asleman has rightly translated it. But whether Johannes theologus was the same person as Johannes apostolus, is a question on which the ancients were divided: and they who received the Apocalypse as a sacred book, but denied that St. John the Apostle was the author of it, carefully observed this distinction. Besides, if Jacob had really meant St. John the Apostle, he would hardly have called him, as in the first of the preceding quotations, by so indeterminate a title, as that of 'one of the saints.'

That the Syrians of the Nestorian party received likewise the Apocalypse in the eighth century, appears from an ancient monument, which was dug up at Sanxuen in the Chinese province of Xensi in the year 1625. This monument has two inscriptions, the one in Chinese characters, the other in Syriac, from which it appears that it was erected in the year of the Greeks 1092, that is, in the year of Christ 781: at which period, as well as some centuries later, was a very numerous colony of Nestorian Syrians in China, who regularly received their bishops from the Nestorian Patriarch. And on this monument mention is made of the New Testament, as containing twenty-seven books: consequently the Apocalypse must have been included in the number. It was formerly suspected to have been a forgery of the Jefuits; but Hassencamp has in my opinion satisfactorily shewn that the monument is really ancient and genuine.

Dionysius

\[\text{\textsuperscript{m}}\] See § 7. of his Remarks, where the history of this remarkable monument is related, and so much of its inscription quoted, as is necessary for the present purpose.
Dionysius Barthalæus, a celebrated Monophysite bishop of Amid at the end of the eleventh century, wrote an Exposition of the Apocalypse, as Hassencamp has shewn from Pococke’s preface to his edition of the Syriac version of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Jude. And this is further confirmed by Assenmani Bibl. Orient. Tom. II. p. 210.

On the other hand, Gregorius Barhebræus, or, as he is likewise called Abulpharagius, who was Primate of all the Monophysites of the East in the thirteenth century, and was by far the most learned of all the Syrian writers, appears, as Assenman* has observed, to have rejected the Apocalypse: for where he speaks of it in his Nomocanon, he does nothing more than quote the opinion of Dionysius of Alexandria, and in the following words. ‘The Apocalypse, which bears the name of the Apostle John, is not his work, but the work either of Cerinthus, who taught that there would be eating and drinking upon earth after the resurrection, or of another John; for two persons of the name of John lie buried at Ephesus.’ The Monophysites or Jacobites therefore did not receive the Apocalypse unanimously.

Ebedjesu, Metropolitan of Armenia, who died in the year 1318, has in his catalogue of the sacred books, which compose the New Testament, entirely omitted the Apocalypse†, though he afterwards takes notice of the work, which Hippolytus had written in its defence. Assenman relates also, that neither the Jacobites nor the Nestorians read the Apocalypse in their churches, and that

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* He died in the year 1286.


† Hassencamp replies p. 17. that the passage quoted from Dionysius is ambiguous, and that Dionysius may possibly mean some Apocalypse different from that which is in our canon. Whether he does, or does not, I leave the reader to determine.


† Ib. p. 12.
that it is not contained in their manuscripts of the New Testament. He adds however that this is no certain proof, that the Nestorians wholly rejected the Apocalypse, since it may arise merely from the circumstance, that it is not contained in the Syrian Vulgate. Of the Maronite Syrians it is unnecessary to mention that they receive the Apocalypse: for as they acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, they of course can reject no book, which has been canonized by the church of Rome. The Egyptian Christians likewise receive the Apocalypse.

I now come to the opinion of the Lutheran church, which, though it is much too modern, to be of any weight in determining the main question, is in other respects of importance to those who are members of this church. Luther, though accustomed from his childhood to consider the Apocalypse, as one of the canonical books of the New Testament, rejected it in positive terms in the preface to his edition of 1522. This preface Luther afterwards omitted, and in the later editions substituted a preface, in which he expressed himself in less decisive terms, and left it to others, who, he says, were better qualified than himself, to determine, whether it merited a place in the sacred canon, or not. It does not appear that Luther discovered new arguments in favour of the Apocalypse after he had written the first preface; at least a comparison of the two prefaces affords no reason to think so. He was probably influenced by the same motives, as those which were avowed by Dionysius of Alexandria: and, as the Apocalypse was highly esteemed by the generality of his brethren, who, like himself had renounced the church of Rome, he would not absolutely reject it, but substituted a dubious for a more decisive tone, that he might give the less offence to

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* An extract from this preface has been already given in the first section of this chapter.

* An extract from this preface likewise has been given in the same section.

* Sect. 2. of this chapter.
to the rest of his party. Who the persons were, on whose account in particular Luther altered his preface, I do not know: and I wish that the records of our reformation were more closely examined with a view to this subject. In general however we may assert as an indubitable fact, that almost all the professed to Luther's doctrine had been accustomed from their childhood to consider the Apocalypse as a prophetical book, and that the Franciscans in particular, many of whom embraced Lutheranism, had begun so early as the thirteenth century to teach the doctrine, that the enemy of the saints, foretold in the Apocalypse, was the Pope.

But, whatever alterations Luther thought proper to make in his original preface, he deviated only so far from it, that he left the matter in doubt: nor do I know of any passage in any of his works, in which, he has given it as his opinion, that the Apocalypse was canonical. Our Symbolic books likewise leave the question undecided. It is true, that at the beginning of the Formula Concordiae, 'the prophetical and apostolical writings of the Old and New Testament' are commanded to be believed, and to be received as the only rule of faith; but since it is a matter of doubt, whether the Apocalypse was written by an Apostle or not, and this very doubt is expressed in the preface prefixed to it in our Lutheran Bibles, it is evident that the Formula Concordiae enjoins no rule in regard to its reception. Should any one object that the authors of the Formula Concordiae meant by the term 'apostolical writings' such writings as the ancient councils had declared canonical, I would answer that even in that case the term does not necessarily include the Apocalypse, because the ancient councils were not unanimous in respect to its canonical authority. The council of Laodicea itself may be here alleged as an instance: for, though the sixty-first canon of this council has lately been called in question, yet at that time when the Formula Concordiae was drawn up, no one had the least doubt of its authenticity. Further, the Apocalypse is not once quoted in the Formula Concordiae, as every
one will find on consulting the index annexed to it in Rechenberg’s edition. When therefore the greater part of the Lutheran divines refer the Apocalypse, without doubt or scruple, to the class of canonical writings of the New Testament, this is the result only of private opinion, and not of any decision made by the church. For the Lutheran church, as a law-giving body, has enacted no decree, which enjoins a belief in the Apocalypse: and therefore, if any of its members should doubt, or even deny the authenticity of the Apocalypse, it would be highly unjust to accuse them of heterodoxy. On the contrary, if it were allowable to argue from inferences, which may be drawn from the Symbolic books, the authority of the Apocalypse would be rather diminished than increased: for in the Symbolic books the doctrine of the Millennium is expressly condemned, and yet the Apocalypse, if we explain it literally, certainly contains this doctrine. But as it would be unfair to argue either on the one side or on the other, where nothing is expressly determined, we must rest satisfied that our Symbolic books, like Luther’s last preface, leave the decision of the question to every man’s private judgement.

SECTION V.

Of the completion or non-completion of the prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, considered in respect to the arguments, which they afford in favour of, or against its divinity.

Though the testimonies of the ancients must decide the question, whether a book, ascribed to any particular person, was really written by that person or not, yet when a book lays claim to prophecy, and the
question is agitated, not whether this or that Apostle wrote it, but in general whether it was inspired by the Deity, there is another method of coming to a decision, which we in the eighteenth century may apply, but which was not applicable in the earliest ages of Christianity. We have only to inquire, whether the prophecies contained in it have been fulfilled. If they have not been fulfilled, we must consider the work as a mere production of the human imagination; but on the other hand, if it be certain that they have been fulfilled, we have an infallible criterion, from which we may at once, and without any further critical inquiries, pronounce in favour of its divinity.

Here however an almost insuperable difficulty presents itself at the very outset, and that is, the difficulty of determining what the prophecies in the Apocalypse really mean: for that which by one commentator is considered as fulfilled, and is accordingly quoted as a proof that the Apocalypse is divine, has according to another commentator not yet received its completion. For instance, Vitringa contends that certain prophecies are completed, which Lange absolutely denies: and Bengel again differs from both. Nor is this the case with these three only; for among an hundred commentators hardly any one is satisfied with the explanations of his predececssors. Each man imagines that he alone has discovered the true meaning, which had escaped the penetration of those who had gone before him: and after having read the various commentaries, which have been written on the Apocalypse, one is almost inclined to believe that each commentator is so far in the right, when he says that all others are in the wrong. I remember soon after the foundation of the University of Göttingen, that Heumann and Oporin read lectures there at same time on the Apocalypse. Oporin, a man of great modesty and diffidence, spoke of Heuman's learning and general good sense in terms of the highest approbation: but always made an exception to the lectures on the Apocalypse, saying, 'that is Heumann's weak side.' Heumann, on the
the other hand, in many respects did justice to Opomin: but when he came to speak of the Apocalypse, he lamented that Opomin should attempt to read lectures on a book, of which he did not comprehend the meaning. About the same time, in the University of Halle, Dr. Lange, a friend of Heumann, had again a very different system, of the truth of which he was so persuaded, that he used to assure his pupils, he was the first commentator, who had delivered the Apocalypse from the torture. It is unnecessary to mention more names: for every man may easily convince himself merely by consulting the different commentaries, that the commentators in general are at variance. In fact he have no connected and enforced commentary on the Apocalypse, in which the agreement between historical events and the predictions of the Apocalypse have been clearly and distinctly explained. Even the immortal Newton, the greatest genius of modern ages, who with powers almost divine, discovered the eternal laws, which the Almighty had prescribed to his creation, has afforded in his attempt on the Apocalypse, in which he was not more successful than his predecessors, a mortifying proof of the weakness of human nature.

If it be objected, that the prophecies in the Apocalypse are not yet fulfilled, that they are therefore not fully understood, and that hence arises the difference of opinion in respect to their meaning, I answer, that if these prophecies are not yet fulfilled, it is wholly impossible that the Apocalypse should be a divine work, since the author expressly declares, ch. i. 1. that it contains "things, which must shortly come to pass." Consequently, either a great part of them, I will not say all, must have been fulfilled, or the author's declaration, that they should shortly

* I mean original commentators, or those who have acted for themselves and cannot be supposed to include all those, who implicitly adopt the systems delivered in schools, in which they have been educated. That the clergyman in the Dutchy of Würterberg, for instance, who maintained that the angel flying in the midst of heaven, Apoc. xiv. denoted Bengel, adopted Bengel's system, is a thing of course.
shortly be completed is not consistent with matter of fact. It is true, that to the Almighty a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years: but if we therefore explain the term 'shortly' as denoting a period longer than that, which has elapsed since the time when the Apocalypse was written, we sacrifice the love of truth to the support of a preconceived opinion. For when the Deity condescends to communicate information to mankind, he will of course use such language as is intelligible to mankind, and not name a period short, which all men consider as long; or the communication will be totally useless. Besides, in reference to God's eternity, not only seventeen hundred, but seventeen thousand years are nothing. But the author of the Apocalypse himself has wholly precluded any such evasion by explaining, ch. i. 3. what he meant by the term 'shortly:' for he there says, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.' According therefore to the author's own declaration, the Apocalypse contained prophecies, with which the very persons to whom it was sent, were immediately concerned. But if none of these prophecies were designed to be completed till long after their death, those persons were not immediately concerned with them; and the author would surely not have said, that they were blessed in reading prophecies, of which the time was at hand, if those prophecies were not to be fulfilled till after a lapse of many ages.
S E C T. VI.

Whether the contradictory explanations, which have been hitherto given of the Apocalypse, ought to be ascribed to the Apocalypse itself, or to a want of knowledge in the commentators.

When a work, which lays claim to prophecy, and of which the author declares, that the prophecies contained in it will shortly begin to be completed, still remains after a lapse of seventeen centuries so difficult to be understood, that commentators cannot agree as to its meaning, it is difficult to avoid suspecting, that the claim of such a book is ungrounded: and I confess that these very contradictions in the explanation of it are still more unfavourable to it, than the ancient testimonies before the time of Eusebius. On the other hand it must be admitted, that, even when it is certain that a work contains divine prophecies, our own ignorance may be such, that we are unable to explain them. For instance, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah relating to Edom, Moab, and Ammon, we are unable to explain from real history: but this circumstance excites no suspicion against their divinity, because the history of the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, for several centuries, is totally unknown to us. And that the commentators on the Apocalypse, even the most learned of them, have been deficient in qualifications, which every commentator on this book ought to possess, must likewise be granted.

In the first place every man, who attempts to comment on a work, must be complete master of the language in which it is written. Now the Apocalypse, though written in Greek, is at the same time full of Hebraisms:

- No book in the whole New Testament has so many Hebraisms, as the Apocalypse.
its language is figurative, and the figures have reference to Jewish customs: and the whole work has manifestly the form and manner of an oriental composition. Consequently, an interpreter of the Apocalypse must, with a knowledge of the Greek, unite a knowledge both of the oriental languages and of oriental antiquities: for mere Hebrew philology, or such as is derived only from the study of the Hebrew Bible, and the use of a Hebrew Lexicon, is insufficient. But the commentators on the Apocalypse, especially those who have taken the lead, and have set the fashion to others, have for the most part been very deficient in this necessary qualification, and moreover have been biased with prejudices; which are not well adapted to a discovery of the truth. Thus the Franciscans in the middle ages explained many passages of the Apocalypse as denouncing vengeance to the Pope, because they were proscribed by Papal authority: the Lutherans discovered in it prophecies against the church, from which they had withdrawn: and in the last century the reformers in France irritated by the revocation of the edict of Nantes found the means of consolation in the Apocalypse, by explaining it to the disadvantage of their persecutors. Hence have arisen commentaries, in which others have implicitly confided. But to return to the necessary philological qualifications in an interpreter of the Apocalypse, which, it is certain, have fallen to the lot of very few. The late Dr. Lange for instance, though a very zealous commentator on the Apocalypse, was possessed of very little knowledge of the oriental languages: and Bengel, though upon the whole a very accurate and very respectable critic, had never made oriental philology his particularly study. An exception may perhaps be made in favour of Vitringa: but even Vitringa did not possess oriental philology in its full extent, for he was unacquainted with Arabic, without which it is impossible to be complete master of the Hebrew. Yet his merits are very great: and, if he had not been a disciple of Cocceius, might not have known more of the Apocalypse, than most other interpreters. Lately however Wetstein and Harenberg
Harenberg have applied a very considerable fund of Jewish literature to the explanation of the Apocalypse: the former in his edition of the Greek Testament, the latter still more amply in his Exposition of the Revelation of St. John, published at Brunswick in 1759, a work, in which the quoted passages, and the translations given of those passages, betray however a few instances of partiality for the author's system. But Wetstein and Harenberg have not set the fashion to others: on the contrary, the latter, if I am not mistaken, is very little read. As to most other commentators and translators of the Apocalypse, it must be confessed that they have been frequently guilty of almost inconceivable absurdities: nor do I except even those, who, setting aside all propheticical explanations, have confined themselves to literal and grammatical interpretation. But whoever fails in the grammatical interpretation of a book will hardly succeed in discovering the author's meaning.

A second qualification, which an interpreter of the Apocalypse ought to possess, is a taste for poetry and painting; for in the Apocalypse, notwithstanding its uncouth Greek, we meet with very fine description. But when a vision is well represented, the rules of poetry and painting are usually observed, and consequently some knowledge of these arts is requisite, in order to understand the representation. Thus, if a painter designed to represent a dream, occasioned by the particular interposition of Divine Providence, he would paint an angel standing by the bed of the person who had the dream: and this he might do, without intending to signify, as

To mention only one instance of false translation. Each of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem consisted (according to the common translation) of one pearl. Now a pearl, whether we consider the rotundity of its figure, or the softness of its mass, is very ill qualified to become the gate of a city, even if that city existed only in poetical description. The word used in the Greek is μαγγαγυτος, and this ought to be rendered 'precious stone,' for this is the meaning ascribed to the word in Chaldee, in which language it was adopted and written. A gate built of precious stones presents an image both of strength, and of magnificence. Μαγγαγυτος is used perhaps in the same sense, Matth. xiii. 45, 46.
a dogmatical truth, that an angel in a bodily shape really descended to that person, and inspired the dream. In like manner the angels, which act so considerable a part in the Apocalypse, may be considered as poetical imagery, unless we suppose that its author intended to convert into articles of faith the fabulous notion of the Jews, that every land and every element had its peculiar angel. This is only one instance out of many, which might be alleged. But among the commentators on the Apocalypse, where shall we find one, who had a proper taste for the explanation of poetical representation? It is true, that Petersen possessed a poetical genius; but then he was a poet, who did not understand the rules of the art, and interpreted the Apocalypse much more literally, than he himself ever wrote. When an ancient poet says,

* Euphrates ibat jam mollior undis,

or a modern poet,

* At thy approach, the Rhine withdrew its waves,
* And left its bed, to let the conqu'ror pass,

no one would take this passage in a strict and literal sense: but Petersen always understood Apoc. xvi. 12. as signifying that the waters of the Euphrates were really and literally dried up. The first time I heard of this literal explanation was, when I was a boy at Halle, and happened to be one day in company with Petersen: but even at that time, though I had no very clear and distinct notions on the subject, the drying up of the Euphrates, that the kings of the East might pass it, appeared to me to be at least an unnecessary miracle.

The third and most important requisite is a complete knowledge of history, especially the history of Asia. A general knowledge of history is by no means sufficient; it must be a knowledge, which descends to the most minute particulars; for a prophecy, in which neither person nor place is named, we can understand only by knowing the distinguishing circumstances of those events to which it relates. Great events, such as battles, politi-
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liitical revolutions, religious persecutions, when examined only at large, are for the most part so similar to each other, that, without names and dates, it is difficult to distinguish them. At least there is hardly any great event, to which there is not something in history which bears resemblance, and with which, therefore, it might possibly be confounded, when all distinctions of geography and chronology are set aside, unless we know the more minute circumstances, which distinguish the one from the other. Two battles fought by the French; the one in 1513, the other in 1757, have a great resemblance to each other, though in importance they were very unlike. Suppose, then, that these two battles were represented in painting, and that some ages hence, when the present military dress, modern tactics, and plans of attack, which to us would easily distinguish the one engagement from the other, the two paintings should be put into the hands of a person unacquainted with these particulars, he would be at a loss to determine which of the two paintings represented the one, and which the other engagement. And every one, who has visited galleries of historical paintings, knows how difficult it is, without a very particular knowledge of history, to pass through the gallery, without being at a loss in discovering the meaning of the subjects.

But the commentators on the Apocalypse are so far from having possessed a complete knowledge of history, that the greatest part of them have displayed only a moderate share of it. Vitringa, perhaps, will here likewise be mentioned as an exception; but among the commentators on the Apocalypse, we can reckon only one Vitringa, and even Vitringa's historical knowledge was not sufficiently extensive. The ancient history before the birth of Christ is foreign to our present purpose; and the history of the seventeen last centuries was understood by Vitringa, in its full extent, only so far as it relates to Europe. But we cannot expect that prophecies, addressed to seven communities in Asia Minor, should be fulfilled only in Europe, or in the Latin church.
church. Christianity flourished under the Eastern, as well as under the Western Emperors: it was propagated likewise in Arabia, in Persia, in the great Tartary from the Caspian Sea to the borders of China, and even in China itself. Asia has been the seat of the most important revolutions, with which the history of Christianity is closely connected. In Asia was founded the religion of Mohammed; and out of Asia emerged the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars. Whoever, therefore, is not acquainted with the Constantinopolitan and Asiatic histories of these nations, is by no means qualified to become an interpreter of the Apocalypse. But among all, who have ventured to interpret it, not one can boast of this thorough acquaintance; and the principal reason is, that the best accounts of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars, are contained in Syriac and Arabic authors, which very few historians can read in the original, and of which we have either no translations at all, or not such as an historian can appeal to, as to an original document.

Further, as most men are acquainted with the history of their own country, and this history always appears of so much the more importance, in proportion as we know the least of the history of other countries, the interpreters of the Apocalypse have sought at home for the completion of its prophecies: and as prophetical descriptions, without either names or dates, are applicable to various events, each interpreter has found, in a great part of the Apocalypse, the history of his own country. And when we consider that the passion for this mode of interpretation has been variously modified, sometimes by religious zeal and a spirit of persecution, at other times by

* It must be admitted however, that even they who were better acquainted with the Constantinopolitan and Arabic histories than we are, did not meet with better success. For Barhebræus, the most celebrated historian of the East, who lived in the reign of the great Tartarian conqueror Hulac, and was himself a witness of very important revolutions, doubted of the divinity of the Apocalypse. Consequently he did not perceive any correspondence between the prophecies of the Apocalypse and the Asiatic history.
by a sense of oppression and enmity to the ruling church, we need not wonder that the commentaries on the Apocalypse have assumed such various shapes, that what is affirmed as indisputably true in the one, is as flatly contradicted in the other.

SECT. VII.

Further remarks on the different expositions of the Apocalypse.

The compass of the present work does not permit me to examine in detail the various expositions, which have been given of the Apocalypse: but this I will affirm in general terms, that of all the commentaries on it, which I have hitherto seen, not one has given me satisfaction. I confess likewise, that out of all the commentaries put together, I am unable to make one, which is better.

Thus much, however, I perceive, that if the Apocalypse is a divine book, the beginning of its prophecies must relate to the destruction of Jerusalem: and that it may relate to that event, provided the work was written before the Jewish war. In this case the sixth chapter may be explained as a prophecy, both of the kingdom of the Messiah (ver. 2.), and of the destruction of Jerusalem itself: but then the second, third, and fourth seals cannot denote events, which followed each other, but events, which happened at the same time, each of which is separately represented, in order to make out the mystical number seven. The seventh seal may relate to the deliverance of the faithful among the Jews, who fled to Pella: and ch. viii. 1. may denote the consequent security, which the church enjoyed in that city. On
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the other hand, if the sixth and seventh chapters be supposed to refer to later events, the first readers of the Apocalypse, to whom the work was immediately sent, must have been so very little interested in them, that the author could hardly have said, ch. i. 3, ‘Blessed is he readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things, which are written therein: for the time is at hand.’

What follows from ch. viii. 2. to ch. ix. 12. is to me so obscure, that I cannot even hazard a conjecture: but ch. ix. 13—17. contains a description which may be very well applied to the irruption of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars, and to those ages, in which one horde of barbarians after another emerged from the East, and with irresistible fury over-ran the West. I think it likewise not improbable, that the most ancient explanation of the mystical number 666 is the true one, according to which the word ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ is denoted; the Greek letters in this name, when taken as numerals, making out precisely the number in question. Nor will I assert that protestant commentators are mistaken, in explaining the ‘whore drunken with the blood of the martyrs,’ not of heathen Rome, which was converted, and became not a heap of ruins according to the description given in ch. xviii., but of the church of Rome, the capital of which may one day, perhaps, meet with this fate. At the same time, however, I must confess, that in all the chapters which relate to the beast and the whore, I can discover no marks, which indicate that the beast and the whore are to be sought in the church: on the contrary, if we may judge from the description given of them in the Apocalypse, one should suppose that they related to an heathen city and empire.

But if it be admitted that certain chapters of the Apocalypse are capable of the most satisfactory explanation, there are other intermediate chapters, which are to obscure, that to me, at least, the chain of prophecy is broken. It is not sufficient, that we discover a resemblance between a few detached passages and some single historical
historical events: for any prophecy, however false upon
the whole, (take that of Drabicius for instance) may
have something in it, which has the appearance of
being fulfilled. Besides, the fourteenth chapter itself
affords a strong argument, that the explanation above
given of the seventh chapter is inaccurate. For the
hundred and forty-four thousand, mentioned in the four-
teneth chapter as having the Father’s name written on
their foreheads, appear to be the very same as the hun-
dred and forty-four thousand, who are described as sealed
in the seventh chapter: and we have no reason to con-
clude, from the fourteenth chapter, that they were per-
sons whose justification was completed, and who were
become inhabitants of heaven. But the Jews, who fled
to Pella, did not live so late as the time, to which I
should be obliged to refer the fourteenth chapter: nor
did their posterity so long continue to be a separate
community.

Further, if the sixth and seventh chapters of the Apo-
calypse really relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, it
will be found, on examination,

1. That they contain nothing, which had not been
already foretold by Christ and the prophet Daniel. Con-
sequently, though it were true, that the Apocalypse was
written before the commencement of the Jewish war,
the completion of this prophecy would afford no argu-
ment that the Apocalypse was written by inspiration,
because the author of it might have derived his in-
formation from preceding prophecies. Thus, if any
man in the present age should foretell the conversion of
the Jews, the completion of that prophecy would not
prove that he was a real prophet, since he might have
taken it from the Epistles of St. Paul.

2. That, though the description in the Apocalypse is
much more pompous, it is not so circumstantial as those
of Christ and Daniel. It takes no notice of the attack
of Cestius Gallus, to which Christ, with a warning voice
to his faithful disciples, very clearly alludes: it contains
nothing about Titus Vespasian, who is characterized by
Daniel, and nothing of the circumstances likewise foretold by Daniel, that the war would last seven years, and that in the midst of this period the sacrifices would cease. Now in a revelation made by Christ himself, a short time only before the destruction of Jerusalem, one might reasonably expect that the description of this event would contain more circumstances than the prophecy, which he had formerly delivered: but since this is not the case with the prophecy in the Apocalypse, one cannot avoid doubting, whether it really did proceed from Christ.

3. That, in order to make out the mystical number seven, events, which happened nearly at the same time, are divided into the second, third, and fourth seals. Now this seems wholly unnecessary for a writer, who was acquainted with the circumstances of the Jewish war, whether his information was prophetic, or only historical. And an author, who was determined to adhere to the number seven, might very properly have fought it in the seven years prophesied by Daniel. The history of the war itself likewise furnishes seven remarkable dates, which are well adapted to the purpose.

1. The offering of birds at the entrance into a synagogue at Cesarea, made in order to irritate the Jews, an event, which, though trifling in itself, afforded an occasion for the breaking out of the Jewish war. 2. The seizure of the principal fortress Malada by the banditti. 3. The campaign of Cestius Gallus. 4. The irruption of the greater army under Vespasian. 5. The siege and conquest of Jerusalem, with the famine which preceded it's surrender. 6. The retaking of Malada, or rather the

*Ch. vi. 6. can have no reference to the famine in Jerusalem: for when a chonix of wheat cost a denarius, it may be said that wheat was dear, but not that there was a famine. A chonix contained as much wheat as was necessary for the support of one day, and a common labourer could earn a denarius every day: the account, therefore, contained in this verse, may be applied to the scarcity which happened in the reign of Claudius (Joseph, Antiq. xx. 2, 6; Acts xi. 28, 29. Matt. xxiv. 7), but it is wholly inapplicable to the dreadful famine, which preceded the surrender of Jerusalem. It was said likewise, in ch. vi. 6. that the oil and the wine should not be hurt; but this was hardly the case, when Jerusalem was reduced to the utmost distress.
S E C T. VIII.

The same subject continued.

IT would really be worth while to write a particular history of the expositions of the Apocalypse, and to shew in what manner the most ancient interpretation of it was gradually forsaken, in what manner the modern interpretation of it took its rise among Protestants, and how this interpretation has spread into so many different branches. But as this would be an undertaking too extensive for the present work, I will briefly observe, that the various expositions of the Apocalypse may be arranged under the following classes.

1. To the first class may be referred all those commentaries, which are fashionable among Protestants, and according to which the Apocalypse contains prophecies against the Pope and the church of Rome. In the commentaries belonging to this class, the prophecies in the Apocalypse are considered as still fulfilling.

They have found, however, two powerful adversaries in Webster and Harenberg, whose objections, especially those of the latter, merit consideration. It is true, that not all Webster's arguments on this subject are satisfactory; for instance, that in which he says, that the Franciscans, persecuted by papal authority, were the first persons who discovered in the Apocalypse prophecies against the Pope; but that it is very improbable, that
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ignorant monks of the middle ages should have been the first to find the true key to so difficult a book. I grant, that as the monks of the middle ages had little or no knowledge of history, they could not have explained prophecies, which were fulfilled long before their time: but if a prophecy was completed in their own time, they might have understood it better than the most learned men of former ages. The very pressure under which the Franciscans, and other dissatisfied members of the church, at that time laboured, added to the corruption of the church, must have rendered such a prophecy more intelligible to them, than it could have been to the most enlightened commentators before it was fulfilled. Another of Webster's objections is, that whoever follows the Franciscans, in interpreting the beast of the Pope, ought, in order to be consistent, to follow them also in believing that the fratres spirituales formed the only true church. Now this objection is unreasonable; for it is surely allowable to adopt one part of an interpretation, and reject the other.

But a very material objection to the commentaries of this class may be founded on the third part of the first chapter. The greatest part of the prophecies in the Apocalypse relate to the sufferings of the church and the punishment of its adversaries; and in the twentieth chapter is described the happy kingdom of a thousand years, which was to put an end to all former sorrows. When, therefore, the prophet says, at the beginning of his work, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of his prophecy, and keep those things, which are written therein, for the time is at hand,' every man would suppose, unless he were already biased by commentators, that some at least of those readers, to whom the book was delivered and recommended, would live to see the happy period of the prophecy or the millennium. For how can a reader be called blessed, who sees nothing but the persecution of the faithful, and the downfall of states? Yet, in a companion, of the twentieth with the preceding chapters, it appears evident
evident that the destruction of Babylon, and of the beast, was to take place before the commencement of the millennium.

2. To the second class belong those commentaries, which confine the prophecies of the Apocalypse to the three first centuries, at least such as relate to persecution and punishment; for the happy Millennium may, according to these commentaries, be made to commence with the conversion of Constantine the Great.

The objection grounded on ch. i. 3, and on the Millennium, may be made likewise to the commentaries of this class.

3. A third class of commentators find in the Apocalypse nothing but the destruction of Jerusalem, and the flight of the Christians from that city to Pella before the commencement of the siege. This interpretation has been supported by Harenberg, in his Exposition of the Apocalypse, published in 1759: and, in order to avoid the objection, that a prophecy relating only to Jerusalem was not a proper work to be dedicated to seven churches in Asia Minor, he contends that the seven churches mentioned in the Apocalypse denoted seven synagogues in Jerusalem, which were called the synagogue of Ephesus, the synagogue of Smyrna, of Laodicea, &c. because they were respectively built by the inhabitants of those cities, who frequented Jerusalem. Now, as, according to this interpretation, the prophecies were fulfilled in a short time, agreeably to ch. i. 3, I should be disposed to adopt it, if difficulties of another kind did not present themselves as obstacles to its reception. To mention only one: 'That great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,' mentioned ch. xvii. 18, can hardly denote Jerusalem; for it clearly characterizes Rome, and is, as it were, the name of that great capital.

Lastly, if the Apocalypse were explained without previously supposing that it was a divine work, an interpretation might be made of a totally different turn from any of the preceding. In this case, as it is not taken
For granted, that the Apocalypse contains prophecies, which have been really fulfilled, we should have to inquire, not what events in history had resemblance to visions in the Apocalypse, but merely what the author of this work proposed to himself in the description of the visions, what events he himself supposed would happen, and what expectations the readers of this work, in the age when it was written, probably formed from it. But this is an inquiry, which I have never instituted, and therefore I cannot say, what would be the result.

S E C T. IX.

Of the time when the Apocalypse was written.

From what has been already said in the sixth section of this chapter, it appears, that the question, at what time the Apocalypse was written, very materially concerns the question, whether it be a divine work. For if its first prophecies relate to the destruction of Jerusalem; it must have been written before the Jewish war: but if the author of it wrote after the Jewish war, and, as is commonly supposed, in the reign of Domitian, the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse cannot possibly predict the destruction of Jerusalem, and in this case I do not see how we can vindicate the assurance given in ch. i. 7: 'the time is at hand;' and, ch. xxii. 20: 'he that testifieth these things, faith, Surely I come quickly, Amen.' If the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, this coming of Christ may be understood of his coming to judge Jerusalem, to which the expression, 'thou comest,' used in St. John's Gospel, ch. xxi. 27, likewise refers. On the other hand, if the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Domitian,
mitian, the coming of Christ admits of no other explanation than his coming to judge the world, or at least to put an end to the reign of the beast, and to establish his thousand years kingdom. But in the course of seventeen hundred years, neither of these events has taken place: and to assert that the term 'quickly' is consistent with so long a duration, because seventeen centuries is nothing in comparison of God's eternity, is a mere subterfuge, in which the love of truth is sacrificed to the support of a pre-assumed opinion.

As Lardner has already given a very full and very excellent examination of the question, when the Apocalypse was written, it is the less necessary for me to be diffuse on this subject: and on two points I may refer the reader entirely to Lardner, namely, the examination of the sentiments of those ancient writers, who on the authority of Irenæus assert, that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Domitian, and the investigation of Newton's hypothesis, which refers it to a much earlier period: Knittel likewise in his 'Criticisms on the Revelation of St. John,' has admirably written on this subject, and has introduced much new matter, which is of importance in estimating the various opinions, which have been maintained in respect to the time, when the Apocalypse was written.

Six different opinions have been advanced. 1. It has been asserted, that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of the Emperor Claudius. 2. Others refer it to the reign of Nero. 3. Others leave it undetermined whether it was written under Claudius or Nero, but contend, that it was written before the reign of Domitian, and before the Jewish war. 4. According to the usual opinion, it was written in the reign of Domitian. 5. It has been referred to the reign of Trajan. 6. To that of Hadrian:

1. The opinion, that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Claudius, has no other testimony in its favour than
than that of Epiphanius, who in his fifty first here
uses the expression 'after his (St. John's) return from
Patmos under the Emperor Claudius,' and presently
after says, 'when St. John prophesied in the days of
the Emperor Claudius, while he was in the island of
Patmos.'

To this single testimony of a writer, who lived three
hundred years later than St. John, two very material
objections have been made. In the first place, no traces
are to be discovered of any persecution of the Christians
in the reign of Claudius: for though he commanded
the Jews to quit Rome, yet this command did not affect
the Jews who lived out of Italy, and still less the Chris-
tians. Consequently the banishment of St. John to the
island of Patmos, can hardly be referred to the reign of
Claudius. Secondly, that the seven flourishing Chris-
tian communities at Ephesus, Smyrna, &c. to which the
Apocalypse is addressed, existed so early as the reign of
Claudius, is an opinion not easy to be reconciled with
the history, which is given in the Acts of the Apostles,
of the first planting of Christianity in Asia Minor.
Besides, it is hardly credible, that St. John resided at
Ephesus, (from which place it is supposed that he
was sent into banishment,) so early as the time of Clau-
dius: for the account given, Acts xix. of St. Paul's
stay and conduct at Ephesus, manifestly implies that no
Apostle had already founded and governed a Christian
church there. And when St. Paul left the place, the
Ephesians had no bishop: for in an Epistle to Timothy
written for that purpose, he gave orders to regulate the
church at Ephesus, and to ordain bishops. This argu-
ment may perhaps be strengthened by observing that the
second apocalyptic Epistle ch. ii. 1. is addressed to the
angel of the church of Ephesus, that is, as is commonly
understood to the bishop of that church. It has been
doubted however, whether the expression ἁγιὰς τὰς
ἐκκλησίας, used in the Apocalypse, really denotes the
bishop of the church: and I remember to have read in

an English periodical publication, a short essay by an anonymous author, in which this expression is rendered by 'Messanger of the church,' the author being of opinion, that the seven churches, to which the seven Epistles in the Apocalypse are addressed, had sent messengers to St. John, while he was in banishment in the island of Patmos. But as each of these Epistles is addressed το αλευρο τες οικονομιας, the word αλευρο cannot denote a messenger sent to St. John, for with such a person, the Apostle had a verbal communication, and was therefore under no necessity of writing to him.

2. The second opinion, that St. John was banished to Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse there, in the reign of the Emperor Nero, is not liable to the objections, which are made to the preceding opinion. It has however only one evidence in its favour: and this evidence, as Lardner observes⁴, is not only without name, but without date. I mean the subscription to the Syriac version of the Apocalypse, which is: 'The Revelation, which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the island of Patmos, whither he was banished by the Emperor Nero.'

But since the Syriac version of the Apocalypse is now known to be a part of the Philoxenian version, which was made by Polycarp at the beginning of the sixth century, and afterwards corrected by Thomas of Harkel; the subscription to it cannot be said to be wholly anony- mous, and it may be regarded as the evidence of a writer, who lived in the beginning of the sixth century. If the same subscription was annexed to the more ancient version of the Apocalypse, used by Ephrem and the Manichees, it might be called indeed anonymous, but then its importance would be increased on another account, by its being so much more ancient.

The opinion that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Nero has been strongly supported by Newton, and Harenberg, whose arguments have been ably exa-


mined by Lardner, to whom I refer every one who wishes to know what may be said for and against the question. And as the inquiry is of such a nature, that an absolute decision is not to be expected, I shall only observe that several arguments in favour of this opinion, especially those used by Harenberg, prove nothing more, than that the Apocalypse, if it is a divine work, cannot have been written later than the reign of Nero. Consequently, unless the divinity of the Apocalypse be taken for granted, such reasoning is without force.

3. According to the third opinion, the Apocalypse was written before the time of Domitian, and before the Jewish war, but whether in the reign of Claudius or in the reign of Nero, is left undetermined. Now, when the words of an evidence are so indecisive as to be capable of a two-fold interpretation, it is consistent with equity to admit that, which is the most probable: and, since for the reasons above-mentioned, it is hardly possible that the Apocalypse should have been written in the reign of Claudius, I will suppose that according to this opinion likewise, the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Nero.

Arethas, who according to some critics lived in the sixth, according to others in the tenth century, wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse, in which he expressly refers it to a period, prior to the commencement of the Jewish war. Lardner indeed observes, and not without reason, that Arethas is not a writer of sufficient antiquity to be here regarded as a witness: but as what Arethas says, seems to imply really ancient testimony, I will examine his account more minutely.

In his explanation of the sixth seal ch. vi. 12—17, Arethas says, that some understood it figuratively, and explained it of the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, though

* The edition of Arethas's Commentary, which I here quote, is that which is printed at the end of the second volume of the Paris edition of Cæcumenius.
though most persons referred it to Antichrist. Now whoever explains ch. vi. 12—17. as a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, must pre-suppose that the Apocalypse was written before that event, for otherwise such an explanation would be an inconsistency. But I will not push this inference too far, because Lardner observes, that Arethas might have believed, the visions in the sixth chapter were representations not of future, but of past events. However there is another passage in the commentary of Arethas, which puts the matter out of doubt, and clearly shews that in his opinion the Apocalypse was written before the Jewish war. For after he has explained what is said of the four angels, which stood on the four corners of the earth, ch. vii. 1—3. as relating to what happened to the Jews as a punishment for their conduct toward Christ, and has interpreted the hundred and forty-four thousand, who were sealed ch. vii. 4—8. of the Jews, who believed in Christ, and had no part in the unhappy fate of Jerusalem; he adds: 'For destruction by the arms of the Romans was not yet come upon the Jews, when he received these prophecies.' Here it must be remarked that Arethas was not an original commentator, but that he exhibited in his own work a synopsis of the commentaries of Andrew of Caesarea, who lived about the year 500, and of others who had written on the Apocalypse. But the explanation of the sixth chapter, as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem was not taken from Andrew: for though Andrew quotes it in his commentary as an explanation, which had been given, yet he himself rejects it. We must

1 Pag. 709. ch. xviii. Τόις δὲ ταύτα εἰς τὴν ὑπὸ Οὐσιοκαταγωγὴ γνωριμίαν στολισάω ἢξαφων, εἰσαρ ό τοίς τημούσι τρευτοποιήσωσιν. Οἱ δὲ πλεῖσοι τῶν ἐπιστήμων συγγραμμένοι τοῦ μεταβασιν ὑποκάιριον τοιοῦτον εἰς τὸν Κριστὸν διώχμοις γνωριμίαν εἰς τὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἁστιγμήν ἄριστον.


3 lb. p. 713.

4 Ch. xviii. xix. p. 27. 29. ed. Syllburg.
must conclude therefore, that Arethas borrowed this explanation, and consequently the previous supposition, that the Apocalypse was written before the Jewish war, from some more ancient writer. But we know of no other commentator on the Apocalypse before Andrew of Cæsarea, than Hippolytus, who lived at the end of the second century. It is therefore not improbable, that Arethas borrowed it from Hippolytus: and if he did, it is supported by the authority of a very ancient writer.

Perhaps also Irenæus may be quoted in favour of the same opinion, at least, if the construction, which Knittel has put upon his words, be the true one. This however is a question which will be examined in the next article. At present I will only observe, that if Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp really referred the Apocalypse to a period prior to the reign of Domitian, and if he thus ceases to be the grand support of the opposite opinion, that it was written during the reign of Domitian, an opinion adopted by his successors on his authority, we may with safety assume, that the Apocalypse was written before the time of Domitian, before the Jewish war, and probably in the reign of Nero.

4. The common opinion that St. John was banished to Patmos, and saw the visions related in the Apocalypse, during the reign of Domitian, is grounded on a passage in the works of Irenæus¹, the Greek text of which is thus quoted by Eusebius². Ἡράφη τις τοις κατὰ τον Ἀντικωςίων προσαγόριος Φερομένης εἰς τῇ Ἰωάννῃ λεγόμενη Ἀποκάλυψις, αυταῖς συλλαβαίσι εἰς ἀποστολὴς τῶν ἥρων ταῖς αἰρετικοῖς ταύτα περὶ τῇ Ἰωάννῃ φησίν. "Εἰ δὲ εἰς αἰσιανδον εἰ τῷ τοῦ καιροῦ ἐπιμεθείς τοῦνμα τούτο, δι’ εἶναι αὐτὸν εἰρεθέν τι καὶ τῷ Ἀποκάλυψιν ευφράτετο. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ τουλάχιστον εἰραθή, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν εἰς τῇ ἑρμηνείᾳ γένεις, πρὸς τῷ τελές τῆς Δομεστίων ἀρχῆς." This quotation from Irenæus has been generally interpreted thus. If it had been proper, that this name should be proclaimed in the present

present time, it would have been made known by him, who saw the Revelation. For it was seen only a short time ago, almost in our own age, toward the close of the reign of Domitian. And almost all the ecclesiastical writers, who have spoken of the time, when the Apocalypse was written, have followed this account.

But several modern commentators, who wish to refer the Apocalypse to the reign of Nero, that they may be better able to explain its prophecies, contend that the words of Irenæus have been misunderstood by ecclesiastical writers, and that Irenæus did not mean to say, that the Revelation was seen in the reign of Domitian. Wetstein for instance, asserts that the verb ἐπάθη refers, not to Ἀποκάλυψις, but to Ἰωάννης, and that the words of Irenæus signify only that St. John was seen at the end of Domitian's reign. And Harenberg, though he admits that ἐπάθη should be construed with Ἀποκάλυψις, yet he assigns to the expression ἐπάθη Ἀποκάλυψις a meaning totally different from that which is usually assigned to it, and explains it as denoting, not that the visions were seen by St. John, so late as the reign of Domitian, but that the Apocalypse, namely the book so called, was first seen by the Christians of Gaul (where Irenæus resided) in the reign of Domitian. Both of these interpretations appear to me very improbable.

However

a Ubi nihil cogit, ἐπάθη interpretari de apocalypsi viva, aut cum interprete Latino Irenæi de nomine vio, cum commodissime et verissime de ipso Joanne dicit possit, eum sub exitum imperii Domitiain conpectum fuisse. Wetstein, N. T. Tom. II. p. 746.

b Page 5, 6, 7, 64. of his Exposition of the Apocalypse.

c He likewise takes the name Domitian in a figurative sense, and supposes that it denotes, not the emperor, who properly bore that name, but either Marcus Aurelius or Septimius Severus, to each of whom, on account of their persecution of the Christians, he says the name of Domitian was applicable. Now the only reason, which can be assigned for this very forced interpretation is, that Irenæus uses the expression σαρκικος τω τοις πιστεοις γενικαι, which Harenberg translates "within the last thirty years," ascribing to γενικαι the sense, which genealogists ascribe to the very word 'generation,' and at the same time wholly overlooking σαρκικος. Now though I grant that in genealogical computations
However there is a third interpretation given by Knittel, which is less liable to objection, and which though it is the most new, may in some measure be said to be the most ancient. According to this interpretation, ἐυράθυ is referred to το κομμα, that is, to the name of the beast, whose number is 666: for on this number, Irenæus is discoursing in the passage in question, and explains it as denoting Titan, which, when written in Greek ΤΡΙΤΑΝ, contains six letters, which make out the number 666. This name Knittel considers as an allusion to the praenomen of Domitian, which was Titus, and says, that the name of Titan was justly applicable to Domitian, because toward the close of his reign he insinuated on divine honours being paid him, and was therefore a Στομαχος, as the Titans were. It is true that κομμα is not so suitable to ἐυράθυ, as it would be to ὁμοιον: but even this difficulty will be removed, if we only supply the word ‘Titan.’ According to this explanation then, the meaning of Irenæus will be, ‘Titan shewed himself not long before our time, toward the close of the reign of Domitian;’ for this emperor exhibited his bad qualities, chiefly in the latter part of his reign, when he conducted himself in such a manner as might be expected from the Antichrist, or the threatened Titan. Irenæus indeed did not believe that Domitian was the real Antichrist predicted in the Apocalypse, whose coming he still expected: yet he might regard Domitian

computations the word γεννα may be taken in this restricted sense, yet when an author says in indefinite terms γεννα ἐν τοι ἱματισι τεκνως, he can mean only ‘not long before our time;’ that is, ‘not long before I, or at least many persons now living were born.’ And since Irenæus himself was born in the year 110, he might without impropriety apply the expression to an event which happened at the end of Domitian’s reign, especially as he speaks in the plural number, and there were undoubtedly many persons alive when he wrote, who were born still earlier than himself. I might surely say, in the present year 1788, that Prussia was erected into a monarchy almost in our own time: for, though this event took place seventeen years before I was born, yet the use of the particle ‘almost,’ and of the plural number, many persons being now alive, who were born before that event, renders the expression perfectly admissible.
Domitian as a forerunner and type of the true Antichrist. Such is Knittel's opinion: and this at least must be admitted, that his construction of ωυγαλω with ωυμα is supported by the authority of the old Latin translator of Irenæus's works, who has rendered the passage in question in the following manner. Si oporteret manifeste præsent tempore præconari nomen ejus, per ipsum utique edictum fuisset, qui et Apocalypsin viderat. Neque enim ante multum temporis visum est, sed pene sub nostro seculo, ad finem Domitian imperii. Further, Knittel appeals to the context of the Latin translation, and supports his opinion by very plausible arguments. If he is in the right, the Apocalypse was not only written before the reign of Domitian, but contains prophecies, which relate to him.

5. In a Latin work, containing the lives of the Apostles, ascribed to Dorotheus, who lived at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, and who is said to have been bishop of Tyre, the banishment of St. John to the island of Patmos is placed in the reign of Trajan: but at the same time it is observed, that in the opinion of others he was banished in the reign of Domitian. Of these Latin lives there exists a Greek translation, made by a person unknown: and this Greek translation, as published by Cave, mentions like wise Trajan.

6. On the other hand, according to another copy, which Knittel found in a Wolfenbüttel manuscript of the Apocalypse, 'St. John was banished to Patmos by the Emperor Hadrian.' These two last dates are supported by only one evidence, and it is moreover uncertain whether he meant Trajan or Hadrian. For this reason I barely mention these dates, without inquiring into their probability.

Among these different opinions relative to the time when the Apocalypse was written, our choice must in a great measure depend on the opinion which we entertain of

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4 Bibliotheca Patrum maxim a, Tom. VII. p. 127.
5 See Knittel, p. 88, 89.
of the work itself, whether we consider it as an inspired book, or regard it only as a human composition.

If we consider the Apocalypse as a divine work, I think we must confine our choice to those dates which precede the commencement of the Jewish war: for thus only shall we be enabled to shew that its first prophecies were fulfilled in a short time. And I grant that if it is referred to the reign of Claudius, the explanation of it is still easier, than when it is referred to the reign of Nero: for the scarcity predicted, ch. vi. 6. is descriptive of that which took place in the time of Claudius.

If it be considered as a mere human invention, it may be either ascribed to Cerinthus, or attributed to some unknown writer, who lived between the time of Papias, and that of Justin Martyr: in the latter case it might have been written in the reign of Hadrian. But if it be really a forgery, if it contains prophecies of the Jewish war made after the events themselves had taken place, we have reason to wonder, that the author did not prophesy more circumstantially, and that he appears so little acquainted with the events of that war.

S E C T. X.

Of the Greek style of the Apocalypse.

In examining the question, whether St. John the Apostle was the author of the Apocalypse, its Greek style, which differs from that of every other book in the New Testament, deserves particular attention. But the application of the remarks to be made on this subject will depend on the question examined in the preceding section,

* See what was said of Papias and Justin Martyr in the second section of this chapter.

1 See the latter part of the seventh section.
section, namely, at what time the Apocalypse was written: for it cannot be denied, that the same author may at one period of his life make use of a style, which is very different from that, which he had used at another.

That the style of the Apocalypse is very unlike that of any other book of the New Testament, is a fact, which no man, who understands Greek, and is capable of judging impartially, will deny. Nor is this difference of such a kind only, that we might ascribe it to the peculiarity of the subject, and say, that the same author, when he wrote in the character of a prophet, would use different modes of expression from those, which he had adopted as an historian: whence might be explained the contrast between the simple unadorned style of St. John’s Gospel, and the rich figurative language of the Apocalypse. But when the rules of the Greek grammar are accurately observed in St. John’s Gospel, and are frequently violated in the Apocalypse, we have a difference which cannot be ascribed to the dissimilitude of the subject: for the same author, who wrote correctly as an historian, would not be guilty of solecisms even in writing prophecies.

Dionysius of Alexandria, whose modesty and gentleness of temper I commended in the second section of this chapter, was well aware of the difference between the style of the Apocalypse, and that of St. John’s genuine writings; and for this very reason, though he did not venture to deny that the Apocalypse was a sacred book, yet he asserted that St. John the Apostle was not the author of it. The difference in question may be reduced to the following heads:

1. The Apocalypse abounds with harsh constructions, in which a nominative is placed, where another case ought to have been used. Of this sort the following instances have been alleged by Bengel: ch. i. 5. έν Ιησού Χριστί, δο καρπός δό ζηλέω: ii. 20. τον παναγίαν, ο άγίστος: iii. 12. τε καινή Ιερουσαλημ, η καταφορά: viii. 9. το τρίτον των καταφορών τω οχυρω ζυχας: ix. 14. το αύγουλο


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To these examples selected by Bengel may be added the following. In ch. i. 6. the reading of most manuscripts is ετοιμευ ειμαι βασιλεια ειρεις, which is taken from the Hebrew text of Exod. xix. 6. ‘a kingdom of priests,’ though the seventy have rendered it in a different manner, namely, βασιλεια εκπεμπα: but the author of the Apocalypse follows not the Greek, but the Hebrew, and lets ειρεις remain with its termination unaltered to denote a genitive. In ch. ii. 13. according to the common printed text, mention is made of a martyr Antipas, a person unknown in ecclesiastical history: but four manuscripts, instead of a proper name Αντιπας, have the verb αντεπας, and with the following strange construction, εν αἰς αντεπας ο μαρτυς μν ο ωςος, ‘in which though hast spoken against my faithful witness.’ The reading αντεπας is supported also by the authority of the Syriac version, and of the Arabic version published by Erpenius, which in other places of the Apocalypse does not usually follow the Syriac. Both of these versions express in quibus contendistit cum tefte, &c.

Constructions of this kind were probably not unusual among the Greek Jews: at least I have found several examples in those books of the Septuagint, which are not so well translated as the Pentateuch ₪ for instance, 2 Sam. xv. 31. και απηγγελη Δαυιδ λεγοντες, and Isaiah xxiv. 16. και τοις αδενιν οι αδενινες του νομου. But we find no such examples in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John: and this extraordinary use of the nominative for another case will hardly be confounded with the nominative absolute of Attic writers.

Even in the Pentateuch, according to the text of the Codex Alexandrinus we meet with some examples of this kind: Gen. xiv. 13. εις τη δει τη Μαρβην.ο Αμωνες. xl. 5. ἡ ρας το ειπων αυτη, ο αγχαιοι ροχος, και ο αγχαιοστοφοιοι.
But before I proceed, I must acknowledge, that the examples of harsh construction above-quoted from the Apocalypse, if we except that which was taken from ch. ii. 5. though they are found in good manuscripts are not contained in all, and that they have been adopted in very few printed editions, in most of which the nominative is converted into a case more suitable to the context. Here, then, it may be objected, that when we have the choice of two readings, one of which is grammatically correct, while the other contains false grammar, we ought to ascribe the latter, not to the incorrectness of the author, but to the inaccuracy of a transcriber. Now if a grammatical error was found in a manuscript of Cicero’s works, no doubt could be entertained that the ungrammatical reading did not proceed from the pen of the author; but that the ungrammatical constructions in the manuscripts of the Apocalypse cannot be ascribed wholly to the copyists, will appear from the following arguments.

First, though an illiterate transcriber may sometimes copy falsely, and convert an accurate expression into a solecism, yet it is incredible that several transcribers should agree not only in copying falsely in the very same places, but likewise in substituting the same mistaken readings, and in converting the true case into a nominative without any assignable reason.

Secondly, these unusual constructions occur too frequently in the Apocalypse to be imputed wholly to transcribers: for, if they arose merely from the inaccuracy of transcribers, we should as frequently meet with such examples in the other books of the New Testament, as in the Apocalypse, many of the transcribers of which have not copied this book alone. Since then these ungrammatical constructions occur so frequently in the Apocalypse, but not in other books of the New Testament written by the same transcribers, the only inference to be drawn is, that they proceeded from the author himself.

Thirdly,

* Bengel says of the examples above-quoted, Singulatim hae ex ad lare facile est: univerfa nemo conceulet.

L L 2
Thirdly, it is certain that these ungrammatical constructions existed in the Apocalypse long before our most ancient manuscripts were written: and therefore they cannot be ascribed to the ignorance of copyists in the middle ages. For even in the third ancient Greek was still a living language, and when therefore it cannot be supposed that Greek transcribers would in copying, make grammatical mistakes, Dionysius of Alexandria delivered his opinion of the language of the Apocalypse in the following words: 'I find the language used by the author not good Greek, for it is disfigured by barbarisms and sometimes by solecisms, which I do not think it necessary to quote, as it is my intention not to ridicule, but only to shew that the style of these writings is not the same.

2. The Apocalypse abounds with Hebraisms much more than the writings of St. John.

It is true that some critics have gone too far with this assertion, and have represented St. John's Gospel as perfectly pure Greek, while the Apocalypse has been charged with Hebraisms in places, where there really are none. But that the Hebraisms in the Apocalypse are more numerous and more harsh, than those in the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John, is a fact, which must be visible to every one, who has only a moderate knowledge of Hebrew, that I think it unnecessary to quote examples.

3. Though

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z Namely St. John's Gospel and the Apocalypse.

a It is not improbable that many of the solecisms of which Dionysius speaks in the third century were gradually corrected by transcribers. See Vol. I. Ch. VI. Sect. XI. of this Introduction. The number of the MSS. of the Apocalypse hitherto collated is inconsiderable: and it is possible that into all of these the grammatical corrections have found their way. Attention therefore must be paid to whatever solecisms may be found in single manuscripts of the Apocalypse, for they may be remnants of the ancient reading: for instance that of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript, Ch. viii. 2. εδήν αὐτοῖς ἐπτα σαλπιγγίς.

b For instance Dionysius of Alexandria, at the end of the passage quoted by Eusebius.
3. Though the figurative language of the Apocalypse, when compared with the simple style of St. John’s Gospel, cannot be alleged as an argument that the two books were written by different authors, since the same author, when animated by a spirit of prophecy will write in a different manner from that in which he had written as an historian, yet there is a certain character in the language of the Apocalypse, which is hardly to be reconciled with the manner, which is visible in St. John’s Gospel. Throughout almost the whole of the Apocalypse we find the author an imitator of the ancient prophets, from whom he borrows his images, and renders them more beautiful than they were in the originals: but St. John’s Gospel has a soft and gentle character so peculiar to itself, as to exhibit no trace of imitation. Further, the author of the Apocalypse (whom from the title of the book I will call St. John the Divine in contradistinction to St. John the Apostle) has not borrowed his imagery merely from the canonical books of the Old Testament, for he has taken a great part of it from the Jewish antiquities, and the theology of the Rabbins, so that his work has almost a cabalistic appearance. And he not only seems himself to be intimately acquainted with these subjects, but to presuppose the same intimacy in his readers, and to have written for those only who were initiated in the abstrusest doctrines which were taught in the schools of the Rabbins: nor does it even once occur to him, that what he says may appear foreign or obscure. But St. John the Apostle seems to have been well aware that not all his readers had this kind of knowledge: for he has frequently explained circumstances relative to the city of Jerusalem, and the customs of the Jews, with more historical perspicuity, than we find even in the other Evangelists.

4. On the other hand, the language of the Apocalypse is both beautiful and sublime, is affecting and animating: and this not only in the original, but in every, even the worst, translation of it. Who can read, if he reads without prejudice, the following address of Jesus to John.
John sinking to the ground through fear, and not be affected by the greatness of the thoughts and the expressions. 'Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that was dead, but now liveth: behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.' The Apocalypse has something in it, which enchants, and insensibly inspires the reader with the sublime spirit of the author. When future blessedness is promised, or the New Jerusalem described, a man must be devoid of feeling, who is not affected: and when the author denounces judgement to the wicked, and represents the smoke of their torment ascending up for ever and ever before the throne of God and his angels, one must be either prejudiced before one reads, or one cannot read without terror. A great part of the imagery is borrowed from the ancient prophets: but the imitation is for the most part more beautiful and more magnificent than the original, which is particularly true of what is borrowed from Ezekiel. And the imagery which is taken from the theology of the Rabbins, acquires in the Apocalypse a taste and eloquence, of which the Rabbinical writings themselves are wholly destitute.

St. John's Gospel has likewise its beauties, but then they are beauties of a very different kind. For while the author of the Apocalypse hurries us away to enchanted ground, and resembles a torrent which carries every thing before it, St. John the Apostle is plainness and gentleness, and is like a clear rivulet, which flows without rapidity and violence. Is it possible therefore that St. John the Apostle, and the author of the Apocalypse, called St. John the Divine, were one and the same person?

5. Dionysius of Alexandria remarks, that St. John the Apostle has not mentioned his own name either in his Gospel, or in any of his Epistles, but that, when he has occasion to speak of himself, he makes use of a circumlocation. On the other hand, St. John the Divine mentions his own name, not only in places, where it was requisite,
requisite, as in the address to the seven churches, ch. i. 4.
but, likewise in places where the single pronoun 'I,' or
the expression 'he who saw this,' would have been full
as proper as the term 'I John.' The one appears to
have an excessive modesty, and to avoid even the shadow
of egotism: the other avoids it so little, that he is lavish
in the use of his name. And what renders this differ-
ence, the more remarkable, is, that the circumlocution
by which St. John the Apostle denotes himself, namely,
the disciple whom Jesus loved,' is not once used by St.
John the Divine.

It is an undeniable fact therefore that the style of the
Apocalypse is very different from that of St. John's Gos-
pel. It is true that some commentators, in order to
thea a similarity between the language of the Apocalypse
and that of St. John's Gospel and Epistles, have selected
expressions from the former, which resemble those, that
occur in the latter. This has been particularly done by
Leonard Twells, whose defence of the Apocalypse is in-
serted in Wolfii Curæ. But in Lardner's opinion, to
whose judgement I fully accede, the examples selected by
Twells are by no means sufficient to prove a similarity of
style: and, even if they were selected with more judg-
ment, and the resemblance in those particular instances,
admitted of no doubt, still the dissimilarity will remain

* Vindiciæ Apocalypseos p. 399-404.

† I will mention one or two examples, which have occurred to me
in reading the Apocalypse. The word apôstolos which occurs so fre-
quently in the Apocalypse, (a word seldom used in the LXX) is found
no where else in the whole N. T. except in the Gospel of St. John,
ch. xxii. 15. The expression ἱστορία αὐτοῦ and καὶ ἔλεησεν is used
Apoc. xxii. 15. and in the first Epistle of St. John, ch. i. 6. Further,
in Apoc. i. 7, there is a quotation from Zech. xii. 10., not according
to the text of the Septuagint, but with a different reading, as in St.
John's Gospel, ch. xix. 37.: and it is remarkable that this passage
from Zechariah, which occurred to St. John, when he saw Christ
pierced on the cross, is quoted by no other of the sacred writers. This
last example has been already noted by Twells, but he has not given
it the force, of which it is capable. See my History of the Resurrec-
tion, p. 31. However these instances will not prove that the Apo-
calypte was written by St. John the Apostle: for the author of it may
in some cases have imitated St. John's manner, in order to make his
work pass the more easily for the composition of St. John.
in other places, and will remain so great, that they who have thence inferred, that the Apocalypse was not written by St. John the Apostle, have drawn an inference, which is not devoid of probability.

To this inference however it may be objected, that a course of years might have made a material alteration in St. John's style, since the manner of writing which we have adopted in the early part of life, is frequently changed in a later part of it, especially when the former manner was imperfect, and stood in need of improvement. It is possible therefore, that St. John in the earlier part of his life, might have written with the fire, which is visible in the Apocalypse, and, being at that time less conversant with Greek, wrote incorrectly, and retained also much of the oriental manner, but that in his old age, be wrote with that gentleness which is visible in his Gospel, and likewise, in consequence of his long residence at Ephesus, more correct Greek. All this may be inferred on the supposition that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Claudius or of Nero: but if it was written in the reign of Domitian, its style is an irresistible argument, that St. John the Apostle was not the author. For in a work written by St. John in his old age, after he had long resided among the Greeks, he would hardly have violated those very rules of grammar, which he had observed in his Gospel: his style would hardly have become more oriental: nor would he have displayed that fire of composition, which he had not exhibited in his earlier works.

The question therefore whether the Apocalypse is a divine book, depends again on the time, when it was written, whether so early as the reign of Claudius or of Nero, or so late as the reign of Domitian. If according to the common opinion, it was written in the reign of Domitian, I do not see in what manner its divinity can be supported.
S E C T. XI.

Whether the Apocalypse was originally written in Hebrew.

SOME commentators have supposed that the Apocalypse was originally written in Hebrew, and that our Greek text is only a translation. Now it cannot be denied, that the mode of writing is quite oriental: but since the testimony of no ancient writer can be produced in favour of the opinion that it was written originally in Hebrew, and its oriental style may be easily explained on the supposition, that the author of it was a Hebrew by birth, and though, in his native language, he wrote in Greek, to which he was less accustomed, the notion of a Hebrew original, appears to be without foundation.

But that I may not be unjust to an opinion, which I do not think proper to adopt, I will observe that one might allege in favour of it several various readings, which have the appearance of being different translations of the same Hebrew word. For instance, instead of the very improbable reading δυο μυριαδες μυριαδων (two hundred millions) ch. ix. 16. several manuscripts have, as I think more properly, μυριαδες μυριαυνων, which is an indeterminate expression, and nothing more than an hyperbole, denoting a very great number in general. Here if the Hebrew word בְּמִרְעָב had been used in the original, it might have been taken by one person for the plural and rendered μυριαδες μυριαδων, by another for the dual and rendered δυο μυριαδες μυριαδων, in the same manner as בְּמִרְעָב, Pf. lxviii. 18. is by some explained two myriads. — Instead of και λεγει μοι, ch. x. 14., nine MSS. quoted by Wetstein, to which may be added the Wolfenbüttel MS. have και λεγει μοι. These may be

The reason why I consider this reading as very improbable is assigned in the Orient. Bib. Vol. VIII. p. 156, 159.
be two different translations of the Hebrew רמג, one translator rendering literally, the other taking impersonally in the sense of 'one says,' or 'they say,' in which manner the word is frequently used by modern rabbins.—Instead of קד factura, ch. xiv. 6. the Complutensian edition, sixteen MSS. quoted by Wetstein, the Wolfenbüttel MS. Origen, Andrew, Arethas, and the Vulgate, have קדBlake. These two readings may be different translations of the Hebrew קדBlake.

However such examples are by no means sufficient to prove a position, which is wholly unsupported by historical evidence. For these variations may be easily explained on other suppositions: the last variation for instance קדBlake, which is a harsh Hebraism, is probably the genuine reading, and קד factura, added in the margin as an explanation of it, was afterwards in some manuscripts inserted in the text.

S E C T. XII.

Remarks on the doctrine delivered in the Apocalypse.

Luther in his preface to the Apocalypse prefixed to the edition, which was printed in 1522, objects, that Christ was not taught in the Apocalypse, which an Apostle is above all things bound to do, since Christ himself says, Acts i. 'Ye shall be my witnesses.' Now this objection, delivered in such general terms, is, I think, without foundation: and I cannot conceive how Luther could say, that Christ is not taught in a book, in which so frequent mention is made, and that too in very affecting terms, of our redemption by Christ’s blood and death. But the true and eternal Godhead of Christ is certainly not taught in the Apocalypse so clearly as in St. John’s Gospel, though the author speaks
speaks in enthusiastic language of the greatness of Christ's ministry, and the glory communicated to his human nature. At the very beginning of the book Christ is placed after the seven spirits, who stand near the throne of God: nor is he ever called God, or the creator of the world, throughout the whole work. Even the form, under which Christ appears, ch. i. 13—15. is, with only a few alterations, borrowed from Dan. x. 5, 6. where is given the description of an angel. It is true, that Christ is called Ὅ θεός τε Θεός, ch. xix. 13.: but this appellation is not decisive, for it appears from the antitheses, which St. John in the beginning of his Gospel makes against Cerinthus, that even false teachers could give to Christ the title of 'Word of God,' without acknowledging, that he was God himself. And on account of this very appellation used ch. xix. 13. the suspicion arose, that Cerinthus was the author of the Apocalypse, because it is used by no other of the sacred writers than St. John, but was the common appellation of Christ's divine nature among the Gnostics. St. John in his Gospel was under the necessity of retaining this expression, because he makes antitheses against the Gnostics: but in the Apocalypse, no such motive could have taken place, and if this book was written in the time of Nero, before the breaking out of the Cerinthian heresy, and long before St. John's Gospel was written, it is difficult to comprehend how St. John, at so early a period, came to apply the appellation of 'Word of God' to Christ's divine nature. Further, it is true, that Christ is called in the Apocalypse, ch. i. 17. 'the first and the last:' and this expression, if taken in the same sense, as that in which it is used, Isaiah xli. 4. xlv. 6. xlviii. 12. may denote Christ's eternal Godhead. Yet it is not absolutely decisive: for the meaning of ch. i. 17. may be, 'Fear not, I am the first (whom thou knewest as mortal), and the last (whom thou now feest immortal), still the same, whom thou knewest from the beginning.' The same explanation may be given of ch. ii. 8. where the
the expression the first and the last again occurs and is used in connexion with Christ's resurrection from the dead. On the other hand, in ch. ix. 11, where the words are less dubious, ἰερός is a spurious addition.

In the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse is delivered an extraordinary doctrine relative to an heavenly mother, who bare in heaven a child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This is a doctrine, which is taught in no other part of the Bible: but it resembles what was taught by several heretics, concerning the mother of life, who bare the first heavenly man, that is, the heavenly Jesus. And as, according to their doctrine, the prince of darkness devours a part of the armour of the first man, so in the twelfth chapter of Apocalypse, the dragon endeavours to devour the new born child, who is caught up to God and his throne, as the first man was according to the heretics. The 15th verse resembles likewise what the heretics say of the drowned Jesus, with only this difference, that what they said of Jesus is here said of the mother. The whole of this chapter may be explained indeed in such a manner, as to remove all offence: yet it is difficult to read it, without thinking of certain cabalistic, Gnostic, and what in later ages were Manichaean doctrines, especially if one has examined what Beaufure has written in his Histoire des Manicheens, Liv. VI. ch. 3. Liv. VIII. ch. 4.

The seven spirits of God, from whom a salutation is sent, ch. i. 4. and who are placed before Christ himself, create likewise a difficulty, which commentators endeavour to remove by saying, that nothing more is meant than the single person of the Holy Ghost: but as the Jews really speak of seven archangels, who had access to the throne of God, the seven spirits before the throne of God, mentioned ch. i. 4, can hardly be interpreted of the Holy Ghost. One may imagine, that inspiration is ascribed to these seven spirits, and that hence they are called in the Apocalypse, not angels, but spirits. The image of the seven lamps, under which they
they are represented, ch. iv. 5. is very suitable to this notion: and the expression ‘he hath the seven spirits of God,’ ch. iii. i. may denote the highest degree of inspiration. But the most important passage is, ch. xxii. 6. according to the reading, Κυριος ο Θεος των πνευμ-ατων των προφητων απεστευε τον αγγελον αυτη, where several spirits are mentioned, who inspired the prophets, and one of them appears to be the spirit, who shewed to the author of the Apocalypse the principal visions.

In no book of the New Testament is so frequent mention made of angels, as in the Apocalypse, in which they appear to be appropriated to particular countries and elements. This however may be considered as mere imagery, and explained according to the principles laid down in the sixth section of this chapter. The worshipping of angels is clearly forbidden in the Apocalypse: but in ch. viii. 2, 3, a high facerdotal office is ascribed to an angel, which we are accustomed to assign only to our Redeemer.

The doctrine of the Millennium is that, which created the greatest number of adversaries of the Apocalypse in the early ages of Christianity, and excited the suspicion, that it was a forgery of Cerinthus. They were particularly displeased with the representation, that after the resurrection of the dead a worldly kingdom should be established on earth for a thousand years. Even to us this doctrine appears strange and incredible: but to the ancient fathers, who, agreeably to the commonly-received philosophy in those days, derived all sin from the gross particles of matter, of which the body is composed, it necessarily gave more offence. And if in this kingdom marriages were to be celebrated, and festivals held, which however is not expressly affirmed in the Apocalypse, all those fathers, who declaimed against bodily pleasures, and regarded the state of celibacy as a state of holiness, of course disapproved of the life to be led in this kingdom, as being, according to their notions, much too sensual, even if the marriages and festivals were confined wholly to those, who
should be alive at the general resurrection. The doctrine of the Millennium was rejected by the reformers in the sixteenth century on a very different account, and was condemned, not merely as a speculative, but as a dangerous practical error. For the expectation of a kingdom in which pure saints should rule over the unregenerate children of the world began to excite a spirit of sedition, as it is very easy for the unruly members of a discontented party to fancy, that they themselves are the saints, and their opponents the unregenerate: and for this very reason the Augsburg Confession condemns the doctrine of the Millennium in express terms. Further, according to the representation of the ancient Chiliasm, offerings and offering-festivals were to be celebrated in this kingdom; but such notions are inconsistent with St. Paul's doctrine concerning the imperfection and abolition of the Levitical law.

On the other hand it must be granted, that the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, in which is described the kingdom of a thousand years, does not contain all that the ancient Chiliasm assigned to their Millennium. It contains nothing of offerings and of a Jewish temple, and this addition was made by the Chiliasm from the nine last chapters of Ezekiel, which they interpreted literally. Nor is mention made of marriages in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse; but in the description, which Ezekiel makes of his temple, are given laws for the marriage of priests, to which the Chiliasm probably appealed in support of their opinion. That the saints should rule over the unregenerate, is a doctrine, which stands more plainly in the Apocalypse: but by the saints we may understand either the church of God, or the Jewish nation returned to their own country. The first resurrection, which is to precede the kingdom of a thousand years, is clearly taught in this chapter, if we take the words as they are, and do not have recourse to figurative explanations: and though they, who rise from the dead,
and, according to this chapter, not to be the only inhabitants of the kingdom, it appears, that they are to take part in it as princes and magistrates, and to return from a better life, which their souls enjoyed, to this earthly one, which is a humiliation. In order to remove this difficulty, those commentators, who are not Chiliasm, explain the first resurrection as a mere figure.

The twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, which occasioned the greatest part of the objections made by the Antichiliasts, seems to have been formed from the thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel; only what Ezekiel had said is shortened, and the picturesque beauties, as in other parts of the Apocalypse, greatly improved. Ezekiel prophecies an invasion of Magog, which was certainly not fulfilled when the Apocalypse was written, and, if we take his words literally, seems to threaten the Jews, who lived in the promised land, with a long interruption of their prosperity. Immediately before, in the thirty-seventh chapter, Ezekiel had seen a resurrection of the dead, which however is to be interpreted, not literally of the coming of dead bodies to life, but according to Ezekiel's own explanation, of the resurrection of the Jewish state after the captivity, though many of the Jewish commentators themselves have taken Ezekiel in a strict sense. In like manner the author of the Apocalypse prophecies a first resurrection, which is to take place before the prosperity of the church is interrupted by Magog. Whether that first resurrection is to be understood literally or figuratively is a question, into which I cannot enter at present. Whoever regards the Apocalypse as a mere human composition, may say, that the author of it misunderstood Ezekiel, and interpreted him more literally, than the prophet himself intended. On the other hand, they, who receive the Apocalypse as a divine work, will find in a comparison of the Apocalypse with Ezekiel the best means of freeing the doctrine of a first resurrection of its improbability: for they need only say, that the author of the former treats
treats the same subject, which Ezekiel had prophesied more clearly, and that he took for granted, his readers would understand him in such a manner, as Ezekiel intended to be understood.

The description given in the Apocalypse of the kingdom of the beast is taken from Daniel, but is augmented by the addition of various circumstances. It must be remarked however, that in the Apocalypse the beast is never called Antichrist, a name, which occurs nowhere, but in the Epistles of St. John, and is there used in a sense, which has no relation to the apocalyptic beast or harlot. If the term Antichrist therefore be taken in its biblical sense, the doctrine relative to Antichrist cannot be proved from the Apocalypse.

Thus much have I thought it necessary to say, rather historically than dogmatically concerning the doctrines delivered in the Apocalypse, because it is of importance to know, whether they contradict the other doctrines of the New Testament. I confess, that during this inquiry, my belief in the divine authority of the Apocalypse has received no more confirmation than it had before; and I must leave the decision of this important question to every man's private judgement.

FINIS.