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"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE."—St. Paul.

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"Speaking the truth in love."—St. Paul.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED EVERY TWO MONTHS BY WELLS AND LILLY.

1822.
AN ACCOUNT OF EICHHORN'S ILLUSTRATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

SIR,

I send you an abstract, which I had occasion to make some time ago, of Eichhorn's theory of the Apocalypse, presuming it may be interesting to some of your readers, who have not access to the original work. This theory has obtained more admirers in Germany, than any which has been proposed in modern times. Some parts of it seem to me to be liable to strong, and perhaps decisive, objections. But as every scheme with which I am acquainted, is attended with as great or greater difficulties, the objections of this sort seem to afford no reason why it should not have its due of attention, as well as others which have been defended by much less learning and ingenuity.

In the opinion of Eichhorn, it was not the design of the author of the Apocalypse to communicate any new predictions, but only to clothe in new and impressive language the prophecies already uttered by our Saviour, and repeated by his Apostles, respecting the establishment and successful propagation of the Christian Religion. To effect this purpose, Eichhorn supposes the author needed and possessed no other inspiration than that of a poetical imagination.

It seems to have been a prevalent opinion amongst the learned that no events occurred in this lower world, which were

1 Cor. xiv. 22—26 and 51—54.
not first proposed for deliberation, and exhibited as in a theatre before the inhabitants of Heaven.* The Apocalypse is supposed by Eichhorn to have been planned and composed in conformity to this Jewish notion. It is accordingly pronounced by him to be a drama, or rather, a spectator's description of a dramatic exhibition. It is expressed, for the most part, by visible symbols and emblems, but is diversified and embellished by the introduction of prayers, hymns of praise, and occasional explanations of the scenes which are exhibited. In this drama, the animating predictions of our Saviour respecting the future flourishing state of his Religion, which are repeated in several parts of the New Testament, are represented as being actually accomplished, and are exhibited, by means of certain enigmatical shapes and emblems, on the theatre of Heaven.

Christianity, when first offered to the acceptance of men, met with powerful opposition. The principal obstacles in the way of its successful progress might, however, be referred to two sources—Judaism, and Polytheism or Paganism. Nor could the Christian Religion be said to have a secure and permanent footing in the world, so long as the greater part of the Jews and of the Gentiles continued to be hostile to it. A decisive victory, a complete triumph over Judaism and over Paganism must be achieved, before Christianity could be said to be firmly established, and to reign in security and independence.

The subject of the drama is, accordingly, stated to be the triumph of the Christian Religion over Judaism and Paganism; or, in other words, the abolition of the Jewish and Pagan religions, the secure establishment of Christianity in this world, and the future reign of the Messiah in Heaven.

Of these events it was the design of the author of the Apocalypse to give a scenical representation—an actual exhibition to the eye of a spectator. Now the establishment, or the decline, of a Religion, being events of an abstract and complex nature, not falling under the cognizance of the senses, they could not be represented in the manner proposed, in any other way than by means of sensible objects or symbols, which would naturally suggest them to the mind.

Such symbols it was not difficult to discover. For, as the Christian Religion is styled, throughout the New Testament, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, it was natural and convenient that Judaism and the Pagan superstition should be represented as two

* The passages adduced by Eichhorn to prove the existence of this opinion may be seen in Wetstein's note upon Rev. iv. 1.
other kingdoms, which were to contend with the kingdom of Jesus Christ for the superiority. The idea of an empire, or kingdom, could scarcely be expressed by a more significant symbol than the capital city of an empire—the seat of dominion. Judaism, therefore, is symbolically represented in this poem by the city of Jerusalem, and Paganism by the city of Rome; and the decline and abolition of these Religions is exhibited, as in a theatre, by the destruction of the cities of Jerusalem and Rome. This being accomplished, the Christian Religion might reign without opposition in this world, until the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ should commence at his return, at the end of the world; that is, until a new seat of empire, the Heavenly Jerusalem, should be manifested.

The drama is accordingly divided into three Acts.

In the first act, the destruction of Jerusalem, emblematic of the abolition of Judaism, is represented. In the second, Rome, the symbol of Idolatry or Paganism, is overthrown. In the third, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the seat of the Messiah's kingdom, and the symbol of the happiness of a future life, is exhibited.*

The drama is not supposed to commence at the beginning of the Apocalypse. A vision is prefixed for the purpose of supplying an occasion for describing the drama; in which vision the author is commanded by Jesus Christ to send an account of what he should see to the churches of Asia. This vision occupies the place of a prologue.

*Eichhorn undertakes to give the reasons why the drama was not divided into four Acts, as the subject seemed to require; or why the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world was not represented in a separate Act, as well as his kingdom in Heaven. There was no fourth city, in addition to the cities Jerusalem, Rome, and the New Jerusalem, which was suitable for a symbol. Consequently the author of the Apocalypse must either omit to represent the earthly kingdom of Christ, that is, the flourishing state of Christianity in this world, in a separate Act, or reject the use of cities as symbols; which he did not feel at liberty to do, because the use of the city of Jerusalem as an emblem of Judaism, and of the New or Heavenly Jerusalem, as a symbol of the happiness of a future life, was so common amongst the Jews, that nothing could serve better to guide the Jewish converts through the mysteries of his drama, than such a use of these cities. Eichhorn also observes, that if the reign of Christianity on earth, after the abolition of Paganism, had been represented in a separate Act, the laws of the drama would have required the author to represent the corresponding weak and feeble condition of Christianity after the abolition of Judaism, in a separate Act; and then five cities would have been necessary; which were more than he could easily find. It was therefore necessary for the author to determine upon three Acts, and to manage his subject so as to give a concise description of the condition of Christianity, at the close of the first and second.
The prologue, comprehending the three first chapters, contains the author's salutation to the seven churches of Asia, (chapter i. 4—8.) an account of the time and place in which he was ordered to commit to writing the visions which he saw, (chapter i. 8—20) and seven letters, written to the seven churches of Asia, exciting them to the duties of piety and virtue, and to firmness and perseverance in the profession of their religion. (Chapter ii. 1. to iii. 22.)

With the fourth chapter the drama itself commences. Here the scene opens. The Almighty is represented as seated on a splendid throne, in a court decorated in the style of Asiatic, and especially of Persian magnificence, holding in his hand a book sealed with seven seals, the volume of the divine decrees. No one in heaven, earth or under the earth, is found capable of opening the book, until Christ, in the form of a Lamb, approaches the throne, takes the book from the right hand of God, and proceeds to unloose the seals. (chapter iv. 1.—v.14.)

When the first four seals are opened, four emblems denoting a Conqueror, followed by War, Famine and Pestilence, appear on the stage. (Chapter vi. 1—8.) No particular conqueror, war, famine, or pestilence, are supposed to be designated. The design of the four emblems, is merely to suggest to the mind of the spectator a lively idea of great national calamity, as being the subject of the volume.

When the fifth seal is opened, the voice of martyred Christians is heard calling aloud for vengeance on their persecutors and murderers; by which it is made to appear, that the contents of the fatal volume relate to the enemies of Christianity. (ch. vi. 9—11.)

On the opening of the sixth seal, still more striking and dreadful emblems are exhibited of the calamities and ruin which were to fall upon the enemies of the Christian name. (vi. 12—17.) An exode follows, in which it is declared that the faithful followers of Christ, whether Jewish or Gentile converts, have no reason to be alarmed on account of the calamities threatened by the preceding omens. (ch. vii.) The first eight verses of this chapter are supposed to relate to Jewish, the remainder to Gentile, converts.

On the opening of the seventh seal, a sudden and silent horror pervades the inhabitants of Heaven. The cause immediately appears. Seven angels standing before God, receive seven trumpets, so as to become the heralds of war and desolation; and prepare to execute their commission, (ch. viii. 1, 2.)
An exode follows, in which the prayers of Christians are presented to God by an angel, who also fills a censer with fire from the altar in heaven and flings it upon the earth; the design of which actions is to intimate that the miseries of Christians will soon be at an end; and that vengeance will very soon overtake their enemies, (ch. viii. 3—5.)

That portion of the drama which has been described, extending from the beginning of the fourth to the fifth verse of the eighth chapter, is called the prologue.

The first act in the drama then begins, and extends from the fifth verse of the eighth chapter, to the end of the twelfth. In this act, the calamities which have been shadowed out in the prologue, are represented as relating to the Jewish nation. Jerusalem is destroyed, or, Judaism is overcome by Christianity.

The angels, who have just received the seven trumpets, begin to fulfil their office; viz. to announce the calamities about to be inflicted upon Jerusalem. At the sound of the first four trumpets, evils of every description are represented by appropriate symbols as descending upon the land. (ch. viii. 6—12.) No particular evils are supposed to be intended by the various emblems exhibited, which are, for the most part, plagues similar to those, which once laid waste the land of Egypt; but all of them combined are designed to present a vivid image of great national calamity. The particular kind of evils to be inflicted, or in other words, the means by which this general national calamity was to be effected, it was the office of the three last of the seven angels to declare.

The exhibition of these symbols of general national calamity is followed by an exode, in which an angel is represented, flying through the midst of heaven, proclaiming woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the land, by reason of the three remaining trumpets which were to sound. (ch. viii. 13.)

When the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, a band of horrid locusts is seen rising out of the earth, emblematical of the plundering and seditious armies of the Jews themselves, by which, as is well known, Jerusalem was not less distressed than by external enemies, (ch. ix. 1—12.) The sixth trumpet summons to the view an immense army of warriors, representing the Romans, rushing into Judea, and taking possession of the country. (ix. 13—21.)

After this scene an exode is introduced, in which it is declared, that the promises of deliverance made by God to the faithful shall be immediately fulfilled. A mighty angel, having
in his hand a book open, 'swears by him that liveth forever, that there should be no longer delay;* but that when the seventh angel should sound his trumpet, 'the mystery of God' i.e. the design of God, hitherto unknown, respecting the deliverance of the Christians from the oppression of the Jews, should be accomplished. John is commanded to take the little book, containing the divine purposes relating to this subject, and to eat it up, i.e. to make himself thoroughly acquainted with its contents, so as to be able to communicate them to others. (ch. x. 1—11.)

A second exode is introduced for the purpose of designating more particularly the city which was to be destroyed, viz. 'the city where our Lord was crucified.' The two witnesses, mentioned in this exode, are supposed to be Ananus and Jesus,† high priests of the Jews, who made successful exertions to restrain the fury of the zealots during the Jewish war, until they were slain by them, on the night when the Idumeans made their fatal entrance into the city. The death of these persons hastened, as we are informed by Josephus, the destruction of Jerusalem.‡ They are therefore supposed to be introduced merely to point out to the Jewish Christians, who were acquainted with these facts, the city which was to be destroyed. The '1260 days,' or, which is the same thing, the 42 months, and also, the 'three days and a half,' mentioned in this exode, Eichhorn supposes to be nothing more than expressions used, by poetical licence, to denote an indefinite, or a considerable, space of time. (ch. xi. 1—14.)

At length the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, and Jerusalem is overthrown by the Romans. (xi. 15—19.)

The first act now closes with a description of the condition of the Christian church, as it may be supposed to have been, when it had surmounted the obstacles and difficulties of which Judaism was the cause. One of its enemies was vanquished, but another formidable one remained. It was weak and feeble, and is represented by the symbol of a newborn infant, which

*Probably the true meaning in this place of the phrase εὐγενεία τιρευόμενον τῇ σεββαμένῃ, which in the common version is rendered 'that there should be time no longer.' Grotius and Wakefield agree with our author as to the meaning of the phrase.

†Eichhorn supposes the Apocalypse to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

‡Jos. de bello Jud. lib. 4. c. 5.
Eichhorn's Illustration of the Apocalypse.

'a huge red dragon' viz. 'that old serpent the devil,' is watching to destroy; in conformity to a well known Jewish opinion. But the infant is caught up to heaven; i.e. the church is protected by God.

The wretched condition of the Jews, who were still attached to their old religion, is also represented by the symbol of a woman, the mother of the child, pursued into a wilderness by the dragon above mentioned. The hope, however, is expressed, that the time would come, when the Jews would embrace Christianity and enjoy its advantages; agreeably to the expectation of St. Paul, Rom. xi. 26. This hope is supposed to be implied in the declaration that the woman would be kept in the wilderness only 1260 days, i.e. a considerable time. After this period, she would come out of the wilderness, and dwell in the cultivated and pleasant region, in which Christianity was flourishing. (ch. xii. 1—17.)

The second act of the drama now commences, and extends from ch. xiii. to ch. xx. 10., in which Rome is destroyed, i.e. Paganism is overcome by Christianity.

In the first place, the gentile superstition, which was to be destroyed, is denoted by appropriate symbols. The scene is changed from Heaven to earth. A wild beast is seen coming out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and ten diadems upon his horns, and upon his heads names of blasphemy, denoting Rome, the symbol of idolatry. It receives the power, throne, and authority of the dragon or satan, who had been thrown down from heaven; (ch. xii. 10.) a circumstance introduced to mark it as the enemy and persecutor of Christians. (ch. xiii. 1—10.)

That Rome was intended to be the symbol of pagan superstition is supposed to be more clearly determined by the scene which follows. Another animal, elsewhere called the false prophet, is seen coming out of the earth, who by his frauds and pretended miracles deceives mankind, and reduces them to the worship of the monster, that came out of the sea, i.e. to prefer idolatry to the worship of the true God. (xiii. 11—18.)

The exhibition of these monsters is followed by an exode, in which the tranquillity and happiness of the worshippers of the

* Eichhorn adopts that explanation of the number of the beast which is mentioned by Irenæus; according to which the word ἀράβιος, latin or roman, is denoted. The figures of which the Greek letters in this word are significant, being added together, make the number six hundred and sixty six.
only true God, are contrasted with the fury and tumults of their idolatrous adversaries. (xiv. 1—5.)

Then follows a series of predictions, or announcements, of the destruction of Rome, as being near at hand. Three angels appear, flying through the midst of heaven, of which the first predicts desolation or punishment, as being about to be inflicted—' that the hour of God’s judgment was come;’ the second declares its accomplishment—‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon, the great city;’ the third intimates to whom the punishment relates, viz. the worshippers of idols, ‘those who worship the beast and his image, or receive his mark upon their forehead or their hand.’ (xiv. 6—13.)

The destruction of Rome is again announced by the symbols of a harvest, and of a vintage. (xiv. 14—20.)

The destruction of the city is yet again represented. Seven angels appear, with the seven last plagues; by the successive infliction of which Rome would be brought to utter ruin. (xv. 1.) An exode is then introduced, in which it is declared that these predicted calamities relate to the idolatrous gentiles. (xv. 2—4.) Then the seven angels come forth from the temple in heaven, ready to fulfil their office; and a loud voice is heard from the temple, commanding them to pour seven vials of the wrath of God upon the city. (xv. 6 to xvi. 1.)

When the first four angels pour out their vials, plagues, designed to express public calamity generally, are represented, (xvi. 2—9.) When the fifth angel pours out his vial, it is made evident, that the plagues just exhibited, relate to the extinction of idolatry, (xvi. 10, 11.) When the sixth pours out his vial, all the obstacles, which might hinder the destruction of Rome, are removed, (xvi. 12—16.) When the seventh pours out his vial, the ruin of the city is completed. (xvi. 17—21.)

The representation of the complete destruction of Rome is followed by an exode, in which this seat of idolatry is designated and described by symbols, more plain and expressive than any which had been before used. (ch. xvii.)

A lament over the fallen city is then introduced, (ch. xviii.) and also a song of triumph over her by the inhabitants of heaven. (xix. 1—10.) A splendid triumphal procession, remarkable for its resemblance in many particulars, to a Roman triumph, is then exhibited, (xix. ii. to xx. 3.) and at length the christian religion reigns without opposition. The description of the flourishing state of christianity under the image of the reign of Christ its founder, closes the second act of the drama. (xx. 4—10.)
The third act then commences and extends from the 11th verse of the 20th chapter to the 5th of the 22nd. In this act the New Jerusalem is represented, descending from heaven, i.e. the happiness of the future life is described.

The scene is first prepared,—the dead are raised, and assembled before the throne of God. The books are opened, and they are judged. The good are enrolled as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. (ch. xx. 11—14.) Then the New Jerusalem, the seat of the Messiah's empire, and the symbol of the happiness of the future life, is represented as 'coming down from God out of heaven.' A full and glowing description of this abode of the blessed closes the third act of the drama. (ch. xx. 14. to xxii. 5.)

The poem ends with an epilogue; in which an angel declares the words of the book to be 'true and faithful,' pronounces a blessing on those, who should keep the words of the prophecy of the book; and commands John not to seal them up, because the time of their fulfilment 'was at hand.'* (xxii. 6—11.) Jesus Christ confirms the words of the angel; (xxii. 12—16.) and John gives an impressive caution to all readers against any alteration of his book, whether by enlarging or abridging its contents, and expresses an eager desire for the coming of Jesus Christ. (ch. xxii. 17—21.)

That part of our author's theory, which makes the cities of Jerusalem and Rome to be only symbols of Judaism and Paganism, as it constitutes the most important, and also, in my opinion, the most vulnerable feature of the system, shall have the protection of the arguments which he has urged in its support.

That the author of the apocalypse did not mean to represent the destruction of cities in the proper sense, our author suppose to be evident from the closing part of the drama. In the third act, the New or Heavenly Jerusalem cannot be supposed to denote a city in the proper sense; but must be considered a symbol of the happiness of the future life. But it would be incongruous, and inconsistent with the ease and ingenuity and success with which the author of the apocalypse has laboured

* A circumstance well worth the consideration of such as suppose that any predictions in this book relate to events still future; or to events of late occurrence. See also, ch. i. 1—3. What should we think of an astronomer, who having calculated an eclipse of the sun, or the return of a comet, should tell us, that the time of its appearance was at hand,' or that it would appear 'shortly,' meaning thereby sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, or we know not how many hundred years?
to make the different parts of the drama correspond to each other, that one of the three cities represented should be used in a symbolic, and the other two in a proper, or literal sense. If, therefore, the New Jerusalem be allowed to be a symbol, the other two cities must be understood in the same manner.

What the symbolic meaning of the cities is, supposing it determined that they are symbols, our author supposed to be indicated with equal plainness. Immediately after the destruction of Rome the millenial kingdom of Christ begins. Now as it is plain that our Saviour never claimed, nor his apostles expected a temporal or civil kingdom, but only a moral or spiritual one—the empire of his religion over the minds and hearts of men, what could have been intended, asks our author, by the destruction of Rome, but the downfal or removal of that which opposed and hindered the moral influence of Christianity upon the mind, and its progress in the world, viz. the Gentile superstition or Paganism.

The same argument is used to shew that Judaism is denoted by the city of Jerusalem, as it was that which opposed and hindered the reception of Christian Religion amongst the Jews. This is confirmed by the manner in which Christianity is described after the destruction of Jerusalem ch. xii. For, when Judaism only was abolished, the diffusion of Christianity was, indeed, increased; but was still very limited, compared with the wider and more extensive spread of it, in consequence of the downfall of Paganism.

Our author suggests another consideration to shew that the city of Jerusalem was designed to be emblematical of Judaism. Just before the destruction of the city was to be represented, John is ordered 'to measure the temple and the altar,' but to omit to measure the outer court with its buildings, which were 'to be trampled upon by the gentiles.' (ch. xi. 1, 2.) This commanded, says our author, intimates that the temple and the altar would be preserved; whilst the outer court would be given to destruction with the rest of the city. Now the temple in the proper sense—the material temple—was not preserved, when Jerusalem was made desolate. It must therefore, be supposed to have a symbolical meaning; and it is very obvious what this is. The temple, and the outer court are emblematical of the whole Jewish Religion; the former denoting its pure and spiritual part—its doctrines concerning the unity and perfections of God &c. the latter, its numerous rites and ceremonies. Now the doctrines concerning the unity and perfections of God were, it is well known, incorporated into the
christian system; whilst the rites and ceremonies were considered unworthy of preservation. If, then, we are compelled to consider the temple the symbol of the spiritual part of the Jewish Religion, consistency requires that we should understand other parts of the drama in the same symbolical sense.

That Rome was intended to be a symbol of Paganism is evident, in the judgment of our author, from the following consideration. Rome or the Roman empire was exhibited, as we have seen, under the image of a sea monster, having names of blasphemy inscribed on his heads, and was assisted by a false prophet, who deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and persuaded them to worship the beast, by an imposing display of pretended miracles.

Now Rome, or the Roman empire in the proper sense, never made use of pretended miracles for the purposes of imposition upon mankind; but Paganism might very properly be represented as deriving its support from pretended miracles by false prophets, as the true religion was introduced and extended by real miracles performed by true prophets. Since, therefore, an empire supported by false prophets is represented as destroyed, a spiritual or religious empire i.e. Paganism, and not a civil one, must have been intended.

Our author observes, moreover, that his arguments are strengthened by the facility and propriety of his mode of interpretation when applied to those parts of the Apocalypse, from which no plain and good meaning can be extracted, upon any other views of its character and design.

Eichhorn has also written a good deal with a view to illustrate the literary merit of the Apocalypse, and to shew the author to have been a man of genius, taste, and learning. But it is not my purpose to state what he has said on this point.

ON THE UNION BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON.

It is allowed by all christians, that our Lord asserts a very intimate union and relation between God and himself, in the expressions, I and my Father are one;—I am in the Father, and the Father in me;—and, he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. * I would attempt to answer the inquiry, what is the nature

* John x. 30. xiv. 10.9.
Religious Notices.

The annual meeting of Ministers in Berry Street will be held on the morning of Election Day, at half past eight o'clock precisely. Subject of the annual address—The difficulties of the Christian Ministry at the present period. By Rev. Joseph Tuckerman.

The Anniversary Discourse before the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity, will be delivered on the day preceding Election, at half past three o'clock, P.M. at the Church in Chauncy Place. By Rev. Samuel Willard of Deerfield—Members are earnestly requested to attend.

Any person becomes a member of this Society by the payment of two dollars a year. For which he receives a certificate which entitles him to take, from the Bookstore of Cummings and Hilliard, the tract of the Society or any other religious tracts published in Boston, at the lowest wholesale price, to the full amount of his subscription.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A long article for our Review was received after this number was fully prepared, and we have not had time to examine it. We had intended to take no notice of the publication to which it refers, and cannot promise that we shall alter our minds.

We are greatly obliged to the kindess of our friend in Woodstock will endeavour to comply with his request, if circumstances permit.

Several communications are received, to some of which we shall attention hereafter.