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MDCCCLXVII.
The following is Hafiz's method of calling for a cup of wine:

"Bring me the sun in the midst of the moon."

The moon is the cup; the sun is the wine. The Sufi sect have a large and regularly constructed lexicon, the very purpose of which is to give the allegorical meaning of the words most frequently used in poetry of this kind. The following are specimens:

Wine—Devotion.
Sleep—Meditation.
Perfume—Religious hope.
Kiss—Pious rapture.
Beauty—Perfections of God.
Treasures—Glory of God.
Lips—Mysteries of God.
Eternity—Religious ardor.

Surely no one acquainted with Oriental literature will think it strange or far-fetched to give to the Canticles an allegorical interpretation; on the contrary, the literal interpretation, to the Oriental eye, is the one which is, beyond example, strange and far-fetched.

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ARTICLE IV.

REMARKS ON STUART'S COMMENTARY ON THE APOCALYPSE.


Every development of the providence of God seems to be giving new interest to the Romish controversy. The great idea of the age is the conversion of the world. The great practical question is, To what shall the world be converted? The claims of the papacy are universal and exclusive. The Romish corporation, in its essential nature, is the universal and all-pervading antagonist of every other effort to convert the world. Hence, soon after the commencement of the era of Protestant missions, we see a universal revival of the papal power, manifestly as the antecedent and cause of the final and decisive struggle.

Of this struggle, too, we have been accustomed to hear our fathers speak, as the battle of the great day of God Almighty. They also firmly believed that in the Apocalyptic visions of the seer of Patmos, they had received from the Spirit of God an inspired prophetic outline of the combatants in that war, and of its origin, progress, and final results. President Edwards, in his
history of the Work of Redemption, in the seventh part of the third period, vividly represents the view generally taken by our fathers of this greatest of all earthly moral revolutions. Substantially the same views may be found in most of the English commentators, under whose influence the anticipations of the main body of evangelical English and American Christians, as it regards the future destinies of the world, have been formed. In consequence of these views, they have felt themselves strengthened in view of the coming conflict, by a cheering consciousness of the closest sympathy of God with his people in their arduous conflicts with the gigantic and malignant power of Rome. In the eighteenth chapter of the Apocalypse they heard the utterance of the omnipotent emotions of long outraged divine justice towards her deeds of pollution and blood, mounting up to heaven, and calling aloud for divine vengeance. In the nineteenth chapter, they heard the hallelujahs of heaven, over her terrific judgments and fiery doom. Then followed in rapid succession the subjugation of all the remaining enemies of God on earth, the binding of Satan and the millennial reign.

But now, just as this great battle is coming to a crisis, and the united energies and wiles of the papal world are concentrated against Great Britain and the United States, the great strongholds of spiritual Protestant Christianity and missionary enterprise, a new system of prophetic interpretation arises to strip the people of God of their arms. It denies any specific reference to the papal power in the Apocalypse; carries back more than fifteen hundred years, passages that have been supposed to refer to the present time, and leaves us only the general assurance that all the enemies of God shall finally fall beneath the dead weight of his retributive vengeance.

This view is by no means a novelty to us. At least twenty years ago, we met it in the work of Eichhorn on the Apocalypse, and examined the principles on which it rests with all the care and thoroughness in our power. The conclusion to which we came was that whatever might be true of Germany, that view would never meet an advocate in our land, at least among the leaders of our evangelical Protestant churches. In this it seems we were mistaken. Professor Stuart has adopted the view, and devoted his great powers and learning to its defence. His introduction and commentary are the result of the patient and protracted study of years; and whatever extended and varied learning, and eminent natural abilities can do to defend the view which he has adopted, has been done. Well then and truly may we say,

"Si Pergam a dextra
Defendi possent, etiam hoc defensa fuissent."

Although the subject, as already intimated, was not new to us,

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but had been repeatedly examined and re-examined, with the aid both of German and English light, yet we felt ourselves called upon by these facts to give to the work of Professor Stuart a careful and oft repeated perusal. We think that among all competent judges, there can be but one opinion as it regards the great and permanent value of large portions of Prof. Stuart's work. In it the reader will find copious stores of valuable verbal interpretation and criticism. He will be interested and instructed by the presentation of the Apocalyptic literature of the centuries preceding and following the Apostle John. He will feel grateful for the thorough and conclusive discussion of the question of the authorship of the Apocalypse.

But when we come to consider the fundamental principles of prophetic interpretation, and raise the inquiry, has the interpretation of our fathers been radically and thoroughly overthrown, and ought the German interpretation to supersede it, then we must beg leave to demur. We do not believe that the fundamental idea in the interpretation of our fathers has been overthrown, or that it can be. And this last and greatest effort of Professor Stuart has the more confirmed us in that belief. The reasons of this conviction we proceed to assign.

We do not rely on the mere fact that the language of ch. 13-19 of the Apocalypse can be applied with striking power to the papacy and to the civil system in league with it; for there is a general similarity in the principles and aspects of Satan's kingdom in all ages: and what was first meant for Egypt, or Nineveh, or Tyre, or Babylon, or any other power of his kingdom, may often with striking appropriateness be applied to subsequent principalities and powers, through which he has ruled the darkness of this world. Nor do we rely on the mere fact that the common English interpretation of the Apocalypse has been much used and would still be of great use in the warfare with Rome. If the Holy Spirit did not give the Apocalypse for such a use, then God forbid that it should be longer so used. We advocate no system of pious frauds. In fighting the battles of truth we ask for no armor but the armor of truth.

The reasons of our conviction are these:

1. The English system of interpretation, in its essential elements, has nowhere been stated and answered with clearness and discrimination in the work of Professor Stuart.

2. It is so inwrought into the fundamental structure of the Apocalypse that it is impossible to remove it without doing violence to the book.

3. The German theory, after all that Prof. Stuart has done to give it consistency and strength, is exposed to numerous, and, in our judgment, fatal objections.

What then is the English theory, in its fundamental elements?
Is it that the Apocalypse is a syllabus of the civil and ecclesiastical history of the world since the days of Christ in minute detail? So one would think from reading the work of Prof. Stuart. In varied forms, he repeats and assails this idea from the beginning to the end of his work.

Now that it is possible, in applying the Apocalypse to the papacy and to the civil power, to descend to an improper degree of minuteness of detail, we freely admit; and that this has often been done, we have not the slightest disposition to deny. But we confidently affirm that such minuteness of detail is not a fundamental or necessary part of the system. Nay, the system may be presented in much greater perfection without it, than with it. Still further; it is much less liable to objection on the ground of a necessary undue minuteness of historical detail than the system that Prof. Stuart advocates.

Its fundamental idea is one of the grandest and most sublime historical generalizations of which the mind of man is capable. It is beyond all doubt true, that out of the city of Rome has grown an ecclesiastical power that stretches back, with dread continuity of history, nearly to the age of the Apostles. It is a no less notorious fact, that from a very early age this ecclesiastical power has acted in adulterous connexion with the civil power—first with that of imperial Rome, till by the sword of the barbarians that power was slain, and afterwards with the revived Roman imperial power under Charlemagne, and with the European civil system to which that power gave rise. A dread unity of fundamental malignant principles has run through this vast system from the beginning to the present day. None in the history of this world has ever wielded power so vast, for so many ages, and for ends so malignant. Nowhere on earth can be found such a true and perfect embodiment of the principles of hell. By no power have such inconceivable and unutterable corruptions of human society ever been effected. No other power has ever been so drunken with the blood of the saints. Without a figure, we assert that Rome has been for long ages the centre of deeds worse than could be done in hell itself. In hell there is no want of malignity against God, but nowhere except in a world of mercy, and by men professing to stand as God’s exclusive vicegerents on earth, could such enormous deeds of mingled lust, licentiousness, sodomy, fraud, treachery, assassination, gluttony, intemperance, blasphemy, and sanguinary hypocrisy, be perpetrated, as may be found clustering around the dark history of that apostate power whose centre is at Rome. There is a dread sublimity in the idea of carrying out moral evil, on a great scale, for long ages to its highest degree of perfection, in order to show to the moral universe to what results the principles of sin, when fully evolved, legitimately conduct. For, studying this fearful science, there is no point of vision in the
universe for a moment to be compared with Rome. Like the
summits of the Himmaleh Mountains, this system of evil that
centres there, towers in solitary and dread magnificence above all
other systems of evil that ever cursed this world,—yea, it pierces
the clouds, it mounts up to heaven, it reaches to the very throne
of God, and calls aloud for the fiercest displays of omnipotent
wrath.

If now the inspired writer had said in few words, and in simple
prose, that such an ecclesiastical power should arise, whose centre
should be at Rome, and which, in guilty league with the civil
power, should from age to age corrupt and debase society, and
oppress and murder the saints of God, would it have been in any
sense, a minute syllabus of the civil and religious history of Eu-
rope? If then he had added, God shall at length judge and
destroy this guilty system in the fierceness of his omnipotent
wrath, and in so doing convulse and terrify the world; that he
shall thus prepare for himself a pure church, arrayed in fine linen,
clean and white, through whom he will subdue the world to him-
self and reign, would this involve an undue minuteness of histori-
cal detail? And yet this and nothing else is the essential and
fundamental idea of the system of our fathers, which Prof. Stuart
rejects and condemns as involving a minute syllabus of the history
of the world.

Now, in order to radically overthrow this system, it is essential
that it be stated, not in its weakest and most defective, but in its
strongest and most unexceptionable form, and in that form be
shown to be untenable. For any such statement and proof we
look in vain in the work of Prof. Stuart. He seems to assume
that if chapters 13—19 are applied to papal Rome, and the civil
system in league with her, a detailed epitome of the civil and reli-
gious history of the world since the days of Christ is of necessity
involved. In his preface he traces the disagreement of original
and independent expositors to the fact that the Apocalypse is
"regarded principally as an epitome of civil and ecclesiastical
history." He affirms that confidence in such expositions is gen-
erally withheld, and must continue to be withheld so long as this
mode of interpretation is pursued.

Again in § 12, Vol. i., p. 208—after stating his views of the end
to be gained by the book, and the mode of effecting it, he thus
proceeds:

"How can we, then, when such a design and such a method of ac-
complishing it stand out with marked prominence in this picture—how
can we attribute to John a mere syllabus of the civil and ecclesiastical
history of remote ages, a history of civil commotions and tumults, or
the mere description of literal famines and pestilences, of earthquakes
and of tempests? In the name of all that is pertinent and congruous in
prophecy, I ask, what have these to do with the object which John had
before him? Or are we, as some have slyly hinted, to regard him as in a state of hallucination when he wrote the Apocalypse? Or if any one alleges that some notice of the great apostasy in the church was surely to be expected, then may I ask again: In what way could it console or encourage John's readers, to be told that at some future day a great part of the church would become heretical, or act the part of apostates, and persecute and destroy true Christians as badly as the heathen were then doing? And is this consolatory to poor fainting spirits, filled with dread lest the light of divine truth might be quenched in the blood of its friends, and anxious for one ray of hope that the church would yet rise and triumph over all its enemies? It would in fact seem not unlike some degree of hallucination, to engage in making such disclosures, with the expectation of reviving the drooping spirits of suffering Christians by them. It is out of reasonable question, then, that we should take, and be able to support, such a view of this subject as the popular exegesis demands. In truth, it requires us virtually to set aside the idea, that John had in view any present, important, and appropriate object in the writing of his book; or if he had such an object in view as appears to lie upon the face of that book, then, according to the exegesis which we are controverting, he took the strangest course imaginable in order to accomplish it, i. e., he wrote a syllabus of the civil and ecclesiastical history of distant ages, the highest end of which, in respect to those whom he addressed, could be only to gratify their prurient historical curiosity.

"Such a view of the book will not bear a sober examination. It is too improbable, incongruous, and inapposite to the necessities of the times. A church bleeding at every pore, and ready to faint or to apostatise—such a church addressed by a grave writer who has a superintendence over its concerns—and merely or principally told what things will happen in distant future ages, things civil, ecclesiastical, and even appertaining to the natural world, most of which were to be developed a thousand years or more after all the members of that church were dead! Nothing short of the most express testimony of John himself, that he meant to address them in such a strain, ought to satisfy us that he has done it."

Here then we are told that the popular exegesis of this book demands such a view of the subject. That is, if we understand it, if we apply the latter portions of the book to papal Rome, and not to pagan Rome, it involves all this, and is totally at war with all that is pertinent and congruous in prophecy. It implies that John had no present, important, and appropriate object in writing his book, or else that he took the strangest course imaginable, in order to accomplish it, i. e., he wrote a syllabus of civil and ecclesiastical history of distant ages, the highest end of which in respect to those whom he addressed, could be only to gratify their prurient historical curiosity. The same ideas are repeated again in § 28; and indeed in every variety of form in both volumes they occur again and again. Not unfrequently, too, reference is made to the
popular exegesis of the book in a manner adapted to render it ridiculous. He speaks of it as involving “merely imaginative and ever floating exegeses.” He speaks of “volumes without number, of prophetic or theological romances, that have already been poured forth under the excitement and guidance of such views as I have now been characterizing.” He says, “it is high time for all men to call to mind that the apostles did not occupy themselves with writing conundrums and charades.”

Any intelligent person who is accustomed to apply the Apocalypse to papal Rome, is not likely to be much shaken by such a mode, either of argument or of ridicule. He will reflect that the general view he adopts does not, by any necessity, involve any absurd or ridiculous minuteness of detail. He will reflect that it is just as possible to interpret symbols generally, when applied to papal Rome, as when applied to pagan Rome. He will remember, too, that Professor Stuart does not dismiss with ridicule the fundamental ideas of Eichhorn, and others, concerning the book; although they are, undeniably, connected with most ridiculous errors of detail. He retains their ground-work, and rejects what he deems their errors. And does not even-handed justice demand that the same measure shall be meted to the other view? Ought it not to be stated with discrimination and precision, and separated from all non-essential adjuncts? And if it can be done, ought it not to be shown that, in no form, does its fundamental idea admit of defence?

But when it is nowhere stated with that discrimination and precision which the subject demands; when it is assailed by scattered assertions, here and there, from the beginning to the end of the work, its advocates may feel themselves harassed and disquieted, but they will not be convinced. Especially will it seem to them in bad taste, to say no more, to assail with ridicule the system which cheered the minds and sustained the hopes of such men as Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, Newton, Fuller and Scott, at least until it has been thoroughly and effectually subverted by fair argument.

But the intelligent advocates of the view thus assailed, though they will not, as easily they might, return ridicule for ridicule, will not rest here. Not only do they see that the deep foundations of their belief have not been shaken, but as before intimated, they see that their view is so inwrought into the fundamental structure of the Apocalypse, that it is impossible to remove it without doing violence to the book. The proof of this is simple, brief, and direct.

None of those against whom we now reason, deny that the events of the twentieth chapter are future. Satan is not yet bound. The millennial reign is yet to come. No less plain is it that the closing conflict of the nineteenth chapter is the immediate antecedent and cause of the binding of Satan and the millennial reign.
As the defeat of Bonaparte in the battle of Waterloo was the immediate antecedent and cause of his capture and confinement in St. Helena, so the defeat of Satan and the destruction of his forces in the last great conflict, is the immediate cause of his capture and confinement in the abyss.

Again, it is no less plain, that the main organs of his antecedent power have been two, the beast and the false prophet. To the beast the dragon gave his power, and his throne, and great authority (13:2). And the second beast, i.e. the false prophet, exercises all the power of the first beast (13:12). Moreover they are powers of long duration. For these identical agents of Satan are the leading combatants in the final battle, that precedes and introduces the millennium. Then, and then for the first time, are they taken and radically destroyed. Let any one who doubts, read and see. The inference is irresistible. They are both alive now. And if they are, then as Rome is definitely declared to be the centre of the system, the Romish Hierarchy under the Pope is the false prophet, and the civil system in league from age to age with this hierarchy, is the beast, and the general view which we have given of the scope of chap. 13—19 is undeniably true.

This argument, we have said, is simple, brief, and direct. It lies upon the very face of the book. True, it is but one; but one such argument is enough. At mid-day there is but one sun in the heavens; but let him who can eclipse it. The Pacific is but one ocean, but let him who can, stride across its limitless expanse. The Andes are but one chain of mountains, but let him who can leap their sky-piercing summits. So this one argument, simple, magnificent, and sublime, is enough for ever to settle the question.

If any should suggest that the beast and the false prophet in ch. 19: 19, 20, are merely generic symbols, and not the identical beast and second beast spoken of in ch. 13, we reply that this assertion is in direct conflict with the express words of the Apostle. He declares as plainly as language can declare, that they are the same; yea, he takes special pains to identify them. What are the most striking acts and characteristics of these two great conspirators against God and man in ch. 13? The second beast makes an image; both conspire to compel men to worship it. The beast has a mark; both conspire to compel men to receive it. The second beast deceives those who dwell on the face of the earth by lying wonders, wrought before the first beast. Had it been the purpose of God to identify these conspirators, what more could he do than to say, they are those by whom these very guilty deeds were done? But this is the very thing he has said—

"The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought prodigies before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image" (19:19, 20).
That this is so, is plain from the fact that although that remarkable symbolical agent, known in this book by way of eminence as θάνατος, is manifestly spoken of as one and the same agent, yet when the common interpretation is rejected, it becomes necessary to use the expression τὸ θανάτος in four different senses.

1. It is used specifically to denote an individual Roman Emperor, i.e. Nero.

2. It is used generically to denote the Emperors of Rome collectively.

3. It is used in a still more generic and indefinite sense, to denote the abstract idea of hostile civil power, as existing just before the millennium.

4. It denotes the devil, without any particular reference to civil power at all, or else it is uncertain what it does denote.

Of the first sense Prof. Stuart thus speaks, vol. ii., p. 351.—"That Nero is mainly characterized in XIII., XVI., XVII., we cannot well doubt."

Of the second sense, he says, "the beast generically considered, represents many kings, not merely one."

"Insensibly almost, at least so it is to the reader, this specific meaning appears to be dropped, and the more generic one to be employed again in chap. XVIII., seq."

Concerning the still more generic sense which refers to a time far beyond the era of the pagan Roman Emperors, even on the verge of the millennial day, he thus speaks, "As soon as the writer dismisses the case of Nero from his consideration, he deals no longer with anything but energetic representations. Persecutions will revive. The war will still be waged. At last, the great Captain of Salvation will come forth in all his power, and make an end of the long protracted war. Then, and not till then, will the millennial glory dawn on the Church."

And yet during all of the book from chap. 13 to 20, it lies upon the very face of the language, that John is speaking of one and the self-same beast. Even Prof. Stuart is compelled to admit this; for he says, "Insensibly, almost, at least so it is to the reader, this specific meaning appears to be dropped," &c. As the language in question was no doubt intended for the reader, so if it gives him no proper indication of a change in the sense of the words τὸ θανάτος, then we have every reason to believe that there is no such change. Most of all are we compelled to believe, that in chap. 19: 19, 20, the beast and the false prophet, who are so carefully identified with those of chap. 13, by a reference to the delusions practised by them, the image, the worship of which was exacted by them, and the sign which they demanded men to receive, are not mere generic representations, totally disconnected from the beasts of chap. 13; but are identically the same with them: so that if the beast of chap. 13, is Nero, then it follows that just before the millennium,
Nero is to encounter Christ, and be taken and cast into the lake of fire.

Concerning the fourth sense of ὁ θηριόν, i.e. the devil, Prof. Stuart thus speaks, commenting on chap. 11: 7—"The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them," i.e. the two witnesses. "Here ὁ θηριόν is said to ascend from the abyss; and who is it that dwells in the abyss, and is an enemy to Christians, and can come forth from that place to oppose them? Who but Satan or the dragon?"

Yet he is forced to admit that the beast of chap. 17: 8 is represented as coming from the abyss. Thus are they clearly identified. Rev. 17: 8, the language is ὁ θηριόν ὁ ἄδης ἐκ τοῦ ἄνω, ὁ ὢν ἐν τοῖς αἰωναίοις, τῷ ἀδιάβολῳ. Rev. 11: 7, the words are, τὸ θηριόν τὸ ἀναβάντων ἐκ τῶν αἰώνων.

But the general theory of Prof. Stuart as to the slaying of the witnesses, forbids him to admit the identity of the beasts of these two chapters.

Now consider how great, how prominent the part assigned to the beast in this book—consider how he is referred to κατ᾽ ἐκεῖνον as ὁ θηριόν—consider the distinct individuality of his character and deeds, and can that be a true theory which demands such a fluctuation and confusion of senses, in which one sense is dropped, and another taken imperceptibly to the reader, whilst he clearly does perceive that one and the same agent is spoken of? That is, now specific, meaning Nero; now more generic, meaning the Roman Emperors collectively; now indefinitely generic, meaning certain unknown deceivers to be encountered just before the millennium; and now specific again, meaning neither Nero nor the Roman Emperors, but the devil? Can this be true, especially when the last time the beast appears on the stage, in the closing ante-millennial battle, he is minutely and carefully identified with the beast, who came upon the stage in chap. 13?

Indeed so strong is the evidence that the beast is still alive, that Prof. Stuart is obliged expressly to say, vol. ii., p. 309.—"It is only in the course of time (which is not limited), when the Redeemer himself shall come at the head of his victorious army, that the final extinction of the power of the beast takes place." And yet such is the confusion of idea, of necessity produced by the system, that on the same page, he says, "The death of Nero was indeed the destruction of the beast for the time being, and it made a temporary end of persecution. But the beast still came up again from the pit; the contest was renewed, and, with many remissions, continued down to the time of Constantine. Rome, as heathen, then finally ceased to persecute. The beast was finally slain." And yet, after all, it seems that the final extinction of the power of the beast was not to take place till more than fifteen
hundred years after, when the Redeemer himself shall come at the head of his victorious army.

Truly this is more obscure than the double sense. We have a quadruple sense of one and the same expression, and without rule or law, nay, against all rule and law; the mind is made to flit from one to the other, and in the confusion of the transitions can retain no definite idea what The Beast is, though it is the most prominent figure in the whole composition.

All this confusion of necessity results from the vain effort to make a crisis and a catastrophe in the days of Nero, where there is manifestly none.

There is plainly but one catastrophe of the Beast, and the false prophet, and that occurs in Chap. 19, at the close. That this is the final catastrophe even Prof. Stuart is compelled to admit. And it is no less plain that this is future. Prof. Stuart is also obliged to concede this. Of course, the beast and the false prophet are yet alive. Their final defeat is yet to come. The splendor and the terror of the battle of the great day of God Almighty are yet to be revealed. If now, we try to split up into parts a catastrophe that is manifestly simple and one; if one part lies in the yet distant future, and another part is placed nearly eighteen hundred years in the past, in the days of Nero, and another part in the days of Constantine, how can anything but constant mental confusion be the result? But most manifestly, in the days of Nero there was nothing like a grand catastrophe in history. Much less was the conversion of Constantine anything like a terrific catastrophe, a catastrophe of wrath. And yet the catastrophe of the beast, whenever it takes place, is such a catastrophe.

But apply the passage to the papal power, and to the civil system in league with it, and all is definite and simple. It presents a sublime view of the past, and a glorious victory of God in the future, when the beast and the false prophet shall finally be consumed, in the fierceness of his wrath. From what has been said then, it is plain that this view is so inwrought into the fundamental structure of the Apocalypse, that it is impossible to remove it without doing violence to the book.

Of this we shall adduce further evidence as we proceed directly to examine the German theory as propounded and defended by Prof. Stuart.

This theory is based chiefly on certain undeniable principles of interpretation, i.e. That we must regard the circumstances of the writer and his readers, and his end in writing. These, it is alleged, forbid the application of the book to the papacy, as involving a syllabus of civil and ecclesiastical history. The tendency of these principles thus used, is to crowd everything back, as far as possible, into the days of John, and the Christians among whom
he wrote, on the ground that he must have written for their consolation and support, and that what he wrote must have been intelligible to them. But a syllabus of history could have served no end but to gratify a prurient historical curiosity. Therefore he did not write such a syllabus—but was mainly intent on consoling Christians during the Neronian persecutions. This is the substance of the principles and their application. They are indeed presented over and over again in every variety of form, until the mind becomes weary of the repetition. But the essence is what we have stated. Now that the Holy Spirit would, to a great extent, regard the wants of the generation for whom John wrote, cannot be denied; and this he plainly did in the introductory chapters, and in the letters to the seven churches. In these are abundant warning, consolation, and reproof, enough undeniably to meet all present emergencies. But let us remember, that John was the last of the inspired writers, and that by him the canon was to be closed. Of course, the necessities of the coming two thousand or more years before the millennial day, were also to be regarded, as well as those of the generation among whom he wrote. Would they be agonized by no persecutions? Would they never bleed at every pore under cruel tyrants? Would they never need consolation and support? Shall God’s communications be expended to a wasteful extent, in view of a persecution under Nero, which even if it did spread beyond Rome, of which there is no certainty, and little probability, was yet so near to its end, that John’s book could scarcely reach the sufferers before it was over, whilst the transcendentally bloody persecutions of the Church of Rome for long and gloomy centuries, are overlooked?

But it is alleged that it is the law of prophetic writing to expand what is near, and to give but brief glimpses of the future. Why then is there such a minute and vivid expansion in chaps. 21, and 22, of the most distant future in the book? Is it said that the future glories of God and the church in Heaven would console the church in the days of Nero? And would not the vision of a future glorious triumph of God over the most terrific enemies that Satan could raise up on earth, also console them? Prof. Stuart, we are aware, asks how could it console Christians to be assured that there would be a great apostasy, and that the nominal church would become a bloody persecuting power? No one was ever simple enough to suppose that there was any consolation in this. But this is not the whole. It is no less clearly revealed that God will destroy, in a manner equally glorious and terrific, this great conspiracy, against his cause. And is there no consolation in this? Neither is there any consolation in knowing that there will be a great apostasy after the millennium; but is there none in knowing that God will most signally defeat and destroy its power?
The truth is, we are not competent to say a priori, how much, in
revealing the closing historical book of the New Testament God
ought to regard the then present generation, and how much the
future. If John were a mere uninspired man, as most of the Ger-
man commentators suppose, we should not expect that he would
see much beyond the horizon of present events. But the foresight
of the future, and the judgment what to present, belonged not to
John as a man, but to John as an inspired man. He did not call
up the splendid panorama of symbols on which he gazed, but the
Spirit of God caused it to pass before his mind, and it came and
disappeared not as John, but as God, judged and chose.

It is also alleged that John must have written to be understood
by the generation among whom he wrote. No doubt he did to a
certain extent. But we know well, that even uninspired men
often are conscious of thinking far in advance of the generation in
the midst of which they live and write; and we know that they
often write far more with a reference to posterity than to those by
whom they are surrounded. They expect indeed to be understood
in part by the present generation, but not to be fully understood
except by future generations. For this reason the illustrious Lord
Bacon committed his reputation to the care of future ages—nor
did he do it in vain. And shall the thoughts of God, and the vast
interests of his eternal kingdom, be cramped down till they can
enter the contracted minds of the generation that happens to live
when they are disclosed?

Some things indeed may be very intelligible, but if God speaks
like himself, many will not be so; and he may well commit the
judgment on them to future ages. And if Prof. Stuart's view of
the Apocalypse is true; so he did; for there is not the least evi-
dence, or even probability, that the book was ever understood as
he now understands it, till since the Reformation.

True, he assumes that the Christians under the persecutions of
Nero must so have understood it, and been consol ed by it. But
of this there is not a particle of proof. Prof. Stuart says, "We
cannot, indeed, make out the history of Apocalyptic exegesis, in
the apostolic age, i.e. during the first century, from any written
documents, for such we do not possess." But if the book was
once understood as Prof. Stuart now expounds it, would all traces
of this view, written or traditional, have utterly disappeared? Yet
they have. The earliest traces of any kind of interpretation of
the book are visionary and erroneous to such a degree as to
injure the authority of the book. Prof. Stuart says, "We only
know that soon after this age (the apostolic), readers of the Ap-
calypt began to explain some parts of it in such a literal manner
as to throw in the way very great obstacles to the reception of the
book as canonical."—(i., 461.) He refers chiefly to the millen-
narian views of Papius and others. But in the third century he
says, "Hitherto all in the exegesis of the Apocalypse is fluctuating, arbitrary, and of course uncertain. No idea of any regular plan and connexion throughout this book, seems to have suggested itself to the minds of the writers of that day."—(Vol. i., p. 453.)

Of the work of Victorinus, the earliest commentary on the book, Stuart says, "No plan of the whole work is sought after, or even conceived of; no effort to get at the circumstances and relation of the writer of the Apocalypse and his times, and bring them to bear on the explanation of the book."—(i., 456.) At the close of the eighth century, he informs us, "no real and solid advances were made."—(i., 458.) From this period to the Reformation, he says there was "nothing important in the way of exegesis." The Reformers, also, in applying it to the papacy, according to Prof. Stuart, erred, and no clear and definite light dawned till the Jesuit Ludovicus ab Alcassar wrote in 1614. He introduced substantially the view that Prof. Stuart now advocates, to the great gratification of the Romanists of his day. Grotius and others followed him, till at last Eichhorn presented this view in its most brilliant form. Of the main features of his exegesis, Prof. Stuart says, "they substantially agree with the general tenor of the book."—(i., 472.) Such, according to Prof. Stuart, are the facts of the case. And in view of them we ask, is it at all likely that the true interpretation of the work was at first plain and actually understood, and yet that all traces of it were so soon and so utterly lost? We have not the slightest belief that the book was ever understood as Prof. Stuart now interprets it in the apostolic age, nor indeed ever until the days of the Jesuit Alcassar.

But mere general principles can never settle the interpretation of the book. In order to do this, it is necessary to examine their application in detail. Although a minute examination of all of Prof. Stuart's exposition is impossible in our limits, yet enough can be considered to aid us in forming a judgment of his fundamental view. This we shall next attempt.

Meantime we will remark, that although it would be a great error, to misinterpret the Apocalypse for the sake of assailing Rome, it would be no less an error, on the eve of the coming and greatest conflict with that power, to throw away weapons of heavenly temper expressly provided for the conflict by God. If God has specifically spoken of the Romish hierarchy in words of consuming fire, then no indefinite human theory of a general certainty of the destruction of all God's enemies, can make good the loss of God's own words. We all know that God's enemies will fall, but who are they? The mother of harlots will of course be destroyed, but who is she? Is it nothing to have in God's own words a description of the very powers with whom we are to contend? No words have an edge and a power like those of God. If the Spirit has given us a sword against the greatest enemy of
God and man now on earth, well may the Christian soldier say in the words of David, "there is none like that; give it me." The interpretation of the Apocalypse, then, is not a question of mere abstract theory. It is vitally connected with the greatest moral conflict of this or any other age.

Professor Stuart has followed the fundamental principles of the Jesuit Alcassar, as the basis of his exposition, i.e. he regards the Apocalypse as "a continuous and connected work, making regular advancement from beginning to end, as parts of one general plan in the mind of the writer. Ch. 5–11, he thinks, applies to the Jewish enemies of the Christian Church; ch. 11–19 to heathen Rome and carnal and worldly powers; ch. 20–22 to the final conquests to be made by the Church and also to its rest, and its ultimate glorification." (i. 463, 464.)

Of course he regards the fall of Jerusalem as the great catastrophe of the first part, and the development of this catastrophe he finds in ch. 11: 15–19, and all that precedes from ch. 6, is designed to prepare the way for this result. A prominent part of this preparation is to be found in the slaying of the witnesses, which occupies the greater part of ch. 11. Now, it is our conviction that this part of the theory cannot be carried out, without doing greater violence to all true laws of prophetic interpretation than is to be found in all the works of Bishop Newton, Scott, Fuller, Edwards; or any of the defenders of the common English theory.

In the first place the language in ch. 11: 15–19, has no fitness to describe such a catastrophe as the fall of Jerusalem. It is upon the face of it, a song of triumph for the conversion of the world to God, after a divine inquisition and judgment, and a retribution to good and to bad, and a glorious victory over hostile nations; and if it were not a case of life and death to the theory, no man, we are assured, would ever conjecture that there was the slightest reference to the fall of Jerusalem or to Jewish affairs in the whole passage. To make it so apply, requires the utmost violence in forcing the words to say what they obviously do not say, and not to say what they obviously do say, as we shall soon show.

Again, this view disagrees with the declaration of the angel in ch. 10: 5–7, that in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished, as he has declared to his servants the prophets. Now it is plain that the existence of the papal anti-Christian power and her civil allies ruling the world in the name of Christ, corrupting society, and preventing the conversion of the world to God, is the great mystery spoken of by Paul, in 2 Thess. 2: 1–12; and the destruction of these powers by the glorious advent of Christ is the finishing of that mystery. Moreover, the general scope of prophecy in both dispensations, is to hold up the universal prevalence of the kingdom of Christ over manifold opposition, as the finishing of the mystery of God. The solemnity of
the whole scene, the oath of the angel that there should be no longer any delay, but that when the seventh angel should sound the mystery should be finished, all imply a long protracted series of antecedent events, on a great scale, followed by the full development of God's system, the triumph of his principles, and the cessation of that mysterious and long continued triumph of Satan, that had so severely tried the people of God. All the expectation thus excited, the language of ch. 11:15—19 in its obvious sense, perfectly gratifies. It implies that the exercise of the great power of God has been for ages withheld, and therefore Satan had come in great power, and organized vast systems to desolate and destroy the earth; but that at length God had taken to himself his great power and reigned. The nations indeed rage and oppose; but the time of divine judgment and recompense has come. Saints and martyrs are to be rewarded, and those who have destroyed the earth are to be destroyed. Hence the all-comprehending idea of the whole is to be found in the anthem that bursts from the lips of the angelic host, "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The fundamental ideas of this passage are precisely those of ch. 19:20; so much so, that those may be regarded as a mere expansion of these.

And now, how are these things to be changed into a mere catastrophe of wrath, like the fall of Jerusalem? The nature of that catastrophe can be easily gathered from the ample and undoubted predictions of Christ with reference to it. It is a day of judgment and of wrath; but not of the conversion of the world to God. Christ anticipates no such result. Jerusalem is rather to be trodden down of the gentiles for a long period, even until the times of the gentiles shall be fulfilled. Moreover, as it regards the catastrophe itself, our Savior is full and precise. Is there even a hint of this catastrophe in this passage? Not one. Even Prof. Stuart virtually admits this, for he endeavors to account for it thus: "the writer is a Jew, and how can he dwell on the destruction of his beloved city and people with a minuteness of representation? He turned from the scene with weeping as a sympathizing Jew," &c., ii.: 145. Again, "The shouts of victory in heaven, fill the ears and occupy the mind of the seer, and turn away his attention from the sad spectacle of the overthrow of his beloved city and people." We confess that this account of the matter, in view of all the circumstances of the case, is little less than ludicrous. The fall of Jerusalem is assumed to be the great catastrophe for which, during six whole chapters, John has been preparing the way. He had heard the words of Christ describing that catastrophe. Six seals have been opened full of omens of wrath. Six trumpets have sounded their blasts of vengeance; every form of terror has been accumulated; but just when the final catastrophe comes, and the
highest development of wrath is demanded, alas! the heart of John is too tender to present it. He omits it entirely, and his ears are filled and his mind is occupied by the shouts of victory in heaven; and those shouts have no reference to the fall of Jerusalem, but solely to the conversion of the world!

It is so plain that the fall of Jerusalem is not here represented that Bleek, Ewald and others deny that there is here any catastrophe at all. Prof. Stuart regards this as unaccountable; to us it is not. It is far more rational to deny any catastrophe at all, than to find the fall of Jerusalem in such a passage as this.

Moreover, there is other internal evidence against this view. The enemies over whom God triumphs are indicated in a way that clearly shows that Jews are not meant. They are called καὶ ἐδρύ (11:18) the nations, or the gentiles. They, and not the Jews, are angry, and resist God. This is perfectly decisive, for never are the Jews called καὶ ἐδρύ, in the general and unlimited sense. This is the common and universal antithesis of the Jews. In opposition to this, Prof. Stuart quotes some passages in which the Jews are called a nation, in the singular, i.e., Gen. 12:2. Ps. 33:12. Is. 1:4. 9:2. 26:2. 49:7. But how manifest is it that to call the Jews a nation, is not the same as to call them καὶ ἐδρύ, the nations. A nation they were; the nations they never were. Nor were they ever so called. Neither does the passage in Gen. 35:11, to which he appeals, sustain Prof. Stuart. Here God says to Abraham, "a nation and a company of nations, shall be of thee." Now the Jews were not in the strict sense a company of nations, but of tribes. Therefore, Rosenmüller says, "Propagatio e patribus undecim tribuum am natis, et Benjamine mox nascituro indicatur;" and he quotes Le Clerc to the same effect. דִּ֖イル is here used in a peculiar and unusual manner; and the use is decided by the context. But never are the Jews called absolutely and independently καὶ ἐδρύ. Prof. Stuart also appeals to Ps. 2:1. "Why do the nations edry דִּ֖イル and the people Laos דִּ֖ילְנֶּ imagine a vain thing?" The raging of the nations here, he says, "applies principally to rebellious Jews." (ii., 242.) Yet the inspired apostles in Acts 4:27, do not take this view. After quoting the passage from Ps. 2, they say, in explanation of its fulfilment, "for of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, &c." So then inspiration has decided that by the gentiles, the Jews are not here meant, for they are distinguished from the people of Israel. There is then, as we have before stated, no case in which the Jews are called καὶ ἐδρύ, and of course the enemies here referred to, are not the Jews, but the hostile nations of the world at large, as the whole scope of the passage plainly shows. Nothing therefore, but the utmost violence can force this passage into a
description of the fall of Jerusalem; and yet to the theory of Alcas-
sar, Eichhorn and Stuart, such an application is essential. That
theory therefore must be false.

Still further, the same theory renders necessary either an obscure
or an imaginary interpretation of the slaying of the two witnesses.
It compels the interpreter to find the fulfilment of this prophecy in
events preceding the fall of Jerusalem. But it lies on the very
face of the prediction that the witnesses were of such power and
influence as to torment those that dwelt on the earth, and that their
death would arrest the attention of the people and kindreds, and
tongues, and nations, and fill them with joy—that their resurrec-
tion would fill them with terror, and be attended with great con-
volutions.

Let us now call to mind that our Savior took especial pains to
point out to his disciples the signs by which they might foreknow
that the fall of Jerusalem was at hand, and enjoined it on them to
escape. Moreover, the general belief of the Christian world, ever
since, has been, that they did escape, and that no Christians were
in Jerusalem when it was compassed about by the Romans.

And yet this theory compels us to find these two illustrious wit-
nesses of God in Jerusalem at this very time, and to discover
events corresponding to their death and resurrection, and the
great convulsions attending it.

Now by a stern necessity, either an absurd or an imaginary
exposition must be adopted. If it is admitted that there were no
Christians in Jerusalem, then the interpretation is absurd, for it
finds God's two illustrious witnesses either among the abandoned
Jews or the heathen. Herder and Eichhorn look for them among
the Jews, and select the Jewish High Priests Ananias and Jesus,
whom the zealots slew. That is, the guilty leaders of God's aban-
donied enemies on whom his vengeance was soon to fall, are God's
two witnesses, whom the beast from the bottomless pit will slay,
and whom God will raise to glory! Where in Mede, Newton,
Scott, Fuller, or Edwards, can anything be found comparable to
this for intense absurdity? Prof. Stuart has taken good heed to
avoid this Scylla, but in doing it, he is obliged to fall into the
Charybdis of purely imaginary interpretation.

There is not a solitary scrap of history by which it can be made
to appear probable that there were any Christians in Jerusalem—
much less, that there were two or more teachers deserving of a
description so magnificent—much less that they were put to death,
—much less that it excited the attention of people, and kindreds,
and tongues, and nations—still less that they rose, and great fear
and convulsions attended their resurrection.

What then is Prof. Stuart's ground? He admits, that "according
to the testimony of the ancients, the great body of Christians
fled beyond the Jordan to Pella, when Palestine was invaded by
the *Romana.* That Judea could successfully resist the Roman power, no considerate person would believe. Hence the flight of Christians in accordance with the warnings of the Savior. But still the case can hardly be imagined, where all would be able to make good their escape. The sick, the aged, paupers, persons of a hesitating or doubting turn of mind, must, or at least would, delay, or give up an effort to fly. Then, among the faithful and zealous teachers of Christianity in Palestine, there must have been those who chose to remain and preach repentance and faith to their perishing countrymen. These I regard as symbolized by the two witnesses in 11:3." (ii:227.)

But is there any historical proof that such illustrious preachers did stay, contrary to the express directions of Christ? None at all. Is there any proof that they tormented those who dwelt on the earth; that nations and peoples and tongues rejoiced in their death, and were terrified by their resurrection in any sense? Not a particle. If there were any teachers, or death, or resurrection of any sort, it excited so little attention and made so little impression, that the general and constant impression of the ancients was, that there were no Christians there at all. But Prof. Stuart finds it hard to imagine that all could escape, and thinks that some teachers must have chosen to stay and preach, and that the zealots would probably kill them; and that the Christian religion would prevail notwithstanding, and this is the death and resurrection of the witnesses!

And now we ask any man to sit down and read ch. 11:1—14, and compare with it an interpretation so purely imaginary and conjectural, an interpretation that cannot call in one historical fact to its support, and then to say whether it can be the true interpretation of a passage so striking and sublime? Ought we not rather to find the interpretation of such a passage in a series of events that deeply affected and agitated the world, and not in a series that made so little impression that no record of them ever was made, and even the memory of them has entirely faded away? It is of no avail to say that we must not interpret too minutely and specifically, the drapery and costume of prophecy. We admit it. But it is a still greater offence utterly to evaporate the vital energy of such a passage, by applying the most moving and striking symbols of the book to purely imaginary and utterly improbable events.

But Prof. Stuart says, that Christ has plainly foretold the persecution of Christians at the time in question, and refers to Matt. 24:9—13. Mark 13:9—13. Luke 21:12—16. No doubt he foretold persecutions in these words, but they were plainly to precede, not to follow, the flight of Christians from Jerusalem. For the persecutions were included among the preceding signs; and after them, he says, when ye shall see certain other signs then
see from Jerusalem to the mountains. See Luke 21:20, 21. Mark 13:14, 15. Matt. 24:15, 16. His words, therefore, indicate no persecution of Christians in Jerusalem after the flight to the mountains, but clearly imply the reverse. Plainly then, that theory must be wrong which compels us to look for the two witnesses in Jerusalem, just before its fall.

Nor is this the end of the violence which this theory compels us to do to the laws of prophetic-interpretation. It compels us to find in Jerusalem some organized civil power to slay the witnesses, that can be called the beast that ascendeth from the bottomless pit. Prof. Stuart (ii:232) has well set forth the perplexity of interpreters on this point. Eichhorn says that ὑποκοπή is generic, and is put for ὑποκοπέας, and that ὑποκοπέας means the locusts, in ch. 9:2. That is, the beast means beasts in general, and beasts in general, means locusts in particular. Grotius and Hammond say that it means the famous impostor Barochchab, &c.; but enough of such theories. According to Prof. Stuart, it should mean the Zealots; for he thinks it extremely probable that they killed the Christian teachers, who probably remained at Jerusalem. But as it would be hard to show in what sense the Zealots were the beast that ascendeth from the bottomless pit, he finally, as a last resort, fixes on Satan—though he is nowhere else in the whole Bible thus designated, and though the word plainly denotes a civil organization and not an individual person. All this violence results of necessity, from endeavoring to convert a song of triumph over the conversion of the world, into an account of the fall of Jerusalem. Let the language of ch. 11:15—19 he taken in its plain and obvious sense, and there will be no difficulty in knowing who the beast is; for, as we have seen, he lives till just before the conversion of the world, and the slaying of the witnesses also takes place so near to that great event, that we are not obliged to hunt up some new and strange meaning of the word beast, or to consider it as denoting the devil. The one great beast fulfills all the conditions of the case.

But Prof. Stuart relies on what is said as it regards the slaying of the witnesses in the city in which our Lord was crucified, as proof that the literal Jerusalem is meant. Yet he is utterly unable to carry out the literal interpretation, through the passage. Speaking of ch. 11:1, 2, he says, "How can we consider the representation before us as anything more than mere symbol?" Is it to be once actually imagined, that John actually expected the Gentiles who would tread down the holy city, and the exterior part of the temple (τῷ ἁγίῳ τῷ ἱερῷ) to spare the interior part of the temple and the worshippers there? This would be to suppose him wholly ignorant of the manner in which war was conducted at the time when he lived. Moreover, as to matter of fact, the reverse of what is implied by such a supposition actually
took place. The temple—the very sanctum itself—was the great slaughter house at the time of the Roman invasion, and all the sacred building was destroyed together, at one and the same period." He resorts of necessity, therefore, to a spiritual interpretation of the temple, and of measuring its parts and worshipers, and preserving a part, and giving up a part to the Gentiles. "But we have the same right to interpret the city spiritually, that he has so to interpret the temple. Moreover, consistency requires it, for mixed interpretation is worse than mixed metaphor. Indeed, Prof. Stuart, in reply to Ewald and Bleek, says, "Why should we adopt an exegesis which is half literal and half figurative?" (ii: 215.) So say we; and yet see how this very thing is done in this passage (i: 184): "The city where our Lord was crucified, was about to be destroyed." This he takes as a literal fact, and thus proceeds: "There was the temple of God, and there in former days he had dwelt. The most holy place is therefore measured off, for exemption from destruction, i.e., the spiritual part of the ancient dispensation is still to be preserved." Is not this exegesis half literal and half figurative? So too, he refers the sealing in ch. 7, to the literal Jewish nation (ii: 139), although the transaction manifestly indicates merely the salvation of a portion of God's elect, i.e., the true spiritual Israel, from impending perils, just as the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel on the gates of the heavenly city (21: 12), denote that all the elect of God have finally reached their eternal home in that city. We regard, therefore, all arguments derived from a reference to "the city called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified," in favor of the idea that ch. 11: 15—19 refers to the fall of Jerusalem as utterly baseless. A figurative interpretation is in part indispensable, as Prof. Stuart has clearly shown (though we do not regard his particular one as correct), and both consistency and the exigency of the case demand a spiritual interpretation throughout. In short, it is not possible to introduce the fall of the literal Jerusalem here, as we have abundantly shown, without the utmost violence of every kind. But a spiritual interpretation will render all symmetrical and consistent.

Thus have we examined the general outlines of what is regarded by Prof. Stuart as the first catastrophe, and shown that they do not present to us the harmonious parts of a consistent system, but warring elements that refuse to combine in harmony either with each other, or with the providence of God. It would be easy still further to illustrate and prove this by descending to minutest details, but this general view of the so called first catastrophe, is all that our limits will admit.

We will now proceed to consider what is called the second catastrophe.

We have already indicated that upon the face of it, as presented
by Prof. Stuart, it is a most singular and unexampled catastrophe, beginning as it does nearly 1800 years ago, and stretching over the middle ages, and about to be completed at some indefinite future time. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of more incongruities and inconsistencies than are involved in the endeavor, to blend Nero, the Roman Emperors collectively, and the future enemies of the Church, together with all intervening enemies, in one and the same catastrophe. It sets at defiance all laws, poetical, historical, exegetical, or prophetic.

The centre of this theory, as presented by Prof. Stuart, lies in the assumption that Nero is the beast described in chap. 17. This view exerts in this theory a wide-reaching influence through the Apocalypse. It is made extensively to control its interpretation, and to reverse, on grounds of internal evidence, the prevailing opinion of the ancients, that it was written in the time of Domitian, and to fix it before the fall of Jerusalem. How then is this theory established? It is by assuming that John has in chap. 17, in direct terms, asserted the truth of certain rumors concerning the death of Nero, and his return to life, and to the imperial authority, which heathen soothsayers had circulated in the Roman empire, not because he believed them, but to point out Nero as the beast spoken of in chap. 13, 16, 17.

Now this, we do not hesitate to say, is at war with every sound principle of interpretation. The words of John are—"The beast which thou sawest was and is not, and shall ascend from the abyss, and go into perdition, and all who dwell upon the earth, whose names were not written from the foundation of the world, in the Lamb's book of life, shall wonder when they behold the beast, that was and is not, and yet is." (17: 8.)

These are as absolute and solemn affirmations as it is in the power of language to make, and they occur in a series, the rest of which is admitted to consist of absolute affirmations; e. g. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth (v. 9); and there are seven kings, five have fallen, one is, the other not yet come, &c. (v. 10). The ten horns are ten kings (v. 12). They shall fight with the Lamb, and he shall overcome them (v. 14). God hath put it in their heart to give their kingdom to the beast (v. 17). The woman is the great city, &c. (v. 18). All these are not rumors, but direct assertions of facts. But verses 8 and 11 are in the same style of affirmation, and are closely interwoven into the series. Who, then, has a right to break out these links from the chain of assertions, and to declare that their design is not what it seems to be, and what the words imply—to assert real facts, but something quite different, i. e., to retail unfounded rumors of heathen soothsayers concerning Nero, in such a way as to point him out as the beast? We protest most earnestly against such a violation of every sound law of interpreta-
tion. When the editors of the improved version of the New Testament came to John 1:10, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not," they merely inserted περιελθοντος after ἀφηνετο, and then all became "facile and congruous." "He was in the world, and the world was enlightened by him," &c. But with what indignation was the question asked, what right have you to insert περιελθοντος? John says nothing about it. But this is a small affair, compared with the insertions needed to bring out the new sense of Rev. 17:8. Let us listen to Prof. Stuart. We have enclosed his additions in brackets, in order that the reader may see at a glance what John actually does say, and what additions are needed to bring out the new sense.

"What the angel says, seems to be (?) equivalent to this. 'The beast [means the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, of whom the report spread through the empire is, that he] will revive, after being [apparently] slain, and will come [as it were] from the abyss or Hades; but he will still perish, and that speedily. [The beast symbolizes him, of whom it is said that] all the world will wonder at [and worship] him when they see him thus returned [as they suppose] from the under world, [that is, all] whose names have not been inscribed in the book of life, before the world was made.'" (ii:323.)

Now, it will be seen that the effect of the additions is not merely to modify, but directly to contradict, what John actually says. John affirms, that the beast will revive after being slain, and that this fact shall excite universal wonder. The additions imply that nothing at all of this kind will take place, but that it is a mere unfounded rumor.

But there is one part of this verse that no violence can pervert or silence. It is the exception of those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. Was this a part of the heathen rumor? Did the soothsayers declare that all should wonder at the return of Nero from the abyss, except those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world? The supposition is absurd. What did they know or believe concerning the Lamb's book of life and election from eternity? This exception, then, can be no part of the heathen rumor—of course the universal wonder to which it is an exception, is no part of that rumor, but a reality; for would the inspired apostle John gravely make so solemn and emphatic an exception, to an unfounded heathen rumor about a universal wonder, which he well knew never would take place? But if the universal wonder is a reality, the cause of it is also a reality; that is the coming up of the beast from the abyss is a reality, and not a heathen rumor about Nero. Therefore, the whole statement is a reality and not a rumor. Thus, not only the whole scope of the
passage, but also a most irresistible exigentia loci, refute and explode the theory that would force the language of John into a reference to heathen rumors concerning Nero.

We do not know, in the whole history of interpretation, of a case of such violence done to the plainest laws of language as is found in this effort to turn aside and neutralize the pointed assertion of John. With such laws of interpretation, it is possible to make aliquot ex aliquo.

True, Prof. Stuart asserts that the object of John is dilucidation, and not prediction, in this passage. But how are we to know that? Out of a given series of similar assertions, who can select some, and say these are meant for dilucidation, but the rest are meant for prophecy? And if once such a principle is introduced, who is to limit its use? It is easy to raise the devil, but not so easy to lay him when once raised. And so Prof. Stuart has found it. For in v. 16, Ewald interprets the assertion that the ten horns and the beast should hate the whore, as having reference to the rumored return of Nero from the East, and his union with certain kings to destroy Rome. But Prof. Stuart tells us, "here there is not so much of explanation on the part of John, as of prediction;" and then gives a lame account of what seems to be the sense. But finally he says, "after all, there would not perhaps be much to object to Ewald's exegesis here, provided it should be regarded merely in the light of a dilucidation." Thus does one false principle, or precedent, like the dry rot in timber, corrupt and destroy the whole framework of interpretation. For if Prof. Stuart has a right to say that in one case John is not predicting, though he seems to predict, why has not Ewald or any one else, as good a right to make the same assertion anywhere else? Indeed the thing does not stop here. In chap. 16: 12, Ewald and others refer the pouring out the vial on the river Euphrates, and preparing the way for the kings of the East, "to the harlot which predicted, that Nero should flee to the East, and there rouse up and unite many kingdoms, and then come and invade Italy and burn Rome." Prof. Stuart admits the existence of such rumors concerning Nero in the East, but still he assures us definitely, that "John is here predicting a reality, something which will take place, not merely, as in some other cases, saying something concerning Nero, which might serve to make him known to his readers." It is easy to make such assertions, but we should be gratified to know on what principle they are made. Who is to tell us when John is prophesying, and when not? We have a great respect for Prof. Stuart's assertion; but we infinitely prefer one definite principle to his or any other man's assertion. But he has destroyed the principle that is essential to our defence, and in place of it, seeks to erect a mere barrier of assertions.

But he informs us: 442, that, some circumstances, which
has not seen distinctly noticed by any of the commentators, tend
to confirm his view. "These are the somewhat veiled, but still
sufficiently plain, intelligible, and oft-repeated cautions of the writer
of the Apocalypse, that the reader should weigh his words, and not
give them an interpretation such as a superficial reading might
suggest." We do not wonder that none of the commentators have
noticed these cautions. One is, 13:9, "if any-man have an ear,
let him hear." A caution often repeated by our Savior, and found
in all the letters to the churches. Does this intimate that these
letters are "not to be interpreted by the letter or according to the
first appearance of the words?" That they are "not to be interpreted in the ordinary way?" If they do not, why give the same
words that force here?

Again, the assertion, ver. 10, "he that leadeth into captivity, shall
go into captivity, he that killeth by the sword must be killed by
the sword," is said to point out Nero. But these words have no
more a natural reference to Nero, than the assertion of Christ,
"they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

Again, in 13:18, and in 17:9, it is intimated that peculiar
wisdom is needed in order to get at the meaning of John; and
from this he infers that the passages were not intended to be
"interpreted in the ordinary way." He says, "Interpreted in the
ordinary way, we might make out from our text the meaning
that Nero had been already wounded," &c. Of course, according
to Prof. Stuart, the text is not to be interpreted in the ordinary
way. And are we then, in order to manifest peculiar wisdom, to
abandon the ordinary laws of interpretation, and to attach a mean-
ing to the Word of God by a reference to unfounded rumors and
heathen harangues? For our part, we cannot see that this is any
more consistent with the true dignity of prophecy than the practice,
so soundly reprobated by Prof. Stuart, of interpreting it as if it
were a series of "riddles and conundrums." We confess that this
whole effort to force Nero into ch. 17, as the wounded beast, and
the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit, savors too much of
that German infidelity that regards John as little better than a
soothsayer himself, and does not hesitate to affirm that he believes
the rumors concerning Nero. They are at least consistent, for
they teach that John really thought that Nero would come
to life, and they are not obliged to neutralize his assertion by
saying that he did not mean what he actually says. But Prof.
Stuart of course, abandons this ground. He says emphatically,
"I do not say, that John meant to convey the impression that Nero
would actually revive and re-appear on the stage of action; for
this I do not believe." (ii: 441.) And yet he asserts that he spoke
as if he believed it, and that in order to get at his true mean-
ing, we are not to interpret his words in the ordinary way. For
ourselves, we decidedly reject not only the root of this German
indefecond, but all that has ever grown from it. This theory as to Nero has decided infidel associations. It is perfectly consistent in the hands of one who denies the inspiration of John; but it cannot be so grafted on the tree of true Christian interpretation, as to appear like one of its true and genuine branches. In short, we are deeply convinced that it is no part of a true interpretation of the word of God.

Still further, we object to this theory that it converts prophecy into an undignified syllabus of minute contemporaneous events, and does not give to its symbols that sublime magnitude and far-reaching scope, which accord with the magnitude and vast extent of the system of God. To a finite mind, near events assume a disproportional magnitude and importance. But an infinite mind can see all events in their true magnitude and relations, and sketch the bold outlines, and omit the minute details.

Now let us look at a few facts as given by Prof. Stuart: "The persecution of Nero began in the middle of Nov. A. D., 64" (ii: 279). It ended with the death of Nero, A. D., 68, June 9; for Galba was proclaimed Emperor on the 9th of June in the same year, and Nero was assassinated on the same day. It is not improbable that Galba was on his march from Spain when the Apocalypse was written, so that the time of deliverance for the church was very near when the book was written (ii: 280). Again, the evidence that the persecution spread from Rome into the provinces is so feeble, that the ablest modern historians deny that it did, e.g. Neander, Lüeke, Gieseler and others. Stuart, indeed, labors to controvert their views; but this state of facts shows of itself, that the persecution was not great and prominent, except at Rome, else it would have made a deeper impression and left stronger evidences of its existence. Not only is this true, but it was also just at its close. The Apocalypse, we are told, was written during the year in which Nero died; and yet its main end was to console and sustain the church under his persecutions. Is not this too much like crying fire, after the fire is put out? Before the book could be finished, copied and circulated, Nero would be dead and the persecution over. Now, does it comport with any just sense of the elevated and expanded views of God, to suppose that he would devote so much space, in such circumstances, to a minute syllabus of events, and even rumors about Nero? After presenting the beast in ch. 13, the development of omens of wrath goes on, till at the end of ch. 16, the seven vials are all poured out, all aimed at the beast. Then comes up the question who is this beast? And in ch. 17, in a most mysterious way, John intimates that it is Nero, by a minute detail of pagan rumors about him; and then the final catastrophe comes on, and somewhere at last, though Prof. Stuart does not indicate where, Nero is slain. Now after all that has been said about the aesthetic merits of this theory, it seems to us a de-
gradation of prophecy, thus to exhaust all its emblems of magnificence and terror on an occasion so little calling for it. Even a heathen could say, nec deus interrit nisi dignus vindice nodas. How much less such a waste of divine displays on such an occasion! No less unworthy of the splendid prophetic symbols employed, is the interpretation of the flight of the church into the wilderness, which is a part of this theory. A portion of the church fled from Jerusalem to Pella, before the capture of Jerusalem. But neither the apostles nor the main body of the church were there. The few at Pella were in no sense the church. And yet the splendid and sublime symbol of the church, in ch. 12:1, 6, 14, is applied to them; and the time of their stay there is minutely limited to three years and a half. Such a contracted idea of the church in the wilderness, and such minuteness of detail concerning a few Christians at Pella, are unworthy of the words the church, and of the dignity of prophecy. And the true tendency of the whole theory is to expose the book itself to contempt, as unworthy of such a being as God.

Another effect of excluding the Romish Church from this book, and referring chap. 18 to Pagan Rome, is to produce of necessity a false interpretation of the marriage supper of the Lamb in chap. 19. The great and obvious idea that lies upon the face of chap. 18 and 19, is this: God will judge and terribly destroy the false and harlot church which has so long corrupted the world, and shed the blood of his saints. In her place will follow, as the natural result of this judgment, a pure and holy church, whom God will publicly own and espouse, and through whom he will speedily destroy all remaining enemies, and reign. Hence the hallelujahs of Heaven over the judgment of the harlot, and their anticipation of the speedy reign of God as the natural result of this judgment and of the consequent marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now it is notorious that no such marriage supper of the Lamb took place after the judgment and fall of pagan Rome. The dark ages and the Romish apostasy followed them. Of course, Prof. Stuart's theory finds no place for the marriage supper of the Lamb on earth. He is obliged, therefore, to call it an episode, and to transfer it to Heaven (ii : 340): "But before the final consumption, the episode (so usual in this book) of praise, thanksgiving and anticipated completion of victory, comes in, with a delay (grateful in itself to the reader) of the main action." So, then, the marriage supper of the Lamb is no part of the main action; it is but a grateful delay of it. But what is it? In it, "the glorious prospect for suffering martyrs is disclosed: They will be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb." So in his commentary on v. 8, he says, "All that is here said, is said for the sake of pointing out the reward, which awaits Christians in the world to come." These are mere assertions. Of their truth he offers no proof.
The reason is plain. There is no proof to be offered. They are in direct conflict with the imperious demands of the passage. They destroy the real ground of the angelic and heavenly joy, expressed in the passage. That joy is not so much called forth by the judgment of the harlot, as by the succession of a pure church in her place. "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready." It is as plainly spoken of as a present event, and a cause of heavenly joy, as is the judgment and doom of the harlot. It is one part of a grand antithesis. "Let us rejoice, for the harlot church is destroyed—the true church takes her place. The earth shall no more be corrupted as it has been. Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." To say that this is merely disclosing the glorious prospect for suffering martyrs, is merely to contradict both the letter and the spirit of the passage. It has nothing to do with the future prospects of suffering martyrs. It is on its very face, an expression of heavenly joy in view of the most glorious result which the mind of a created being can conceive, in the history of this world—the removal of that corrupt power, which has degraded Christianity, corrupted civil governments, debased human society, and deluged the world with the blood of saints, and the presentation in her stead of the true bride of Christ, royally arrayed in robes of heavenly righteousness. And well might the angel say, happy is he who lives to behold, and is permitted to enjoy so glorious a consummation. It will indeed, be life from the dead to this miserable world. What, then, shall we say of a theory which compels its advocate to throw aside the very essence of the result at which the whole system of God aims, as an episode, and a delay of the main action! The final consummation of the great work of purifying the church on earth, and perfecting her glorious union to Christ, a delay, an episode! Surely this one result is enough to condemn the whole theory; for it is not Prof. Stuart's fault—he does the best that the theory will allow. It is the necessary result of the theory, and is therefore, a demonstration of its absurdity.

But take the other view, and it is easy to account for the fact that at this point the joy of heaven reaches its highest degree of intensity. Christianity is restored to its purity; the Church appears in her true holiness, unity and glory. No more an adulteress, no more ruled and debased by the civil powers of the world, and a corrupt hierarchy; but free from all bondage, and relying solely on her own glorious Lord and Savior, she shines forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. The anticipation of such a day is not an idle dream, for these "are the true sayings of God."

To what has been said as it regards Nero, the Church in the wilderness, and the Marriage supper of the Lamb, let that be added, which at the outset we proved, concerning the main beast, and it
will be seen that the second part of the theory of Alcassar, after all that Prof. Stuart has done to support it, is totally at war with any just interpretation of ch. 13–20. By the same course of reasoning as we applied to the first beast, it can be shown that the effort to interpret the second beast, called generally the false prophet, as the priestly hierarchy of pagan Rome, is at war with the radical structure of this part of the book. The pagan hierarchy has been long extinct. The false prophet is yet alive, and with the beast, is yet to be taken and slain. Of course, he represents the papal hierarchy of false teachers, and not the pagan hierarchy of old Rome.

Thus far we have regarded only the bold outlines of the German theory. We have looked at the framework of the building which they have tried to erect. If now we were to descend to more minute details, it would be easy to accumulate evidence of the falsehood of the theory to any extent, but it would be wearisome, and our limits forbid. There are also, some other topics which deserve discussion, such as Prof. Stuart’s views of the modes of designating time in the Apocalypse, and on the question of a literal resurrection of the dead before the millennium. But either of these points would require an independent essay for its full discussion, and we omit them here.

We will only notice one striking fact: Prof. Stuart is a decided opposer of the millenarian theory; and yet more arguments can be derived from his commentary for its support, than from any other book we know of, not written by a millenarian. Now it is of little avail to ridicule the millenarians, as Prof. Stuart once did, and yet concede to them the interpretation of their leading proof texts.

It is well known to the readers of their works, how much they rely on Rev. 20: 4–6. Phil. 3: 8–11. Luke 14: 14. Isa. 26: 19. 1 Cor. 15: 23, 24. 1 Thes. 4: 16, to prove their theory of a literal first resurrection, before the general resurrection. And yet Prof. Stuart not only concedes, but insists that these passages do teach or intimate that doctrine. True, he denies that those who partake of the first resurrection, will remain, and reign on earth. He insists that they will ascend and reign with Christ in heaven (ii: 435): “May we not conclude, then, that John did not mean to designate a resurrection apparent to all the dwellers on earth, or apparent to the fleshy eye, but one which, although not outwardly seen by men, and unattended by any proofs, or outward and visible tokens, will in reality take place, in order that martyrs and faithful saints may, as it were, anticipate their final state of glory, and enjoy the triumphs of the church, in the splendor and excellence with which redeeming love will invest them.”

Doubtless the millennarians are willing that Prof. Stuart should have his own opinions on this point. They will also give them just as much weight in regulating their own opinions as they see fit.
But one other thing they will surely do. They will exult in the fact that the power of truth has at last compelled the great father of philology in America, to admit the fundamental correctness of their interpretation of these passages. And they will feel that the barriers that prevent a transition from such a concession to the rest of their doctrine, are shadowy and imperceptible.

We say not this by way of reproach. If their views are correct, let them prevail. But we do not regard them as correct. In our judgment they introduce a false theory as to the conversion of the world, and tend to paralyse the present efforts to effect a purely spiritual regeneration of the human race. We therefore regret to see them gain strength by what we regard as unauthorized concessions. We will only say that the interests of the Church require a radical re-investigation of this subject, in a very different spirit from what has often been manifested in the discussion of millenarian views.

In our review of Prof. Stuart, we have spoken with earnestness and freedom. We could not in any other way have done justice to our feelings and convictions on a subject of such moment. The most careless observer must see that a great crisis in the history of this world hastens on. The free church movement in Scotland, and recent events in Switzerland, are raising the question of the entire dissolution of the union of church and state throughout Europe. The efforts of the Romish hierarchy to regain their lost ascendancy are redoubled. We are the special objects of their wiles. All things tend to a re-investigation of the whole history of the Romish church, and to such a judgment as she has never yet undergone. The great want of the world is a pure, a united church. Never did the people of God so much need guidance and strength. They need to see among them a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. They need to see that pillar standing between themselves and their foes, shedding light on one side and darkness on the other. In the Apocalypse we see such a pillar of cloud and of fire. In it we hear God's exposition of the present crisis, and of coming events. The Apocalypse is the tract for the times. In it there is no spurious charity, no pantheistic philosophy of history, no transcendental liberalism. It is a clear, pure, omnipotent utterance of the heart and mind of God. It is the sharp, two-edged sword, that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ. It is the iron rod, with which he will break his foes.

The interpretation of such a book stands high above all personal considerations. In it not only the whole world, but the whole universe, are vitally interested. At this very hour an intense interest fills all heaven—yea, it fills God himself, in view of the events transpiring and soon to transpire on earth. And what we solemnly believe and deeply feel to be acceptable to God, and for the highest good of man, that we must speak—that we have spoken.
To unfold the details of what we regard as the true interpretation of this book, is inconsistent with our limits. That we regard the papacy, and the unholy union of church and state, which have been the main corrupters of the church, and of human society as included in it, is plain from what we have said: Still, we would not make it a syllabus of history. We would sketch only a grand outline of the great mystery of God, and pay a due regard to the great laws of poetry and of symbolical prophecy. Nor would we neglect even trichotomy. But we would insist on it that the crises of the book, and those of history, shall correspond. The nature of history is such that we know what its crises are, without a revelation. They reveal themselves. And we would not by force, apply the most splendid crisis of the Apocalypse, where in the book of history, we find no crisis at all. Prophecy and history are counterparts; and their similitude to each other on the great scale, is natural and obvious. That similitude we would never disregard. Nor would we ever contract the mind of God to the narrow dimensions of the generation when John wrote. We do not believe that the generation then living either did or could understand all of the Apocalypse. Much they could understand. The letters to the churches were plain. The grand idea, God will finally triumph over Satan and all his hosts, lies on the face of the book. Its moral influence is always elevating and bracing, even if not understood in detail. But it was designed as a book for ages; providence was to aid in its interpretation, and it should become most clear when most needed. Such a book we believe God can make, such a book we believe he has made—and as such with all gratitude and reverence, we receive it.

If Kepler was willing to wait centuries for an intelligent reader of his exposition of God's works, because God had waited thousands of years for an exposition, uttering the memorable words: "Jacio en alem, librumque scribo, seu presentibus, seu posteris legendum, nihil interest; expectet ille suum lectorem per annos centum; si Deus ipse per annorum sena millia contemplatum praestolatus est," shall we think an inspired apostle incapable of such sublime waiting? Nor does it move us that, at the opening of his book he says, "the time is at hand." He was then judging from God's point of vision, with whom a thousand years are as one day—he was judging on the scale of eternity—he was, in fine, surveying the scene from the same point of vision as Christ, when at the close he said, in view of the completion of the whole system, Surely I come quickly, to whom the apostle responds, Amen, even so; come Lord Jesus. Who will not join with the beloved disciple in a response so heavenly?

But there is not time fully to discuss the principles of prophetic

1 See Bacon's Sermon at the Ordination of President Woolsey, p. 29.
interpretation, or of interpretation in general. We will only say
that if any have ever gone to the extreme of overlooking the cir-
cumstances of the writer, and the thoughts and feelings of his age,
and his peculiarities as a man, the prevailing danger is not now of
that kind. All things now tend to break up the Bible into a series
of writings to be looked at exclusively on the human side, and
interpreted as the results of human minds.

The idea of one great centralizing, inspiring mind, who saw
each book as the part of one great system, as its human author
could not see it, and who saw the reference of his words to future
results, as he could not see it, is in multitudes fast fading away.

For our own part, we believe the present tendency to be far the
most dangerous. Edwards may have erred in too minute an
interpretation of types and symbols; but standing as he did at the
point of vision of the great eternal mind, breathing the air, and seeing
the light of Heaven, he correctly grasped the great system of the
Word of God. And when the trial of the fiery day shall come,
and the wood, hay, straw and stubble of human error shall be con-
sumed, we fully believe that the German theory of interpreting the
Apocalypse on which we have commented, will be utterly reduced to
ashes, while the main features of that of Edwards, as disclosed
in his history of the work of redemption, will for ever shine as
pure gold in the bright splendors of eternal day.

We will also add, since so much has been said of late of the
progress of interpretation in general, and especially since Mr.
Barnes has called in question the antecedent probability that any
of the Scriptural quotations of Edwards are apposite, that we
regard such things as adapted unduly to degrade our holy prede-
cessors in the great battle of God, and to inflate the men of the pre-
sent age with an extravagant idea of the attainments of the age.

We are sorry to see so much that tends to this result in Prof.
Stuart's work. We freely admit that much progress has been
made in interpretation in some respects. But it is long before the
vast mass of German interpreters will reach the heights where
Calvin stood three centuries ago. Noble exceptions, we freely
admit, there are. But it cannot be denied that the predominating
tendency of German interpretation has been to relax the nerves of
faith in a full inspiration of the Word of God, and to reduce its
interpretation to the same level with the interpretation of
merely human books. We would avail ourselves to the utmost, of
every advantage furnished by German industry and investigation.
But after all, nothing can make good the loss of that eminent power
of spiritual interpretation which is the peculiar gift of the Spirit
of God, and which Edwards possessed to a degree rarely, if ever,
equalled on earth.

A man thus guided, and so eminent in logical power, could not
miss the main scope of the Word of God, as it regards the great
system of doctrines—or, as a general fact, misapply the Word of God; and in truth few writers interpret Scripture on all great doctrinal points with such precision and correctness as President Edwards.

May God give the same spiritual insight into his Word to all our young men, and especially may he guide them into the true interpretation of that glorious book of prophecy which was the last message of Christ to his own church, to guide her on to victory!

ARTICLE V.

MIRACLES.

By Rev. Enoch Pond, D.D., Prof. of Theology, Bangor Theological Seminary.

In the following article, I propose, first, to define or describe miracles; secondly, to show, that the Bible contains veritable accounts of real miracles; thirdly, to consider the leading object of miracles, and their bearing on the divine authority of the Bible; and then to consider the question of their continuance.

By a miracle, I understand an event or work, not only out of the common course of nature, but contrary to it; transcending, obviously, the capacities of creatures; and implying, in every case, a direct intervention of the divine knowledge or power. A clear and proper miracle is always, and may be known to be, a work of God.

Miracles may be divided into two classes, viz.: those of knowledge, and of power. In miracles of the first class, there is a display of knowledge—there are disclosures, which are possible to no being but God. In those of the second class there is a display of power, which no being can exercise, except the Creator.

Intelligent creatures in this world may arrive at various kinds and degrees of knowledge; and they may make disclosures of their knowledge which shall astonish and confound the uninitiated; but they never work miracles. Intelligent creatures in other worlds may have knowledge vastly superior to our own; and were they permitted to have communication with us, might make disclosures far exceeding all our present conceptions. But there are some things which even they cannot do. They cannot perform a proper miracle.

I can conceive that some ministering spirit, if he were allowed to make the communication, might inform me what had been doing in the city of London to-day, or yesterday. But could he tell me, of