JOHN

OR THE

APOCALYPSE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY

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VICAR OF ALVEDISTON, WILTS:

AUTHOR OF 'DANIEL, OR THE APOCALYPSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.'

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IN SINCERE ADMIRATION OF THE VARIED AND IMPORTANT
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE
WHICH HAVE WON FOR THE DEAN OF WESTMINSTER
A FOREMOST PLACE AMONG THE DIVINES OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH,
AND WITH A STILL MORE PROFOUND AND PERSONAL
APPRECIATION OF THE FEARLESS CONSISTENCY WITH WHICH
HE HAS ADVOCATED THE PRINCIPLE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN
AN AGE MORE REMARKABLE FOR THE PROMOTION OF
ECCLESIASTICAL SUITS THAN FOR PERFECT INTELLECTUAL SINCERITY,

This Book,

WHICH PURPOSES TO GIVE THE MEANING WHICH THE VISIONS
OF THE APOCALYPSE ORIGINALLY PRESENTED TO THE
MIND OF THE WRITER,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR
WITH THE NAME OF

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY.
The writer conceives it to be due to those who have felt, or may continue to feel, an interest in his former work, to give the reasons which have led him to change his views on the subject of Apocalyptic interpretation. In bondage to the theory that the Revelation was an infallible book, and that its mysterious visions were capable of a real fulfilment, he once imagined that it might be explained of events which took place within the horizon of St. John's own times, and laboured to accommodate its elastic symbols to the facts of contemporaneous history. With a near approach to the central idea of the book, he interpreted it generally of the coming of the Son of Man to judgement, although with a deferential regard to the positive declarations of Scripture he restricted the time of that stupendous event to the destruction of Jerusalem. A principal reason which led to the adoption of this theory was that the Apocalypse is occupied with the destruction
of a great city existing in St. John's own day, and this the writer concluded could not be Rome, which never fell in the manner described in the book, but Jerusalem, whose ruin seemed minutely to correspond with the Apocalyptic prediction. The position he had assumed appeared to be strengthened by the circumstance that the fall of this great city is followed by the Advent of Messiah, the connection between these two events harmonising with the statements of the Synoptic Gospels that the destruction of Jerusalem would be immediately succeeded by the coming of Christ. This well-meaning, although mistaken theory, which if it could have been maintained would have gone far to reconcile the predictions uttered by, or attributed to, Jesus, with the actual course of events, he has been compelled, however reluctantly, to abandon. Impressed with the conviction that the Apocalypse is not a prophetic record of literal facts, but a sincere, although visionary, delineation of events which St. John, in common perhaps with many of his countrymen, supposed to be impending, he cannot again look for secular history in the book, or believe that the Seer of Patmos was infallibly guided in his prognostications. He is now, therefore, no longer careful to appear as an apologist for St. John by labouring to reconcile at any cost the visions of the Apocalypse with irrelevant facts, but is primarily
anxious to discover its real meaning irrespectively of
the consideration that such freedom of exegetical
treatment may be prejudicial to the prophetic cha-
acter of the Revelation itself. The task then which
the writer has undertaken in the following pages is
to inquire honestly, and without regard to any
foregone conclusion, 'what the author of the book
proposed to himself in the description of the visions;
what events he himself supposed would happen, and
what expectations the readers of the work in the
age when it was written probably formed from it.'

And this task, ungrateful as it is, might not be
without corresponding benefits. It might indeed
disappoint millennarian expectations, and consign
them to the shadowy region from which they sprang,
but it might also recall from the pursuit of these
extravagant theories to the sober duties and prac-
tical aims of life. It might detract from the value
of the Apocalypse as a record of prophetic history,
but it might also suggest that the interpretations
hitherto given are mutually destructive of each
other, and exhibit a climax of exegetical weakness
without parallel in the range of Biblical exposition.
It might impair the authority of a book which the
ignorant yet pious multitude have hitherto regarded
with superstitious reverence, but on the other hand
it might rescue it from the mischievous and un-
charitable uses to which it has been too often
applied. It might take out of the mouth of controversial divines opprobrious epithets originally applied to Antichrist and the False Prophet, but again it might determine the fact that no adversary corresponding to the Apocalyptic description is to be expected by the Church. It might expose the signal failure of the grand event of which the Apocalypse is the principal exponent, but it might also lead to the conclusion that the latter-day anticipations of the early Church were not well founded, and the acknowledgment of error might be the first step towards the development of truth.

The study of the Apocalypse acquires at this time additional interest from the circumstance that, with a correct appreciation of its object it has been selected to be read in the Revised Table of Lessons for the season of Advent. Owing perhaps to its extreme abstruseness, which consists not so much in the mysterious nature of its symbols, which were easy of comprehension to a contemporaneous age, as in the difficulty of finding for them a fulfilment which shall tally with the facts of history, the book has not received from English Biblical students the attention it deserves. But whatever may have been the cause of previous neglect, it is plain that with its introduction into the services of the Church the question of Apocalyptic interpretation must be opened afresh; and the truest solution will necessarily
be the most orthodox, although it may not be most in agreement with traditional opinions. The successful expositor of this much misunderstood, much perverted, and much neglected book, must conduct his examination not only on a logically severe and critical basis, but in a spirit of complete indifference to the consequences involved in the expression of his sincere convictions. He will probably run counter to systems of interpretation which have long assumed for themselves the prestige of orthodoxy; he will, perhaps, incur the odium which attaches to the promoters of all new theories, whether in science or religion; but his want of popular sympathy will be no proof that his conclusions are erroneous, or that what is highly esteemed among men may not be abomination in the sight of God.
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JOHN
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CHAPTER I.

DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

It is almost superfluous to observe that the Apocalypse presents features of more than usual exegetical difficulty. Independently of the mysteriousness which attaches to writings of this kind in general, the facility with which its symbols have been accommodated to persons and events widely distant and distinct from each other is an indication not only of the elasticity of which they are capable, but affords a melancholy yet instructive exhibition of the failure of ingenious conjecture when applied as a key to symbolic teaching. It does not, however, follow, because much that has been said or written on this book is mere guess-work in defiance of common sense as well as of sound rules of critical interpretation, that no meaning is ever to be found for it, or that emblems which to the first were easy of comprehension should be unintelligible to the light and research of the nineteenth century. If we
2 John; or, the Apocalypse of the New Testament.

have lost the key, as we have lost the knowledge of some science with which antiquity was familiar, it is perhaps because we have failed to realise the mental exaltation experienced by the writer as well as by those to whom the Revelation was sent. From intimations scattered throughout the book, it would appear that it was composed under the influence of anticipations of an extraordinary and alarming character, that St. John believed himself to be standing on the eve of a terrible crisis, and that the very time of the long-expected Advent had arrived. The Revelation, we think, is simply the prophetic delineation of this stupendous event. Amidst all its varied imagery, it is occupied principally with one grand subject—the sudden and speedy Advent of Messiah, and the phenomena which should accompany that astounding parousia. The first page utters the same warning as the last, and the last the same as the first. In no other writing of the New Testament is the event so graphically portrayed, or its imminent and terrific character so clearly and positively defined.

But whilst, in our opinion, the Apocalypse is simply a pictorial representation of the coming of Jesus at the end of the age then thought to be fast approaching, the history of the book shows nevertheless that a different view has been considered worthy of attention, and the Revelation has been interpreted of a series of historical events which have happened in the world and in the church from the days of St. John to our own times. The book,
however, obstinately refuses to be so coerced. Sufficiently unintelligible before, it becomes under this treatment, 'confusion worse confounded.' Interpretations far more wonderful than the problems they are meant to solve, and expositions of a far more marvellous character than the symbols of the sacred text, have made the exegetical history of this book the subject of sharp yet not unmerited ridicule. We desire to record our conviction that these, and like efforts which may yet be made to reconcile the visions of the Apocalypse with the events of history, are doomed to meet with disappointment from the simple fact that the prolonged existence of the world itself was an idea the furthest removed from the writer's mind. Underlying not only the Apocalypse, but the whole literature of the New Testament, is an absorbing expectation of an immediately approaching end of all things which precludes prophetic forethought for the future. To interpret the book, therefore, of historical events occurring at great intervals from each other, is not only to do violence to the positive and urgently expressed declarations of proximity of accomplishment with which the Apocalypse abounds, but to create a state of things not originally contemplated by the writer. Nothing perhaps but a religious reverence for so-called orthodox opinions could have postponed the catastrophe of which the Revelation is the principal exponent beyond the period appointed for its fulfilment, and the result is the discomfiture of those who, afraid to follow the light of reason, endeavour to
force its symbols into unhappy agreement with irrelevant facts. For ourselves, we dare not roam over the field of history in search of events which may be strained to fit the apocalyptic symbols, nor may we exhaust the period which has elapsed from its composition to the present time to discover a suitable fulfilment. If the prophecy cannot be interpreted, as a whole, of events which were expected to usher in the Messianic reign, our principle is defective and the right chord has not been struck; but if, on the other hand, an adequate explanation can be given within the required period, the conclusion may with difficulty be avoided that it is, in the main, correct. Encouraged by the hope that such an interpretation can be found, we shall examine this much-neglected and long-perverted book in a spirit of reverent yet careful criticism. We shall regard it not as an unintelligible mystery of which no solution can be given, but as a genuine work of great antiquity, reflecting an interesting phase of primitive expectation, and occupying a normal place in the literature of the New Testament. To add to its demands upon our attention, it may be remembered that the Revelation was the text-book of the primitive Church, which for the first two or three centuries was essentially chiliastic. Considered from this point of view the study of the book is full of interest to those who would obtain correct notions of the primitive traditions of Palestine respecting the Messianic career of Jesus, and the opinions formed by the Jewish section of the Christian
church respecting him. In entering then upon the subject of apocalyptic interpretation, we are beginning at the beginning of Christianity. We contemplate the new religion in its earliest, yet most Jewish and contracted form. With its after-thoughts and metaphysical speculations as they developed themselves in the second century, we have as yet nothing to do. We are unveiling the mind of the disciple who lay in the bosom of Jesus and knew his most secret thoughts. We are reading the heart of him who saw, and touched, and heard, and handled, the Word of Life.

Our first inquiry will be devoted to the consideration of the date of the Apocalypse, and here, at the outset, we are met by a material difference of opinion. A tradition originated with Irenæus, which was propagated by successive ecclesiastical writers who seem, as in the case of Papias, to have relied on the 'antiquity of the man,' that the Apocalypse was seen by John in Patmos at the close of the reign of Domitian.\(^1\) It appears, however, that this tradition was not universally accepted, and that the contrary opinion, that the book was written in, and even before the time of Nero, was also entertained. Since the voice of antiquity is divided on this question, and all that can be done is to array the testimony of one Father against that of another weighing the credit to be attached to each in the balance of our own judgment, it becomes necessary to have recourse to a different kind of proof. This, it is thought, may

\(^1\) In Hær. v. 20.
be furnished by a critical examination of the terms employed in the book itself; the Apocalypse affording more decisive marks of the probable time of its composition than any other book of the New Testament.

1. The passage which fixes the date of the Apocalypse with the greatest clearness is Rev. xvii. 9–11, where the seven heads of the Beast are interpreted of the seven mountains and the seven kings of Rome: 'The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and there are seven kings. Five have fallen,'¹ and the one is, and the other has not yet come.' The five kings who have ceased to be monarchs of Rome (according to Jewish modes of reckoning the Roman emperors—a circumstance on which, in our opinion, great stress should be laid, and confirmed by Josephus and Pseudo-Esdras² who speak of Augustus as the second emperor) are Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius: 'the one that is,'³ who, although pierced with a sword, is, in the opinion of the writer, still living, would seem to be Nero, the sixth emperor: 'the other who has not yet come, and who when he cometh must remain a short space'—further described as 'the beast that was, and is not, the same too is the eighth, and is of the (prior) seven, and goeth into perdition,' being also Nero, the seventh emperor, returning from the lower world as Antichrist. It has been usual for critics by following the list of the Roman emperors given by Tacitus, to interpret

¹ ἐπεκαυ. ² Jos. Ant. xvii. 22; 2 Esdras xi. 13; xii. 15. ³ Previously mentioned in Rev. xiii. 3.
the last of the five kings who have fallen of Nero, thus making Galba the sixth emperor, during whose reign the book is thought to have been written. Without confining the composition of the Apocalypse to the limited reign of this last-mentioned emperor, whose tenure of power lasted only seven months and seven days, we prefer to consider Nero as 'the king that is'; the writer having no intention by this clause of settling the date of the Apocalypse, but simply of expressing his conviction that Nero was still alive. In imitation of the Lamb as it had been slain the beast is only as it were wounded to death, who has¹ the stroke of the sword and lived; the recovery of Nero from his deadly wound (a fact distinctly asserted in the Apocalypse) making it difficult to include him among the five kings who have fallen, his destruction being deferred to the final triumph over the beast and the false prophet who are cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone at the Advent of Messiah. It will be seen that according to our principle of interpretation the same individual is represented under different stages of development—'the king that is' being identical with 'the other who has not yet come,' as in the corresponding passage it is declared of 'the beast that was, and is not,' that he 'shall again be present.'² But whilst we are unable to fix with precision the period of composition (and obscure hints are given that it is due to the reign of Vespasian)³

¹ Sinaitic MS. ² Rev. xii. 14; 2 Esdras xi. 32, xii. 26.
we have no desire to remove the date far from the period which careful criticism has assigned to it. In asserting its composition to be shortly after the death of Nero, we have exhausted the only reliable evidence furnished by the book itself.

2. A second argument for the date may be gathered from the command given to St. John to measure the Temple of God (i.e. the heavenly temple), the altar (the heavenly altar), and the worshippers, with a view of declaring their indestructible and enduring character: but the court or palace which is 'without' the heavenly temple (as the winepress is trodden 'without' the heavenly city, and as dogs are 'without' the heavenly Jerusalem), i.e. the Jewish temple which has passed away for the ark of the Testament is seen in the temple of God in heaven, he is bid to cast out and not to measure, with the view of declaring its destruction, for it was given to the Gentiles, 'and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months'—both city and temple being alike involved in destruction by the imperial armies of Rome. It is true that only a partial desolation of Jerusalem is at first indicated, for the tenth part only of the city falls, and seven thousand men are slain by the earthquake; but in the corresponding and more terrible picture of its ruin, the great city (Jerusalem), which is here contrasted with heathen cities and great Babylon, is divided into

1 Rev. iii. 12, xi. 19, xv. 5.  2 Heb. xiii. 10.
3 Rev. xiv. 20.  4 Rev. xxii. 15.  5 ἀπὸ τῆς.
6 Rev. xi. 1, 2.  7 Rev. xi. 13.  8 Rev. xvi. 18, 19.  9 Rev. xi. 8.
three parts,\(^1\) accompanied, as before, by 'a great earth-
quake, such as was not since men were upon the earth,
so mighty an earthquake and so great;' the vial,
according to the principle of Apocalyptic structure,
being an intensification of the trumpet plague. To
this it may be added that retribution is to be exacted
from Babylon, or Rome, similar to that which she
had brought upon Jerusalem; the mode of her de-
struction by 'death, mourning, famine, and burning
with fire,' corresponding with the woes already in-
flicted upon the holy city, and from the recollection
of which calamities the seer of Patmos probably
drew his measure of vengeance. These considera-
tions lead us to assign a period of composition for
the Apocalypse shortly after the destruction of
Jerusalem by the Romans—a period in harmony
with the requirements of the book itself, which is
full of burning indignation against the invaders who
were treading down the sacred soil of Judea.

3. The persecution from which the Church had
recently emerged, and which, it was thought, would
soon be repeated in an aggravated form, favours the
supposition that the book was written subsequently,
but by no long interval, to the death of Nero, and
therefore within the term of the natural life of St.
John. The author sets out with the statement
that he, 'their companion and brother in tribula-
tion, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus
Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the
word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.'\(^2\)

\(^1\) Zech. xiii. 8.  
\(^2\) Rev. i. 9.
The Epistles to the Seven Churches abound with commendations for patience under the sufferings they had already experienced, and with exhortations to persevere under the still more fiery trials which awaited them. The Church of Ephesus is commended for its 'patience,' and because it had not 'fainted.' That of Smyrna is exhorted to 'fear none of those things which it should suffer,' and to be 'faithful unto death.' Pergamos is praised because it had not 'denied the faith even in those days wherein Antipas, my faithful martyr, was slain among them.' Thyatira is lauded for its 'faith and patience.' Sardis had 'a few names which had not defiled their garments, and who should walk (with Christ) in white, for they are worthy.' It is promised to Philadelphia that, because it had kept the word of Christ's patience, it should be 'kept from the hour of temptation which shall (soon) come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' The warning is given to Laodicea, 'As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.' And the Epistles close respectively with a promise to 'him that overcometh,' an evident allusion to the reward of martyrdom. This appeal from woes which had already fallen upon the Church to others of a still more afflictive character, which were soon about to follow, shows that the book was written shortly after a season of great and overwhelming trouble, such as that which marked the reign of Nero; whilst its object appears to have been to afford comfort and encouragement to the
Church during the more severe yet homogeneous trials which should accompany his return as Anti-
christ.

4. Whilst apocalyptic ideas, either common to the period or borrowed from the Revelation, are found in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, the Gospel of St. Luke bears clear and decisive marks of previous acquaintance with the Johannic Revelation, showing that the latter preceded it in time of com-
position. Amongst these we may compare the an-

1 The latter-day anticipations recorded Matt. xxiv. xxv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., correspond in a remarkable manner with the symbols of the Apocalypse, and may either be drawn from that source, or may represent ideas common to the Jewish Christians of the first century. The wars, famines, and pestilences of the former bear a close resemblance to the calamities delineated under the first four seals, the persecution and slaughter of the disciples to the cry of the martyrs under the fifth: the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, to similar phenomena described under the sixth: the preaching of the Gospel to every creature before the end should come, to the commission given to the angel to preach the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and the escape of the Church into the mountains to the flight of the woman into the wilderness. Similarly the rising up of many false Christs and false prophets agrees with the qualities ascribed in the Revelation to Antichrist and the false prophet, whilst the great signs and wonders whereby they should 'deceive even the very elect,' are in harmony with the prodigies which the latter are said to perform. And as the consummation approaches, the correspondence becomes more apparent. The setting up of the abomination of desolation in the holy place (omitted by St. Luke)—a passage which has been explained of the introduction of the Roman ensigns into the temple, but which may be more consistently interpreted of the setting up an idol image in the holy of holies (Dan. ix. 27, xi. 31, xii. 11)—is answered by the blasphemy offered by Antichrist to God and his tabernacle: the shortening of the days for the elects' sake (omitted by St. Luke)—a circumstance which has no parallel in the events of the Jewish war—by the abbreviated times of that impostor, whilst the coming of the Son of Man 'imme-
diately after the tribulation of those days' (omitted by St. Luke) accords with the apocalyptic description of the Advent of Messiah.
nouncement made by Moses and Elias at the
Transfiguration, of our Lord's decease, 'which he
should accomplish at Jerusalem,' a circumstance
peculiar to St. Luke, with the death of the two
witnesses (Moses and Elias) in the great city (Jeru-
salem), 'where, also, their Lord was crucified.'
The clause indicative of delegated authority, 'I appoint
unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed
unto me,' with its apocalyptic parallel, 'To him
that overcometh will I give power over the nations,
even as I received of my Father.' The promise of
Jesus to confess his servants 'before the angels of
God,' with 'I will confess his name before my
Father, and before his angels.' Dives 'tormented in
this flame' in the presence of Abraham and Lazarus,
with 'they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone
in the presence of the holy angels and in the
presence of the Lamb.' The promise to the peni-
tent thief, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in (the)
Paradise,' with that to the victor at Ephesus, 'I
will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the
midst of the Paradise of God.' The names written
in heaven, with the names written in the Book of
Life. The day-spring from on high, with the
'angel ascending from the east,' and 'the bright and
morning star.' The petition of the devils that
Jesus would not send them into the abyss, with the

casting of Satan into the abyss for a thousand years.\(^1\) The phrase, The devil departed from him for a season,\(^2\) with 'After that he must be loosed a little season.'\(^3\) 'The time draweth near,'\(^4\) with 'The time is at hand.'\(^5\) 'I am come to cast fire on the earth,'\(^6\) with fire cast on the earth at the sounding of the first trumpet. 'I beheld Satan, as lightning fall from heaven,'\(^8\) with 'I saw a star (Satan cast out of heaven) fall from heaven unto the earth.'\(^9\) The coming of the Son of Man in a cloud,\(^11\) with 'Behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man.'\(^12\) His arrival at supper-time, and his standing and knocking at the door for admission,\(^13\) with 'Behold I stand at the door and knock,' &c.\(^14\) God's own elect crying day and night unto him for speedy vengeance upon their persecutors,\(^15\) with the similar cry of the martyrs under the fifth seal.\(^16\) Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,\(^17\) with the holy city trodden down of the Gentiles forty and two months.\(^18\) The cry to the mountains and hills to fall on them and cover them,\(^19\) with the corresponding cry addressed to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'\(^20\) From a comparison of these passages,

which are peculiar to the respective writings, it will be seen that the writer of the third Gospel must have been familiar with the Apocalypse; and that, with the exception of the unimportant yet significant variation between the forty and two months of the Revelation, during which the Gentiles tread down the holy city, and the more extended period expressed by ‘the times of the Gentiles,’ no difference can be said to exist between them.

Reference would also seem to be made to the Apocalypse, if not in the Epistle of James, yet certainly in that to the Hebrews, in which mention is made of the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city which hath foundations, the (heavenly) altar, and the new heaven and the new earth. The second Petrine Epistle, as Sir Isaac Newton long ago observed, has the form of a continuous commentary on the Revelation; the mention of Babylon being also probably suggested by the mysterious name given to Rome in the Apocalypse. To this it may be added that apocryphal imitations of the Revelation ascribed to Peter, Paul, Cerinthus, and others, imply the prior and early existence of a true original which was highly prized and extensively circulated in primitive times.

5. The announcement of the sudden and speedy Advent of Messiah in the clouds of heaven, which is the central idea of the book, gives evidence of a period of composition prior to the disappointment of primitive Christian expectations. It will not be

1 James i. 12, 18, v. 9. 2 Rev. xxi. 14. 3 1 Pet. v. 13.
denied, except by the generation of the prepossessed, that the Apocalypse is occupied with the delineation of a great catastrophe, the phenomena by which it is attended forming a series of brilliant variations upon the event itself. The proximity of this catastrophe is the Alpha and Omega which opens and shuts the book, and the interval between its announcement and final accomplishment is declared to be of the briefest kind. The Apocalypse sets out with a statement expressed in clear and unequivocal terms, that it is 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, which he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John,' and ends with the corresponding assertion, 'The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.' The prologue announces in a few grand words the subject of the entire book, 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen:' the epilogue takes up a similar strain, and reiterates the rallying cry of the apostolic age, 'Behold I come quickly.' 'Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' The Apocalypse is prefaced with a promise with which the persons to whom it was sent were immediately concerned, 'Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep

1 ἀποκάλυψις. 2 Rev. i. 1. 3 Rev. xxii. 6. 4 Rev. i. 7. 5 Rev. xxii. 12. 6 Rev. xxii. 20.
those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand;’¹ it closes with the analogous benediction irrelevant except to the original hearers and readers of the book, ‘Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.’² It bears on its title-page a salutation to ‘The Seven Churches which are in Asia,’ shewing that it is occupied with a subject with which they were principally interested: it concludes with an assurance of similar import: ‘I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.’³

The Apocalypse, as may be seen on the surface, demands an interpretation bounded by the horizon⁴

¹ Rev. i. 3. ² Rev. xxii. 7. ³ Rev. xxii. 16. ⁴ Dean Alford observes, ‘We cannot consent to believe the vision of the writer to have been bounded by the horizon of his own experience and personal hopes. We receive the book as being what it professes to be, a revelation from God, designed to show his servants things which must shortly (ἐν τάχει), come to pass . . . the ἐν τάχει confessedly contains, among other periods, a period of a thousand years.’ ‘Confessedly,’ says the Dean! But we cannot honestly confess it. It is the Advent and the events preceding the millennial reign which are alone included in John’s idea of speed. The thousand years of the Apocalypse are affirmed not of the short intervening space preceding the Advent, but of the subsequent reign of the martyrs with Messiah during the millennial period.

One must lament the laboured attempts of the same writer (Gk. T, vol. i. p. 176) to prove that ἐν τάχει (quickly) is equivalent to μακροθυμῶν (long suffering). If we understand him ‘God’s speedy time’ (such is his phrase) means a very distant time: and in the same spirit, γένεά with him, means not a generation, but a race or family of people. This is, no doubt, convenient to modern hierophants who are embarrassed by Matt. xxiv. 24, and who, as it appears, arefain to shelter themselves under decanal authority; but Christian faith is not to be supported by harsh and untenable interpretation. Moreover, nothing is more evident in the writings of the New Testament generally, and especially in the Apocalypse, than that the Messianic Advent might be looked for at any hour of day or night. Every disciple was to watch
of the writer's own times, independently of the circumstance that such interpretation may impair the authority of the book, and place it in the same category with the Shepherd of Hermas, or the Ascension of Isaiah. If it is a revelation of 'things which must shortly be done,' it is not consistent with exegetical honesty to interpret these imminent things of events yet future. If the prophecy is to remain unsealed because 'the time is at hand,' it is not the part of critical candour to 'shut up the words and seal the book unto the time of the end.'1 If a necessity existed that the communication of events immediately impending should be made known to the Churches—the Seven Churches of Asia long since perished—it might be thought that these, and not the Church of the nineteenth century, would be principally concerned in such proximate disclosures. If a warning of a solemn nature was pronounced against those who should add unto or take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, it might serve as a caution to interpreters not to let traditional theories override the natural sense of Scripture. This distinct and reiterated announcement of the immediate and stupendous coming of for it. No tampering with separate words or separate texts can efface this broad fact. That clergymen of the Church of England, whose especial office it is to prepare the way of the Lord's Second Advent in the spirit and power of Elias should be sorely puzzled in the attempt to reconcile this fact with the teaching of the Church is not to be wondered at; but that they should endeavour to escape its force by reticence or by evasion, seems little less than a sacrifice of truth at the shrine of ecclesiastical fidelity.

1 Dan. xii. 4.
Messiah in the clouds of heaven, carries with it a strong indication of very early authorship. That a later period would have much softened the urgency of its phrases may be reasonably inferred from the Fourth Gospel. All who attribute that book to the Apostle John fix its date in his extreme old age; and it is a fact quite undeniable that this waiting and watching for the coming of Messiah in clouds had vanished from its theology, in spite of the circumstance that John was one of the four disciples to whom Jesus is said to have communicated his prophetic utterances on the subject of the last things.\(^1\)

To sum up the case. The evidence for the date, although the decision of this question, even if it were attainable, might not materially affect the interpretation, points to a time shortly subsequent to the death of Nero as that of the composition of the Apocalypse. It is not that the reported death of the tyrant is asserted in different forms and with persevering constancy, nor that the court which is without the (heavenly) temple, i.e. the Jewish temple, is cast out and given to the Gentiles, who tread down the holy city forty and two months, nor yet that the trials from which the Church had recently emerged correspond with the persecutions which marked the reign of Nero; neither is it again that reference is made to the book in the Gospel of St. Luke and other writings of the New Testament, nor that imitations of the Revelation ascribed to

\(^1\) Mark xiii 3.
Peter, Paul, Cerinthus, and others, imply the prior existence of a true original, nor yet that the graphic delineation of the Advent of Messiah which exhausts the symbols of the book ties down its composition to a season when this expectation had attained its greatest height; but it is all of these combined which form a phalanx of evidence which it is hard, if not impossible, for the human mind to resist. It is even questionable whether such a book could have been the production of a much later period than that we have assigned. With no other epoch does it seem so well to coincide. The whole world in abject terror at the unparalleled enormities of the monster who had just filled the Roman throne, and who was hourly expected to return as Antichrist—Jerusalem trodden underfoot by the armies of the aliens—sounds of battle hurtling in the air—nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom—famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places—'the day approaching' nearer and nearer, and the cry ever waxing louder and louder till it broke upon mens' ears like the crack of doom, 'The Lord is at hand,'—these were the unique and extraordinary circumstances which called forth the Apocalypse, forming together a combination of stirring incidents such as meet at no other period of this world's history, and presenting so strong an argument for an early date as to make it difficult to conceive that any other could ever have commanded serious attention.
CHAPTER II.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE APOCALYPSE.

With partial and insignificant exceptions, the voice of antiquity ascribes the Apocalypse to the pen of the Apostle John. It will be therefore necessary to examine the testimony of the ancient Fathers in behalf of its genuineness; and this, freely using the arguments of those who have preceded us in this important inquiry, we present in a condensed form to our readers.

In adducing the evidence furnished by the earliest periods in support of the Johannean authorship of the Apocalypse, we might set Papias first, who (in Eusebius) cites the first two Gospels and the Apocalypse. Clement of Rome, whose death is usually placed A.D. 100, gives a still earlier testimony, if the passage quoted by him is really taken from Rev. xxii. 12,—'Behold the Lord, and his reward is before him, to give to each according to his work.' Justin Martyr, the contemporary of Papias, the time of whose death is assigned to A.D. 166, asserts in most explicit terms that John was the author: 'Among us too (he says), a certain man named John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, pro-

1 1 ad Cor. xxxiv.
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phesied that the believers in our Christ should fulfil a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that, after that, there would be the general and final resurrection and judgment of all men together. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who flourished in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and Apollonius, who lived in those of Commodus and Septimius Severus, 'made use of witnesses from the Apocalypse of John.' The celebrated letter of the Christians of Vienne and Lyons to their brethren in Asia, giving an account of the persecution they had undergone in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 177), abounds with phrases quoted literally from the Apocalypse. The author of a MS., entitled 'A Refutation of all Heresies,' ascribed to Hippolytus, speaking of the Nicolaitans, observes: 'The disciples of this school doing despite to the Holy Spirit, John, in the Apocalypse has charged them with fornication and eating meats offered to idols.' In his treatise 'De Antichristo,' Hippolytus asks, 'Tell me, O blessed John, apostle and disciple, what thou hast seen and heard respecting Babylon.' Irenæus, a hearer of Polycarp, gives a fanciful explanation of the number of the Beast, and declares that John the disciple of the Lord, whom he further designates as he that leaned on the bosom of the Lord at supper, wrote the Apocalypse. Tertullian says that the Apostle John in the Apocalypse describes the sword coming out of the mouth of the

1 Dial. cum Tryph. c. 81.
3 Eus. H. E. iv. xx. 11.
Lord, and that he (John) saw the heavenly city.¹ Clement of Alexandria says of the faithful presbyter, that he shall sit in the four-and-twenty thrones as John declares in the Apocalypse.² Origen declares that the same John who leaned on the bosom of Jesus wrote the Apocalypse.³ Citing the Apocalypse he calls it the work of John the son of Zebedee.⁴ 'I believe' (says the late lamented Mr. Tayler, from whose admirable work on the Fourth Gospel much of this evidence is abridged) there is not a passage in the writings of Origen in which he expresses a doubt of the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse.' Victorinus, the earliest commentator on the Apocalypse whose work is now extant, not only declares that John was the writer, but that he saw it in the island of Patmos, where he was condemned to the mines by Cæsar Domitian.⁵ To this list may be added not only Ephrem Syrus, who constantly quotes the Apocalypse, although by a singular and as yet unexplained circumstance it is omitted in the ancient Syriac version called the Peschito, but also Epiphanius, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. 'Hardly one book of the New Testament (says Kirchofer) has such a list of historical witnesses marked by name in its behalf.' 'With the limited stock of early ecclesiastical literature that survives the wreck of time, we should despair (says Davidson) of proving the authenticity of any New Testament book by the help of

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ancient witnesses, if that of the Apocalypse be rejected.' It must, we think, be admitted that the proofs now adduced in favour of the Johannean authorship of the Apocalypse are of great weight, and, in the opinion of those who are disposed to lay stress on the argument from antiquity, might seem to be sufficient. The difficulty, however, of weighing the credit to be attached to the testimony of the ancient fathers, makes it desirable not to rest the case solely upon these. Proofs of a different yet not less convincing kind, furnished by a critical examination of the book itself, are at hand to confirm our position; internal evidence agreeing with ecclesiastical tradition in assigning its composition to the Apostle John.

1. Our first argument in support of a Johannean authorship for the Apocalypse is taken from the frequent and prominent mention of St. John's own name—a circumstance which distinguishes the writer of the Apocalypse from the author of the Fourth Gospel, in which the name of John is not mentioned. The simplicity, moreover, with which the writer asserts the truthfulness of his testimony does not look like imposture, and contrasts favourably with the indirectness employed by the latter.

The Epistles to the Seven Churches further show that the writer was held in respect by the Christians of proconsular Asia, and fit in with the tradition of St. John's long residence and eventual decease at

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1 Rev. i. 1, 4, 9, xxii. 8.  
2 Rev. xxii. 18, 19.  
3 John xix. 35, xxii. 24.
Ephesus, whilst the association of his name with 'The isle which is called Patmos,' has special application to the history of John alone. It is, also difficult to imagine any one of less dignity than an Apostle to write with so authoritative an air to the Seven Churches; or that, if there had been a John so eminent, ecclesiastical tradition would have passed him by. The presbyter (E. V. 'elder'), who is the author of the second and third Epistles which bear the name of John, and who is supposed by some to be also the author of the Fourth Gospel, does not appear to have been invested with so high an office; for he himself seems to have been excommunicated by an unknown Diotrephes. 1 To this it may be added that there is no reliable evidence (if we except that of Dionysius of Alexandria, A.D. 250) that another John wrote the Apocalypse; no other person of that name holding a prominent position at that time among the churches of lesser Asia.

2. The character of the book may also be said to harmonise with the idiosyncrasy of the son of Zebedee. The author of the Apocalypse, it has been observed, exhibits none of the tenderness, not even in his letters to the Churches, which characterises the author of the Gospel and the Johannean Epistles; the endearing terms 'beloved' and 'little children,' so frequent in the latter, never occurring in the former. It is known that the sons of Zebedee were of a fiery and impetuous temperament—sons of rage, or thunder—sternly forbidding those that cast out

1 3 John 9.
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devils in the name of Jesus, and desirous of calling
down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan village
which refused to receive him. They are, moreover,
narrow and Judaic, seeking for themselves, at the
instigation of their mother Salome, the foremost
places in the kingdom then thought to be approach-
ing, and requesting to sit one on the right hand and
the other on the left hand in their Master's glory—
characteristics which agree with the exclusive spirit
manifested in the Apocalypse. Further, they are
'unlettered and ignorant men,' a circumstance
which receives confirmation from the ungrammatical
style of the Apocalypse, as well as from its abundant
Hebraisms, which show that the writer had only
lately come from Judea. In a MS. of the twelfth
century the Revelation is entitled, 'The Apocalypse
of the holy and most glorious Apostle and Evangelist,
the beloved Virgin who lay in the bosom (of Jesus),
John the Divine'—an idea corresponding with Rev.
xiv. 4, where the 144,000 who are not defiled with
women, and who follow the Lamb, are called 'virgins.'
To this it may be added that his career subsequent
to the death of Christ gives strong indication that he
took a prominent part in establishing the Jewish
section of the Church both at Jerusalem and at
Ephesus, in which latter place his teaching had been
preceded by the more liberal doctrine of Paul. As
an instance of the impetuosity of character which
marked even the later years of the Apostle, Irenæus
relates that John, going into a bath and seeing

1 Acts. iv. 13. 2 παρθένος. 3 Rev. ii. 2.
Cerinthus there, hastened out of it, fearful lest the building should fall and crush him with the heretic. Clement also tells the tale of his pursuing the robber whom he had formerly baptised, and winning him back to repentance. The general view of John’s character, as perhaps almost universally conceded by Christians, is well summed up by an orthodox writer. ‘The truest thought that we can attain to is that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved,\(^1\) returning that love with a deep, absorbing, unwavering devotion. One aspect of that feeling is seen in the zeal for his Master’s glory, the burning indignation against all that seemed to outrage it, which runs with its fiery gleam through his whole life, and makes him, from first to last, one of the Sons of Thunder. To him more than to any other disciple there is no neutrality between Christ and Antichrist. The spirit of such a man is intolerant of compromises and concessions.’\(^2\)

3. The Judaic mould in which the Revelation is cast would also seem to establish a Johannean authorship. To use the words of an able writer in the *Westminster Review* for July, 1868, ‘Its eschatology, its demonology, its Kabbalistical arithmetic, its Hebraistic construction, its Rabbinic mode of expression, its Christology, its doctrine of an immediate advent—(a doctrine held by apostles, evangelists, and fathers for more than a century after the death of Jesus)—all testify to its Jewish origin, and to the Jewish nature of its conceptions.’ Regarding with M. Renan

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\(^1\) δ ἐπιστήμον.  
\(^2\) Smith’s Bibl. Dictionary.
the Apocalypse as one of the earliest books of the New Testament, we are prepared to find it replete with primitive Messianic expectations, and in this we certainly are not disappointed. At the period of its composition the time for the promised Advent had not expired, although it was fast drawing to a close, the consummation of all things was hourly awaited, and heaven and earth seemed alike to be giving tokens of the impending change. At this juncture the writer of this mysterious book, under the influence of strong national feeling, traces out the picture of the coming age, opens the seals of the book of fate, blows the trumpets which sound the approaching catastrophe, and pours out the vials of wrath upon the earth. Holding fast to the Jewish theory of a war and triumph of Messiah, he summons the white-robed armies of heaven to contend with the beast and his armies at the battle of that great day of God Almighty, treads the winepress of Divine wrath till blood gushes out of it even unto the horse bridles, and builds the superb kingdom of Messiah upon the shattered ruins of that of Antichrist. These ideas, it will be observed, are strongly marked with a Jewish tinge, and are conceived in the spirit of that anticipated superiority to other nations which once and again prepared the way for the downfall of the favoured people; their hope of national pre-eminence which no misfortunes were dark enough to quench, proving but too often the source of national disappointment. Indeed, the Apocalypse of the New Testament is but the echo of that of the Old, recast
into a Christian shape. As the Jewish prophet conceived of a kingdom of saints which should prevail over the kingdoms of the heathen world, so does the Christian seer behold the kingdom of this world become that of our Lord and of his Christ. As the former saw in visions of the night a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days, so the latter depicts the advent of Messiah with power and great glory. As the former imagined the accompanying events of a resurrection and a judgment, so the latter describes the millennial reign and the universal sentence of mankind. As the former drew the appalling picture of the Syrian tyrant, so the latter delineates that of the Roman persecutor. As the former prescribed the duration of the pre-Christian tribulation, so the latter defines that of the Antichristian period. As the one consigned Antiochus Epiphanes to the burning flame, so the other drags down the beast and the false prophet to perdition,—the characteristic features of the respective representations being impressed by the Jewish mould in which they are cast.

To sum up: From the fact that the writer of the Apocalypse gives his own name; from the mention of the island of Patmos, a spot associated in an especial manner with the history of the Apostle; from the letters addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor suggestive of the prominent position held by St. John at Ephesus; from the impetuous disposition manifested by the writer corresponding with the idiosyncrasy of the beloved disciple, and from
the Judaic mould in which the book is cast, it may be inferred that the author—being certainly a very eminent and very early John—is John, the son of Zebedee. Hence, from whichever side we take up the argument; whether, with our older divines we lay great stress on the testimony of Fathers, or, with our modern severe and sceptical critics, we look to the facts of the book and the internal indications of age and authorship, we are brought to the same conclusion. Taking the two arguments together—and they are far weightier than we can ordinarily expect in inquiries where so little of contemporary literature assists us, we can conceive of no writer who would have been more likely to have been its author than the ambitious and fiery disciple who coveted the first place and the highest seat in his Master's kingdom.

This opinion is confirmed by the circumstance that a separate authorship must be assigned to the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel; and that, if only one of the two books is to have John for its author, this may be affirmed with more probability of the Revelation than of the Fourth Gospel. It will be observed that, in appropriating the ideas and almost the very words of the Apocalypse, St. Luke, with some unimportant yet significant variations, employs them in the sense primarily used by the writer. On the other hand the writer of the Fourth Gospel sees a different sense—a thing which is natural to different minds, but very rare and hard to believe with the same mind. However common
it might be for one writer to appropriate the thoughts of another, it is difficult to understand that the same writer could so completely put on a new mind as to reverse his own tendencies and peculiarities. This, however, is what the writer of the Fourth Gospel has done with regard to the Apocalypse. In spite of external agreement in certain words and phrases, he has refined and as it were purified the features of the Revelation. It is, in fact, a kind of 'sublimated' Apocalypse, in which the more literal anticipations of a primitive period are softened into a spiritual shape. Like the earlier book, it has a Lamb of God and a Word of God; the former under a different Greek noun, and the latter under a different theological conception. Like the earlier book, it has a first resurrection and a judgment; the former changed from a literal resurrection of martyred saints into a passing from death unto spiritual life,¹ and the latter from a judgment of the literally dead into a spiritual sentence pronounced by the Son of Man.² Like the earlier book, it has a casting out and a punishment of Satan; the former changed from an ejection from heaven by Michael and his angels to that of a moral defeat on earth,³ and the latter from the binding of Satan for a thousand years into a condemnation already executed upon the prince of this world.⁴

¹ John v. 24. ² John v. 22, 25. ³ John xii. 31. ⁴ John xvi. 11.
the clouds of heaven to that of another Comforter, such as Christ had already been,¹ and the latter from the reign of the saints in the New Jerusalem to a kingdom which is not of earth.² Like the earlier book, it has a home and a reward of the saints; the former changed from the city resplendent with gold and pearls into many mansions of the Father's house, and the latter from a carnal millennium into that eternal life which consists in a knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.³ Like the earlier book, it abounds in sharp contrasts; not between the Beast and the Lamb, the Whore and the Bride, the false prophet and the two Christian prophets, the Old and the New Jerusalem, but between the mystical ideas of life and death, flesh and spirit, light and darkness, from beneath and from above, of this world and not of this world.

To this difference of general conception may be added that of particular words and phrases which are used in a separate and often antagonistic sense by the respective writers. In the former, Jesus is 'The Prince of the Kings of the earth,'⁴ i.e., the Jewish Messiah; in the latter, Messias is the Divine teacher who will tell us all things.⁵ In the former, Messiah receives power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron;⁶ in the latter, Jesus receives power over all flesh to give unto them eternal life.⁷ In the former,

¹ John xv. 26.
² John xiv. 2, xvii. 3.
³ John iv. 25
⁴ Rev. ii. 26, 27.
⁵ John xvii. 2.
⁶ John xviii. 36.
⁷ Rev. i. 5.
every eye shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven;\textsuperscript{1} in the latter, every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him shall have everlasting life.\textsuperscript{2} In the former, the Two Witnesses assume the shape of two ancient Hebrew prophets who are slain at Jerusalem by the beast which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit;\textsuperscript{3} in the latter, Jesus 'receiveth not testimony from men,' but bears witness of himself, and the Father that hath sent him also bears witness of him.\textsuperscript{4} In the former, the Lamb slain is the Redeemer of the elect;\textsuperscript{5} in the latter, Jesus is 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'\textsuperscript{6} In the former, St. John sees 'heaven opened' at the coming of Messiah with his celestial armies;\textsuperscript{7} in the latter, the heaven is opened that angels may ascend and descend upon the Son of man.\textsuperscript{8} In the former, the words 'Come and see' are employed to point out Messiah going forth conquering and to conquer;\textsuperscript{9} in the latter, the same words are used to indicate the place where Jesus dwelt.\textsuperscript{10} In the former, they who pierced him look upon Messiah as he comes with the clouds of heaven;\textsuperscript{11} in the latter, they who pierced him look upon Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.\textsuperscript{12} In the former, the water of life, of which he that is athirst is invited by the Spirit to take freely,\textsuperscript{13} is 'the pure river of water of

\textsuperscript{1} Rev. i. 7. \textsuperscript{2} John vi. 40. 
\textsuperscript{3} John v. 34, 36, viii. 17, 18. 
\textsuperscript{4} John i. 29. 
\textsuperscript{5} John i. 51. 
\textsuperscript{6} John i. 39, 46. 
\textsuperscript{7} John xix. 37. 
\textsuperscript{8} Rev. xi. 7, 8. 
\textsuperscript{9} Rev. v. 9. 
\textsuperscript{10} Rev. xix. 11. 
\textsuperscript{11} Rev. vi. 1. 
\textsuperscript{12} Rev. i. 7. 
\textsuperscript{13} Rev. xxii. 17.
life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb;¹ in the latter, a similar invitation to him that is athirst is answered by ‘rivers of living water flowing out of the belly of the believer,’ explained of the Spirit which they that believe on Jesus should receive.² In the former, the elect 144,000 bear his Father’s name on their foreheads, while the apostates are marked with the name of the beast;³ in the latter, Jesus comes in his Father’s name and the Jews receive him not, but if another should come in his own name, him they will receive.⁴ In the former, the 144,000, of all the tribes of the children of Israel ‘follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;’⁵ in the latter, it is said with great significance, ‘Behold the world is gone after him.’⁶ In the former, Jews take precedence of Gentiles, form a permanent aristocracy in the New Jerusalem, stand upon Mount Sion, and sing the new song which no man could learn but the 144,000 which were redeemed from the earth;⁷ in the latter, Gentiles take precedence of Jews, and worship God, who is a spirit, neither in Jerusalem nor upon Mount Gerizim.⁸ In the former, Paganism, symbolised by Nero and Babylon, Gog and Magog, is the giant adversary of Christianity; in the latter, the resistance proceeds from Judaism, and the Jews are the habitual opponents of Jesus. In the former, they who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,

are of the synagogue of Satan;¹ in the latter the Jews themselves are the children of the devil and liars.² In the former, Jesus is "The root and offspring of David," who has "The Key of David;"³ in the latter, the Messianic title "Son of David," common to the Synoptics, is unknown. In the former, the marriage of the Lamb's wife, of which it is said, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,' is the heavenly union of Jesus and his elect;⁴ in the latter, the marriage to which the mother of Jesus and he (the Bridegroom),⁵ and his disciples are also called, is the earthly union of Jesus and his disciples, and takes place in Cana of Galilee.⁶ In the former, the saved enter in through the gates into the celestial city;⁷ in the latter, Jesus is the spiritual door of the sheep.⁸ In the former, Messiah treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God;⁹ in the latter, Jesus is the true vine, and his Father is the husbandman.¹⁰ In the former, the exclamation, 'It is done,' is significant of the consummation introduced at the pouring out of the Seventh Vial;¹¹ in the latter, the death-cry, 'It is finished,' is put into the mouth of Jesus on the cross. It is chiefly, however, in doctrinal points that the divergence is most apparent, for whilst the Jesus of the Apocalypse realises most perfectly the Judaical type, the Jesus

of the Fourth Gospel approaches more nearly to the conception of our own times. The tendencies of the two writings may fairly be called the antipodes of theology. They represent the very poles of Christian thought and speculation, and that one man should simultaneously hold both, or change after middle life from one phase of thought to the other, may seem morally impossible.

Moreover, the style and subject of the respective books are as opposite as the most opposite things, creating a literary gulf between the Galilean Sibyl and the Jewish Plato which it is hard to bridge over. The Revelation, it has been said, is the most, and the Gospel the least Jewish of all the books of the New Testament. The Revelation deals with the literal and the objective, the Gospel with the mystic and the spiritual. The Revelation is narrow and Judaic; the Gospel, Catholic and more comprehensive than even the Epistles of Paul. The characteristic features of the Revelation are action and impetuosity; in the Gospel, calmness, contemplation, and serenity reign supreme. The imaginative and visionary conceptions of the former book are, moreover, completely at variance with the calm and mystical thoughts expressed in the latter. In the Apocalypse, Messiah is the external conqueror of his enemies; the Gospel contends for spiritual victories and the reign of Jesus in the heart. In the former, the kingdom of Messiah arrives suddenly amidst the convulsions of the universe and the terrors of the human race; in the latter, it is established gradu-
ally by the secret operation of Divine grace in the soul. In the former, portentous signs falling on earth, and sea, and sky, and river, swarms of fiery locusts issuing from the bottomless pit, and myriads of unearthly horsemen from beyond the Euphrates, usher in the great and terrible day of the Lord; in the latter, a mysterious silence is preserved on the subject of the last things. In the Apocalypse, angels preside over natural phenomena, they restrain the winds, or 'turn the sea into blood, or darken the moon, or stand in the sun, or shake the stars out of the sky;' in the Gospel, their employment is rare and uncommon. The Gospel betrays an acquaintance with Alexandrine, and especially Philonic philosophy, of which there is not a trace in the Apocalypse. It has also a 'Valentinian vocabulary—Life, Grace, Truth, Only begotten, Fulness'—terms wholly unknown to the other. The crude, uncouth, ungrammatical, often scarcely intelligible syntax of the Revelation stands out, moreover, in marked contrast to the easy, fluent, if not always classical, Greek of the Fourth Gospel. The Hebraisms of the former book have altogether disappeared from the latter, as well as its Jewish modes of thought and expression. Under these circumstances it is hard to believe that the same person could have been the author of both writings. Supposing, however, that such a literary phenomenon were possible, how is it, it may be asked, that there are no signs of antagonism between the old and the new ideas of the writer? In the case of St. Paul, we know that his conversion from
Judaism to Christianity was attended with a complete inversion of his former sentiments, and this he presses constantly upon the minds of his readers. On the other hand, the writer of the Fourth Gospel makes no reference to a previous state of thought, and appears never to have entertained views different from those which he enunciates. The composition of the Gospel after the Apocalypse has been described as something 'psychologically impossible.' The difference between poetry and prose, the fire of youth and the chill of age, or between sentiments incident to Galilean associations and the refined speculations of a Greek city, might indeed account for some variety of style and diction, but no merely external circumstances can induce variety of theological conception. 'That one who at the end of middle age still wrote the awkward and faulty Greek of the Revelation should as an old man have adopted the flowing style of the Gospel, is difficult to understand; but that in extreme old age he should have been inclined and able to identify himself with a novel mode of thought, and one so far removed from the range of his ideas hitherto, is a supposition devoid of the slightest semblance of probability.'

We are brought, therefore, to the conclusion that a separate authorship must be assigned to these distinct and dissimilar writings; ecclesiastical tradition agreeing with internal evidence in favour of a Johannine authorship for the Apocalypse, while it is less positive in assigning the Fourth Gospel to the same writer. 'No result of modern criticism
(says De Wette) stands more firmly than this: If the Apostle wrote the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles which bear his name, he did not write the Apocalypse; or, if the Apocalypse be his work, he is not the author of the other writings.'
CHAPTER III.

THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

PREFACE.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.—Rev. i. 1-3.

The Revelation,¹ not of St. John the Divine, but of Jesus Christ, is prefaced by the declaration that it was given unto Him (Jesus) by God to show unto his servants 'things which must shortly come to pass,' the knowledge of which had hitherto been not in his own but in his Father's power.² This communication of events immediately impending is confided by an angelic messenger to John as a faithful servant and martyr of Jesus, and therefore worthy to record whatsoever things he saw in these visions. An especial blessing is then promised to the public reader,³ as well as to those who should hear and keep the words of this prophecy, a bless-

¹ ἀποκάλυψις.
² Acts i. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32.
³ δ ἀναγινώσκων.
ing emphatically repeated ¹ and for the same reason, 'For the time is at hand'—the proximity of the event being adduced by the writer as the principal motive for securing attention to the message he delivers.

SALUTATION.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.—Rev. i. 4-7.

The salutation of the writer, who distinctly announces himself by the name of John, follows the general preface. It is addressed perhaps not so much to particular churches as to the church universal of that period symbolised by the 'Seven Churches which are in Asia.'

The Apostolical benediction proceeds from 'Him which is, and which was, and which is to come'—the Almighty and eternally living God: from 'the seven spirits which are before His throne'—the seven presence angels; ² and from 'Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.' Led away by an irresistible impulse at the mention of this last and adorable name,

¹ Rev. xxii. 7. ² Zech. iii. 9, iv. 10; Tobit, xii. 15.
which appears to have had the effect of bringing before the imagination of the writer the brilliant hopes with which it was associated, he bursts forth into one of those sublime ejaculations which are common to the book, and exclaims with up-turned gaze, as if he actually saw the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen;' the all-absorbing expectation which had taken possession of his soul having almost the shape of an actually present and visible reality.

JOHN IN PATMOS.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and
the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.—Rsv. i. 9-20.

The scene now opens with John in Patmos, a desolate island in the Ægean Sea, where he appears to have been exiled in the reign of Nero 'for the word of God (the public preaching of the Gospel) and the testimony of Jesus Christ.' 'In this ocean solitude he seems to have limned out, under the influence of a strong religious and poetic transport, a dim outline of an imagined history of the immediate future of the world, and to have given it, apparently after his exile had terminated, the literary completeness which characterises the Johannic Revelation.' He tells us that he was 'in the spirit on the Lord's Day' (the well-known first day of the week), and heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet commanding him to write the things which he saw, the things which are, and the things which are about to be after these¹ ('which must shortly come to pass hereafter,' Sinaitic MS.), to the Seven Churches of proconsular Asia. Turning to perceive the voice

¹ No substantial argument in support of a system of historical interpretation can be built upon the words, 'Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;'—'Scribe quae vidisti, et quae sunt, et quae post haec sunt futura,' (Beza)—which have been thought to indicate a threefold division of the apocalyptic visions into the past, the present, and the
which was speaking to him, he beholds seven golden candlesticks, explained in the book itself of the Seven Churches, and in the midst of the golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man. As might naturally be expected from the title here given to Jesus, the imagery is closely borrowed from that ancient prophet whose writings have given distinct shape to the Messianic ideas of the Apocalypse: the garment down to the foot and the golden girdle corresponding with the angelophany of Dan. x. 5: the head and hairs like wool and white distant future; the words translated 'hereafter' being invariably used in this book, not of things indefinitely future, but of things immediately consequent upon others which had preceded. In order to place this point beyond the reach of controversy it will be necessary to examine those passages in which the words in question are used in this sense. In Rev. iv. 1, the same words translated 'After this,' are in the end of the verse rendered 'Hereafter,' where no futurity can be claimed for the latter beyond that given to the former: so in Rev. vii. 9, and ix. 12, the same words translated 'After this,' and 'Hereafter,' are used of events immediately consecutive. When it is said of Satan, Rev. xx. 3, that 'After this he must be loosed a little season,' no long interval is expected to elapse between the expiration of the thousand years and his release, and the clause itself, 'Things which must be hereafter,' Rev. iv. 1, is explained by its equivalent, 'Things which must shortly be done,' Rev. xxii. 6. Added to this the same events are treated of in the first as well as in the last chapters of the Apocalypse which could scarcely have been the case had it been a prophetic history of the Church from the days of Nero to those of Louis Napoleon. We may instance the Coming of Christ, which is the exordium, middle, and finale, of this mysterious book; the Beast rising out of the bottomless pit mentioned, Rev. xi. 7, xvii. 8; great Babylon doomed to destruction, spoken of, Rev. xiv. 8, xvi. 19, xviii. 2, xix. 2; the New Jerusalem introduced, Rev. iii. 12, as well as Rev. xxi. 2, 10; this reiteration of the same subjects throughout the Apocalypse, making it morally certain that no such idea as that of recording the fortunes of the world and of the Church down to the so-called end of time, ever entered into the conceptions of the writer.
as snow, agreeing with the portraiture of the Ancient of days\textsuperscript{1}: the eyes like a flame of fire, denoting penetration,\textsuperscript{2} with the 'lamps of fire' of Dan. x. 6: the feet like unto chalcolibanus, as if they had been burnt in a furnace, with the 'feet like in colour to polished brass' of the same prophet: and the voice, loud and terrible as the sound of many waters or a great multitude,\textsuperscript{3} with 'the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.'\textsuperscript{4} Besides those taken from the book of Daniel, other features are added of a more strictly Christian shape, such as the seven stars in his right hand, expressive of the protection afforded to the Seven Churches; the two-edged sword out of his mouth, symbolising the vengeance with which Messiah should smite the nations;\textsuperscript{5} and his countenance as the sun shining in its strength, indicative of his glorious aspect 'white as the light,' and 'above the brightness of the sun,' as he is said to have revealed himself at the transfiguration. Overwhelmed by the splendour of this unearthly apparition, the disciple whose privilege it was to lie close to the breast of his beloved Master falls, like his Danielic prototype, at his feet as dead, unable to endure the 'excellent glory,' and needing the gracious reassurance, 'Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.'

\textsuperscript{1} Dan. vii. 9. \textsuperscript{2} Dan. ii. 23. \textsuperscript{3} Rev. xix. 6. \textsuperscript{4} Dan. x. 6. \textsuperscript{5} Rev. xix. 15.
It will be remembered that this is seen *in vision*: 'in the spirit.' The seer is not describing objective realities which presented themselves to his waking senses, but scenes which floated through his transported imagination as, rapt in prophetic gaze, he brooded over the present sorrows and the future trials of the church. The picture which is here so graphically delineated is no more to be taken literally than the seven candlesticks and the seven stars in the right hand of the appearing Christ, but is stamped with the unreality common to visions in general. At the same time it is extremely probable that these creations of the brain which the ancients called vision and mistook for Divine teaching, may not have been without foundation, but, like dreams, may have been peopled by a selection from waking thoughts. Thus the persecution in which the seer of Patmos bore a part may have suggested to him the idea of the great antichristian tribulation; the calamities which befell Jerusalem may have furnished the anticipated retribution on Great Babylon; the invasion of the Roman territory by the dreaded Parthians may have given shape to that of the kings of the East, and the belief in 'Jerusalem which is above' may have supplied the conception of 'Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven.' So, in the vision under consideration, the writer has invested a subject which demanded original treatment with circumstances borrowed from the book of Daniel, as he takes the irruption of the

1 *ἐν τῷ πνεύματι*, i.e., under ecstatic influence, and not in the understanding, *ἐν τῷ νοῇ*. 
John; or, the Apocalypse of the New Testament.

armies of Gog and Magog\(^1\) from Ezekiel. Under these circumstances, it would be unreasonable to expect a strict regard for historical accuracy. Exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, and caught up into the third heaven in the plenitude of prophetic ecstasy, the writer of the Apocalypse may be regarded not so much as a narrator of real and sensible fact, as a transcendental idealist lifted up in the spirit above mundane things, and continually hearing behind him 'a great voice as of a trumpet talking with him,' while the mysterious disclosures which he records do not so much resemble the outpourings of ordinary inspiration as the words which he had not the power of uttering,\(^2\) mentioned by St. Paul. And it is only when viewed in this light that the Revelation divests itself of the charge of fraudulent deception, and assumes the character of a sincere although fanciful delineation of events which St. John, in common perhaps with most of his countrymen, supposed to be at hand; sharing indeed the imperfection consequent upon the non-fulfilment of its sublime visions, yet maintaining a dignified attitude as the expression of the latter day anticipations of the primitive church.

The Epistles to the Seven Churches are prefaced by some characteristic appellative of Messiah as he appeared to John in Patmos, and are addressed not so much perhaps to particular churches as to the universal church of that period, symbolised by the number 'seven,' the sacred number being employed partly be-

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1 \(\text{Rev. xx. 8.}\)

2 \(\text{ς ἄρπητα ρῆματα.}\)
cause it is one of perfection, and partly because every-
thing in this book is done by sevens.¹ In the Epistle
to the church at Ephesus, Christ is described as, 'He
that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand who
walketh in the midst of the seven gold candlesticks.'²
In that to Smyrna, as, 'The first and the last, which
was dead and is alive.'³ To Pergamos, as, 'He that
hath the sharp sword with two edges.'⁴ To Thyatira,
as, 'The Son of God who hath his eyes like unto a
flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass.'⁵ To
Sardis as, 'He that hath the seven spirits of God and
the seven stars.'⁶ To Philadelphia, as, 'He that is
holy and he that is true.'⁷ To Laodicea, as, 'The
Amen: the faithful and true witness,⁸ the beginning
of the creation of God.'

It is also remarkable that a warning of the imme-
diate advent of Christ is given to each of the Seven
Churches. To Ephesus it is said, 'I will come unto
thee quickly.'⁹ To Smyrna, 'I will give thee a
crown of life.'¹⁰ To Pergamos, 'I will come unto thee
quickly.'¹¹ To Thyatira, 'Hold fast till I come.'¹²

¹ We may instance the seven candlesticks, the seven stars, the
seven epistles, seals, trumpets, vials, thunders and plagues, the seven
lamps of fire which are the seven spirits of God, the seven heads and
crowns of the dragon, the seven mountains, and the seven kings. Not
to insist upon what some have thought to be a seven-fold arrangement
of the book itself, it descends even to the consideration of the half of
this mystical number (Rev. xii. 14), and the millennium represents the
rest of a seventh day of a thousand years, after the six thousand years
in which all things shall be accomplished are completed (S. Barn.
Epist. xii. 4–6). To this it may be added that even Antichrist is 'of
the seven,' and that the Lamb has 'seven horns, and seven eyes.'
² Cf. i. 12, 13. ³ Cf. i. 17, 18. ⁴ Cf. i. 16. ⁵ Cf. i. 14, 15.
⁶ Cf. i. 16 ⁷ Cf. i. 5. ⁸ Cf. i. 5. ⁹ Rev. ii. 5.
¹⁰ Rev. ii. 10. ¹¹ Rev. ii. 16. ¹² Rev. ii. 25.
To Sardis, 'I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.'
To Philadelphia, 'Behold, I come quickly.'
To Laodicea, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

It is, moreover, worthy of notice that the symbols employed in the epistles to the churches recur in the latter portions of the book. To the church of Ephesus it is said, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'
To Smyrna, 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.'
To Pergamos, 'To him that overcometh will I give a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.'
To Thyatira, 'He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.'
To Sardis, 'He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.'
To Philadelphia, 'He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and my new name.'

To Laodicea, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne' —the clause, 'He that overcometh,' used in all these passages, suggesting

1 Rev. iii. 3. 2 Rev. iii. 11. 3 Rev. iii. 20. 4 Cf. xxii. 6. 5 Cf. xx. 6, 14. 6 Cf. xxii. 4. 7 Cf. xxi. 7, 24. 8 Cf. xxi. 27, xix. 14. 9 Cf. xxi. 10, xxii. 4. 10 Cf. xx. 4, xxiii. 3.
that the victor should be rewarded not so much for patient endurance under past trials as for the exercise of the same qualities under the new and more terrible conflict which awaited the church. If we add to this that a command is given to St. John to write to the angel, probably the guardian angel, of every church, that in each Epistle something for, and something against, is invariably introduced, that each is prefaced by the words, 'I know thy works,' and ends with a formula similar to that employed in the Gospels, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches;' it will, perhaps, be admitted that the Epistles exhibit traces of carefulness and design as well as of uniformity and agreement with the rest of the book. The Revelation, moreover, as the salutation indicates, is addressed to the Seven Churches which are in Asia; and it ends, as it began, with a solemn assurance that its disclosures affect them, and not the churches of later times. It is, therefore, impossible to eliminate these encyclical letters from the context which precedes and follows them, or to prove that they relate to subjects distinct from those which are enunciated in later portions of the book; the vision of the New Jerusalem being displayed to the Christians at Philadelphia as effectually, although not so completely, as in Rev. xxii.; and the tribulation to be caused by Antichrist as positively, although not so fully asserted,¹ as in the description given ² of Antichrist himself.

¹ Rev. iii. 10. ² Rev. xiii. 1–9.
Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—Rev. ii.1-7.

The epistle to the church at Ephesus may be divided, like the rest, into the two principal heads of something for and something against. It is first commended for its 'labour and patience,' qualities expressive of the troublous circumstances under which the book appears to have been written. It had also difficulties peculiar to itself, for it had 'tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and had found them liars.' It is hard to conceive to whom these accusations refer, unless they are directed against St. Paul and his fellow-labourers, who appear to have come into violent collision with the ultra-Jewish section of the Christian Church. This consideration receives weight from the fact that the authority of Paul at Ephesus had been sup-
planted by that of John, who, according to Irenæus, lived and worked at Ephesus, and who is said by Polycrates to have been buried there. To this may be added the charge brought against the church at Ephesus that she had 'left her first love,' implying that she had forsaken Judaic Christianity for Pauline teaching. That the Jewish party was strong at Ephesus may be inferred from the fact that Paul was compelled to withdraw his converts from the synagogue to the 'school of one Tyrannus,' and it would appear that his labours for three years in that city had not been attended with favourable results. It is therefore by no means improbable that 'after his departure' a reaction should have taken place similar to that which occurred in the churches of Galatia, a circumstance alluded to with much feeling by the Apostle himself. This church is also commended for its hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitans, 'which (says Christ) I also hate.' It is conceived that the Nicolaitans, or Balaamites, were adherents of Pauline doctrine, and that these epithets were applied to them in contempt, as the term Christian was applied derisively to the disciples at Antioch. And here we would remark, in passing, that the unity of the Church, a dream fondly indulged in by enthusiasts of the present day, was but of short duration. Divisions soon began to declare themselves, and men who had listened to the Apostles themselves speedily asserted their choice of teachers.

3 2 Tim. i. 15.
By far the most serious difference was that which separated the Johannine and Pauline schools, and it seems probable that the acrimony between them may have led the seer of Patmos to inveigh against the Apostle of the Gentiles as a teacher not included within the sacred college.

A hollow truce, if indeed we may give credit to the statements of the Acts (a book clearly written with the object of reconciling the differences between the Petrine and Pauline parties), was concluded between them when the leaders of the church at Jerusalem gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that the latter should go to the heathen as the former to the Jews; but this agreement was neither real nor lasting. No long time elapsed before certain came from James to Antioch to spy out privily the Christian liberty of the Gentile converts, and from that time the breach between them assumed a positive and distinct character. To such a pitch did this rupture proceed, that Paul withstood Peter to the face because he had incurred blame, whilst, on the other hand, Barnabas was carried away with the dissimulation of the Jews who came with Peter. The jarring sentiments of the conflicting schools speedily found vent in their respective writings. This is evident from the fact that the Epistles of James and Jude are directed against heretical teaching which corresponds with that ascribed to St. Paul, whilst sharp invective against James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be 'pillars' and 'somewhat' (it mattered nothing to Paul, and
to whom he gave place by subjection no, not for an hour), runs through that splendid burst of indignant rhetoric, the Epistle to the Galatians. It is certain that the apostleship and even the Jewish origin of Paul were seriously called in question, and that marks of sensitiveness under calumnious accusations abound in his epistles. Thus we find him saying, as if in refutation of previous insinuations to the contrary, 'Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do condemn me is this.'\(^1\) So again, 'I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.'\(^2\) He is equally explicit in asserting his Jewish origin: 'I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.'\(^3\) 'Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews.'\(^4\) With reference perhaps to his own exclusion by the twelve, he says, 'Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I;'\(^5\) and in his defence before the Jewish people he not only speaks to them in the Hebrew tongue, but asserts, 'I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel.'\(^6\) It is, however, in the Apocalypse

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\(^1\) 1 Cor. ix. 1-3.  \(^2\) 2 Cor. xi. 5, xii. 11, 12.  \(^3\) Rom. xi. 1.  
\(^4\) Phil. iii. 5.  \(^5\) 2 Cor. xi. 22.  \(^6\) Acts xxii. 3.
that the acrimony between these champions of opposite faiths reaches its greatest height. Whilst the followers of Paul are opprobriously termed Nicolaitans and Balaamites, he is himself a false Jew, a false apostle, a Nicolas, or conqueror of the people (an allusion to his name Saul identical with that of the unrighteous king who subdues the people),¹ a new Balaam (a word allied in signification to Nicolas), and perhaps, to crown the whole, a Simon Magus, no term of abuse being too violent, and no form of wickedness too revolting, to point out the apostate who is here made to realise to its full extent the odium theologicum of the first century. This antagonism between the Johannine and Pauline schools may be traced to the peculiar circumstances of the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch. The former consisted chiefly of orthodox Jews, blindly zealous of the law of Moses, who had accepted Judaic Christianity. These were under the spiritual guidance of the original apostles who had seen Christ, and who derived their commission direct from Him. The latter was composed chiefly of Gentile proselytes, to whom the ceremonies of the Mosaic law were distasteful, and whose spiritual teachers had no claim to a place among the twelve. Hence when Paul appeared to assert this claim for himself, and declared that 'truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among them in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds,' it was only natural that this assumption of apostolic powers should have called

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 17.
forth the indignation of the partisans of Judaic Christianity. The epistle, therefore, to the church at Ephesus points to a state of things such as would be likely to exist under the circumstances of the case, when the broader and more catholic ministry of Paul had been followed by the less liberal teaching of one of the leaders of the Jewish party. This antagonism was exaggerated by the difference of religious principles between them. Whilst the one regarded the eating of meat offered to idols as a matter of indifference, to the other it was a sin of the deepest dye. Whilst the one viewed circumcision only in the light of expediency, the other paid the utmost regard to the Jewish rite. The contest between them, which took the form not so much of diversity of doctrine as that of eating, resembled that between Orthodoxy and Liberalism in the present day, and, as might be expected, was accompanied by mutual hatred and recrimination. To the victor at Ephesus the reward is promised of partaking of 'the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God'—an idea familiar to the ancient Rabbis and to the prophet Ezekiel.\(^1\) Dean Milman cites the Rabbinical belief that in 'the days of Messiah Israel shall sit down and eat in the garden of Eden, and satiate themselves all the days of the world.'

\(^1\) Ezekiel xlvi. 12.
SMYRNA.

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.—Rev. ii. 8-11.

There is nothing in the epistle to the church at Smyrna which demands particular attention. Like the rest, the circumstances in which it is placed are those of tribulation, and particular mention is made of its 'poverty,' arising probably from the confiscation of the property of excommunicated persons. The exclusive spirit manifested in this epistle betrays itself in the mention of 'the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan,' a passage contrasting sharply with the more liberal sentiments of Paul, with whom 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus.' From the consideration of past and present trials the writer proceeds to anticipate others shortly to come, and the church of Smyrna is bid not to fear what it is about to suffer in the great Antichristian tribulation then thought

1 Heb. x. 34. 2 Gal. iii. 28; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. xii. 13.
to be fast approaching. 'The devil (it is said) is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days' —an indefinite period, equivalent to 'a short space,' i.e. the abbreviated times of Antichrist. That this Satanic persecution was to exceed that which had preceded may be inferred from the exhortation to be 'faithful unto death, and they should receive the crown of life.'" In addition to this the reward is held out to the victor of immunity from 'the second death, which is the lake of fire'—the especial privilege of the martyrs who should have part in the first resurrection.

**PERGAMOS.**

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—Revs. ii. 12-17.

Pergamos is described as the seat (or throne) of Satan, 'where Satan dwelleth.' It is hard to say, in

1 James i. 12; Ignat. ad Polycarp. epist. i. 12.
the absence of contemporaneous information which might throw light on the condition of the Asiatic Churches, why it should have deserved this term of infamy, unless, perhaps, that as the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia had 'them of the synagogue of Satan,' it was notorious for its acceptance of Pauline doctrine. The merit is ascribed to this Church of not having denied the Christian faith at a season of persecution, then long past, in which 'Antipas, my faithful martyr, was slain among (or near) you, where Satan dwelleth.' It is probable that St. John here refers to the murder of Stephen, in which Paul took a prominent part, and to which he is made to allude almost in the words of the Apocalypse, 'And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death;' the name Antipas, or, against everyone, by which Stephen is symbolised, being significant of his noble and isolated defence against his numerous antagonists, and especially against them of 'Cilicia and Asia.' On the other hand, this Church is blamed for holding the doctrine of Balaam, called by St. Jude 'The error of Balaam,' and by the author of the second Petrine Epistle, 'The way of Balaam,' as well as that of the Nicolaitans. There is little doubt that the seer of Patmos had still in view the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and that allusion is here made to the permission given by St. Paul to his followers to frequent feasts held in heathen temples, and to eat whatsoever was set before

1 Acts xxii. 20.
them, asking no question for conscience sake. Under certain restrictions, the Apostle allowed this practice, which, at a time when it was customary to offer every animal in sacrifice before it was eaten, could hardly be avoided, unless, indeed, the Gentile converts were to 'go out of the world altogether.' This offence seemed analogous to that of Balaam the heathen seer, who enticed the Israelites to whoredom and idolatry, and who is here selected as a 'true type of Paul, the advocate of mixed marriages and feastings in idolatrous temples.' The juxtaposition of idolatry and fornication, which is also observable in Acts xv. 20, implies (says Dr. Davidson) that all the objects of prohibition are placed in the same category; and as Paul permitted his converts to eat food offered to idols, it is easy to see that he would give a fair hand to his enemies for attributing to him the same opinions relative to fornication. The Epistle concludes with a promise to him that overcometh of the 'hidden manna,' and the 'white stone' inscribed with the new name. By the former, the writer may have intended to show that the martyrs should partake in the first resurrection of 'angels' food,' as the Israelites of old were fed by God himself in the wilderness; by the latter, he may have wished to denote the privilege of citizenship in the New Jerusalem.

1 1 Cor. x. 27, 28.
And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. ii. 18-29.

In common with the preceding Epistles, that to Thyatira\(^1\) conveys the impression that the Jewish Christians of that city, having been seduced by a false teacher, had departed from a first faith. As the

\(^1\) Against the genuineness of this Epistle, as well as that of the Revelation generally, the objection was raised by the Aogi (or Irrationalists) at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, that John had said 'Write to the angel of the Church which is in Thyatira, whereas there is not now a Church of Christians in Thyatira.'
Church of Ephesus had 'tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and had found them liars;' as that of Smyrna had experienced 'the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan;' as that of Pergamos had those that held 'the doctrine of Balaam,' and that of the Nicolaitans; so is the accusation brought against the Church of Thyatira, that she suffered that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to seduce (Christ's) servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.' It is conceived that by the terms 'that woman Jezebel'—thy wife Jezebel (a name familiar to every Jew, and suggestive of the abominable idolatry of Ahab, whom 'Jezebel his wife stirred up') the writer intended to denounce the pernicious doctrines of a female disciple of Paul, who was to the Church at Thyatira what his Sidonian spouse was to Ahab. The connection of this false teacher with the city of Thyatira naturally points to Lydia, a pious woman of that city, converted to Christianity by Paul, to whose house the disciples were wont to resort, and who may have accompanied the Apostle in his wanderings. He possibly alludes to this when he says, 'Have we not power to eat and drink? have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife (i.e. a Christian wife), as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?' And in his exhortation to the Christian women at Philippi, in which city the house of Lydia was situated, he probably addresses her by the conjugal title of 'true yokefellow,' or

1 Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40. 2 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5. 3 Phil. iv. 1–3.
own wife (in the sense in which Timothy is his 'own son')—an interpretation adopted by Clement of Alexandria and by Eusebius. Whether St. Paul was married or not—and from 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8, it would appear that he dissuaded from marriage—it is by no means unlikely that Johannean bigotry desired to represent the connection between Lydia and himself as adulterous. She is called a 'prophetess,' as Paul is subsequently called a 'false prophet;' and the charge preferred against her of seducing Christ's servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, is the same as that made against the Balaamites of the Church of Pergamos. A reference to Pauline doctrine may also be seen in an allusion to an expression familiarly employed by the Apostle. He had been wont to call his revelations 'The deep things of God': in a spirit of sarcastic irony, they are here called 'The depths of Satan, as they (the false teachers) say.' The bed of affliction in which she is to be cast, as well as the death with which her proselytes are to be killed (an evident allusion to the miserable end of the sorceress 'whose whoredoms and whose witchcrafts were so many'), may refer to the punishment to be inflicted upon herself, and upon those who had been seduced by her idolatrous practices, at the Advent of Messiah, when, like another Jehu, he should 'give to every one according to his works.' It is promised to those which have not this doctrine, that no other

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1 Tim. i. 2.  
2 1 Cor. ii. 10.  
3 2 Kings ix. 22.
burden should be put upon them but that which they have already; a passage elsewhere closely imitated, in which not only the charge to the Gentile converts to abstain from meats offered in sacrifice to idols and from fornication, but the command of the Spirit to the Churches is reproduced in that of the Holy Ghost to the Council. The concluding injunction, 'Hold fast till I come,' or, as the same idea of proximity is intimated by the words 'Unto the end,' denotes an interval of the briefest kind between the promise of the Advent and its fulfilment, and, as in other portions of the New Testament, makes that event synchronical with the final consummation of all things.

To the victor at Thyatira the promise is made of 'power over the nations,' and of ability to 'rule them with a rod of iron.' These gross and literal conceptions of a stern and wide-spread dominion to be exercised by Messiah and his saints over the heathen world are to be traced to similar views enunciated in the books of Enoch and Daniel, and present features at variance with 'transcendental philosophies and imaginative theories' respecting the spiritual nature of the kingdom whose advent was proclaimed by Jesus.

Besides the privilege of supremacy over the less-favoured Gentiles, the promise is made to 'him that overcometh' of the gift of 'the morning star,' a gift significant of the splendour of those who should

1 Acts xv. 28, 29.
attain unto the first resurrection, and conveying the idea of a sameness of reward with Messiah himself.¹

SARDIS.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. iii. 1-6.

Jesus is represented as addressing the Sardian Church under the title of him that hath 'the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.' The latter of these symbols² is explained in the book itself so that

¹ Rev. xxii. 16.

² The symbols of the Apocalypse appear not only to have been comparatively easy of interpretation to a contemporaneous age, but are not unfrequently explained in the book itself. Thus 'the seven stars—are the angels of the seven churches.' 'The seven candlesticks—are the seven churches.' 'The great dragon—(is) that old serpent called the Devil and Satan.' 'The waters where the whore sitteth—are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.' The Woman—is 'that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.' 'The seven heads—are seven mountains and seven kings.' 'The ten horns—are ten kings.' 'The fine linen—is the righteousness of saints.' The Millennial reign—is 'the first resurrection.' 'The lake which burneth with fire and brimstone—is the second death.' 'Where an interpretation (says Dean Woodhouse) is expressly given in the vision, that interpretation
nothing more need be said. 'The seven spirits of God' associated in the salutation with the Almighty Father and with Jesus Christ, and described as standing before the throne in the attitude of ministering spirits,¹ may be interpreted of 'the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One,'² called by St. Paul 'The elect angels,' and by St. Luke, 'The angels of God.'

The charge preferred against the Church of Sardis is of a graver kind than those laid against previously mentioned churches, and with partial exceptions it is condemned as having a name to live, but, in reality, dead, or about to die. The caution solemnly impressed upon this lifeless Church, is watchfulness. 'In an hour, such as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.' In terms conceived, not only in the spirit but in the very letter of the Gospels, the Apocalypse rings out the Maran Atha of the latter days. 'If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief,'³ and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee'—at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.

To the few who had not sullied their robes by impurity or by the defilements of false teaching, it is promised that they should be clothed in white raiment, and should walk with Christ in white, for

¹ Rev. i. 4; iv. 5.  
² Tobit xii. 15.  
³ Matt. xxiv. 42-44; Luke xii. 39; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. xvi. 15.
they are worthy;\(^1\) the colour, the hue of victory as well as of spotlessness, and indicative of the glories of the first resurrection. And if to this the writer adds the assurance that their names should not be wiped out of the Book of Life, and that Messiah would confess their names before His Father, and before His angels, it is because he conceived of the reward of the saints as of a great city coming down from God out of heaven, and of its blessed inhabitants as citizens whose names were inscribed on the public registers, from which they could not be removed except by death or crime.

PHILADELPHIA,

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Rev. iii. 7-18.

\(^1\) Rev. vi. 11; vii. 9; xix. 14.
The Epistle to the Church of Philadelphia is remarkable for its immunity from the grave rebuke which marks those addressed to Sardis and Laodicea. In the address to this Church, Jesus describes himself as 'He that is holy, he that is true,' i.e., the real Messiah, and as 'he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;' words used primarily of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, the treasurer in the room of Shebna,\(^1\) and significant of authority over the house of David, and of power to admit into, or to exclude from the kingdom of Messiah. To the members of the Jewish portion of this favoured Church who are distinguished from Pauline heretics 'of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,' it is promised that because they had kept the word of his patience they too should be kept from the hour of temptation which was soon about to come upon the whole habitable world to try them that dwell on the earth—i.e., from the great Antichristian tribulation then supposed to be fast approaching. That these perils were thought to be of an immediate accomplishment, may be inferred from the introduction of the rallying cry of the Apocalypse, 'Behold, I come quickly,' which, like the \textit{Maran Atha} of St. Paul, may have been interchanged by the primitive Christians with a view of encouraging each other in the expectation of the promised Advent, whilst as a further indication of their imminent character, the injunction is given,

\(^1\) Isaiah xxii. 22.
‘Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown.’

The reward of perpetual citizenship in the New and heavenly Jerusalem held out to him that should overcome, has so plain a reference to the city whose glories are delineated in the latter chapters of the book, as not only to bind the Apocalypse in one grand dramatic whole, but to make it difficult to believe that its visions could ever be seriously applied to consecutive events. It is to the martyrs of the Church of Philadelphia, and not to martyrs of future ages, that the promise is made, ‘I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name;’¹ the clause, ‘I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God,’ receiving additional significance from the circumstance that Philadelphia was subject to frequent earthquakes, being among the twelve cities of proconsular Asia overthrown by these calamities.²

¹ ‘R. Samuel filius Nachmanni ait R. Jochananem dixisse, tres appellari nomine Dei S. B., justos (Is. xliii. 7), Messiam (Jer. xxiii. 6), Hierosolyma (Ezek. xlvi. 35).’—Bava Bathra, 75, 2.
² Tac. Ann. ii. 47.
The Epistles to the Seven Churches.

LAODICEA.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. iii. 14-22.

The accusation brought against this Church is that it was 'neither cold nor hot'—i.e., that it was indifferent to the superior claims of Judaic Christianity over Pauline teaching. Laodicea is mentioned by St. Paul as a city for which he had a supreme regard, and to which, although he had not visited it personally, he had addressed an epistle, generally supposed to be lost.¹ For this reason, it may have fallen under the censure of St. John, and the threat is uttered, 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will (soon) spue thee out

¹ Col. ii. 1; iv. 15, 16.
of my mouth.’ The rebuke of the Laodicean Church is conceived in a spirit of deep irony. ‘Because thou sayest I am rich, and am become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched, and the pitiable one, and poor, and blind, and naked. I advise thee to buy from me gold burnt from the fire that thou mayst be rich, and white garments that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest, and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes that thou mayst see;’ a rebuke most probably directed against Pauline teaching, and especially against the fervent prayer for the Churches of Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, that they may stand ‘perfect and complete in all the will of God.’ Like the rest of these epistles it closes with the announcement of the speedy Advent of Messiah under the figure, common to the Gospels, of a supper, or marriage feast, to which the elect are invited at the coming of the bridegroom. ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’ The promise made to the conqueror at Laodicea to ‘sit with Messiah upon His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne,’ (hence called ‘the throne of God and the Lamb,’ 2) is significant of the dominion to be exercised by Jesus and His saints over the nations of the heathen world, when, to use the words of the book of Enoch, ‘The Son of Man will share

1 Col. iv. 12, 13.  
2 Rev. xxii. 3.
the throne of God's majesty, and kings, and princes will worship Him and invoke His mercy.'

The general purport of these Epistles, besides their grave rebuke of heretical doctrine, appears to be to invite the attention of the universal church of that period to the momentous events which were shortly about to happen at the Advent of Messiah. This is the leading thought which runs like a thread through these encyclical letters, and which also underlies every Seal, Trumpet, and Vial throughout the book. It is the call to sleepless vigilance so common to the rest of the New Testament. The solemn and unceasing warning to the church to be 'ready' for the coming of her Lord, that he might 'present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' ¹ 'The Spirit and the Bride say Come.' 'He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches.'

¹ Ephes. v. 27.
CHAPTER IV.

OPENING OF THE FIRST SIX SEALS.

After this, I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him: and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a
strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.—Rsv. iv., v.

The manifestation of the risen and glorified Jesus to the seer of Patmos resulting in the command to write the Epistles to the Seven Asiatic Churches, may be considered the prelude to the Apocalyptic drama.
With the commencement of the fourth chapter the scene is changed. 'A door is opened in heaven,' and St. John, 'in the spirit;' beholds things which must be hereafter: i.e., things immediately consequent upon the preceding. Rapt in prophetic vision, he sees the events of the last times pass before him in a series of dissolving views, in which Seals are replaced by Trumpets, and these again by Vials, or bowls, descriptive of the woes upon animate and inanimate nature, the wrath upon Babylon, the Advent of Messiah, and the defeat of the armies of Antichrist; followed in turn by the millennial reign, the descent from heaven of the New Jerusalem, and the final establishment of the kingdom of Christ and of God. Previously, however, to the gradual unfolding of the mystical drama, St. John is caught into heaven, and admitted into the penetrailia of the celestial temple. In imagination coloured by recollections of the temple-worship on earth, he beholds the throne of God encircled by its emerald rainbow, and the Unnamed One sitting upon it, to look upon as a jasper and as a sardine stone. Around the throne were four-and-twenty seats, and upon them four-and-twenty elders sitting, significant of the order of the ministering priests. Before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne

1 Ezek. i. 28.
2 'Et collaudavi eum qui non nominatur, et præpotentem qui in cœlis habitat, cujus nomen non patefactum est cuiquam mortali.'—(Ascen. Isai. Vatis, vii. 37).
3 1 Chron. xxiv.
4 Ex. xxiv. 10.
Opening of the first six Seals.

were four living creatures,\(^1\) \(\zeta\sigma\alpha\), full of eyes before and behind,\(^2\) and they rest not\(^3\) day or night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. In the right hand of Him which sat on the throne is a book 'written within and without,' and sealed with seven Seals. The seer weeps much because no man is found worthy to open the book, when, lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and amidst the triumphant acclamations of earth and heaven prepares to break the seals.\(^4\)

\(^1\) 'After this, I beheld thousands of thousands, and myriads of myriads, and an infinite number of people standing before the Lord of spirits. On the four wings likewise of the Lord of spirits, on the four sides, I perceived others besides those who were standing before him. Their names too I know, because the angel who proceeded with me declared them to me, discovering to me every secret thing. Then I heard the voices of those upon the four sides magnifying the Lord of glory. The first is the merciful, the patient, the holy Michael. The second is he who presides over every suffering and every affliction of the sons of men, the holy Raphael. The third who presides over all that is powerful, is Gabriel. And the fourth who presides over repentance and the hope of those who shall inherit eternal life, is Phanuel. These are the four angels of the Most High God, and their four voices which at that time I heard.'—(Book of Enoch, xl.)

\(^2\) Ezek. i. 5; x. 12.  
\(^3\) 'Without sleeping,' Book of Enoch, xxxix.  
\(^4\) 'And again I heard a voice saying unto me, I will command the Lamb to come before me, and I will say, Who shall open this book? And all the multitude of angels shall answer, Let this book be given to the Lamb to open it. And then I will command the book to be opened. And when he shall open the first Seal, the stars of heaven shall fall from the top to the bottom. And when he shall open the second Seal, the moon shall be darkened and there shall be no light in her. And when he shall open the third Seal, the light of the sun shall be restrained, and there shall not be light upon the earth. And when he shall open the fourth Seal, the heavens shall be dissolved, and the air shall be unfurnished (with stars). And when he shall open the fifth
It is characteristic of the first four Seals that they are introduced respectively by one of the four living creatures which stand in the presence of God, that they each have the common emblem of a horse and horseman, that they refer to a common subject, as is usual in this book whenever the mysterious number 'seven' is divided into 'four' and 'three,' and that they are prefaced (with, perhaps, the exception of the first) not as in our English version, by the words 'Come and see;' but by the significant word Come, denoting at once the impatience of the writer, and the nearness of the event. Without dwelling too much upon particulars, or straining the symbols of a highly figurative book like the Apocalypse beyond their legitimate meaning, we shall expect to find under each seal a basis of real or supposed fact, the remaining parts being subsidiary, and, as it were, helps to finish out the picture.

**THE FIRST SEAL.**

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of these seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.—Rev. vi. 1, 2.

Of the first Seal one interpretation would alone seem to be admissible. The rider on the white horse is the Messianic King: the colour of the Seal, the earth shall be rent asunder, and all the judgment places upon the face of all the earth shall be revealed. And when he shall open the sixth Seal, Hades shall be uncovered.'—Apocryphal Apocalypse of John, 19.
horse, white, is significant of conquest: the bow in his hand, a common emblem of a successful warrior, denotes triumph over his enemies: the crown given to him describes the cecumenical sovereignty assigned to him who is 'King of kings and Lord of lords;' whilst his going forth 'conquering and to conquer,' represents a succession of victories over the armies of Antichrist who are 'gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse,' until the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast into the lake of fire.¹

It is conceived that the first Seal depicts the beginning of the end. Messiah issues forth in answer to the summons from the four living creatures on his triumphant mission. War, famine, and pestilence, the eschatological concomitants² of divine vengeance, follow in his train. Scenes of terrific and unearthly strife succeed; and the arrows of the conqueror drink deeply of human blood before his adversaries are overthrown, and the battle can be won. His Advent, however, may be no longer delayed; and each of the four living creatures evokes the champion from his celestial sojourn with the call uttered in a voice of thunder, Come.

THE SECOND SEAL.

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.—Rev. vi. 3, 4.

"The red horse and his sword-bearing rider (says Victorinus) represent those woes which are predicted, and of which we read in the Gospel, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be great earthquakes." This is the red horse." It would, perhaps, be difficult to come nearer to the meaning of the symbol than this earliest commentator on the Apocalypse has already done. It is well known that the period we have assigned for the composition of the book was marked by sanguinary and almost universal wars. The Roman empire from Gaul to the Euphrates was convulsed by struggles for the imperial crown. Judea lay prostrate at the feet of Vespasian and Titus, and the words of Jesus seemed to receive a literal fulfilment, 'I came not to send peace on earth but a sword.' It is probable that the political distractions at that time convulsing the earth may have been regarded as indications of the approaching Advent, and may have given shape to the still more terrible calamities which were expected to follow.
THE THIRD SEAL.

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.—Rev. vi. 5, 6.

The third Seal is, beyond doubt, indicative of famine, one of the terrible precursors of Messiah’s Advent. The colour of the horse, black, is significant of mourning and distress: the rider holding in his hands a pair of balances for the purpose of measuring and weighing food, and the voice saying, ‘A chœnix of wheat for a denarius, and three chœnixes of barley for a denarius, and the oil and wine do not thou injure,’ may signify that the prices of food would be raised to famine prices, and that a difficulty would be felt in obtaining the necessaries of life. ‘The black horse (says Victorinus) means famine, for the Lord says ‘There shall be famines in divers places.’ Now the saying properly extends to the time of Antichrist, when there will be a great famine by which all men shall suffer.’ This scarcity is said by the same commentator to be caused by the Two Witnesses who withhold rain during the time of their prophecy, thereby creating great famine throughout the world, an idea also repeated by the Sibyl. Independently of this view, the notion of
famine as one of the accompanying signs of the approaching Advent may have been suggested by the severe and memorable precedents recently experienced at Rome under Nero, and during the siege of Jerusalem, as well as by 'the great dearth throughout the world which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.'

THE FOURTH SEAL.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.—Rev. vi. 7, 8.

The colour of the fourth horse is livid—a colour suiting the rider for his name is Death, and Hades (the abode of the dead personified) accompanies him. Power is given to this cadaverous horseman 'over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth,' an idea common to the ancient prophets who represent the judgments of God under a similar form.

Such are the woes which introduce the catastrophe for which the world was waiting. First comes the Messianic warrior on the white horse, denoting the beginning of the end, and going forth conquering and to conquer. Then the red horse significant of internecine war among the nations of the earth.

1 Acts xi. 28.
Then the black courser emblematical of unequal balances and scant measures, and, last of all, the pale horse 'bestrode by death,' bringing up the rear of this gaunt and terrible array. Divested of the subsidiary accompaniments, the general idea conveyed by the first four Seals seems to be that the Advent of Messiah would be the signal for the introduction of unparalleled calamities, and that his coming with clouds would cause a note of woe to be struck which would be echoed by all the tribes of the earth. These, however, are but 'the beginning of sorrows.' Greater and more appalling tribulations have yet to be developed; the Apocalypse, from its very nature, always culminating in a seventh, and unfolding with gradually increasing clearness and intensity the terrors of the last times.

**THE FIFTH SEAL.**

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto everyone of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.—Rev. vi. 9-11.

A new picture is unfolded under the fifth Seal. The four living creatures who appear to have fulfilled their mission in announcing the Advent of Messiah, disappear. The horses and their riders fade from our view. Conquest, war, famine, and death, recede. The actors are no longer ministers of vengeance but
victims of persecution, and the vision opens upon us of plaintive martyrs and suffering saints. In accordance with Jewish notions respecting the souls of the faithful departed, the spirits of these martyrs are seen beneath the altar of the heavenly temple, invoking vengeance upon their murderers and saying 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'—a prayer which finds a response in the judgments shadowed forth by the trumpets and vials. In answer to this impatient cry, a white robe is given to each of them to stay, as it were, their ardent expectations, and they are bid to rest for a while until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should (shortly) be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled—a season of patient waiting, not extended over a long period, but comprising the interval between the persecutions of Nero and his expected return as Antichrist. This passage supplies one out of many arguments in favour of a speedy accomplishment for the Apocalyptic visions, for the writer connects the persecution which had recently taken place with that which was shortly about to succeed it, and not only declares that the space be-

1 'Nihil morare, ait Dominus (ad Mosen), venit tibi summa dies; ego te in superiori cælo sub throno gloriae collocabo.'—(De Morte Mosis. Græzer, p. 361).

2 'Et vidi illic vestes multas repositas, multosque thronos, multasque coronas. Et inquam angelo qui me ducbat, Quorum sunt hæ vestes, thronique, coronæque? Et mihi inquit, Hæ sunt vestes multorum ex mundo qui accipient fidem suam a verbis illius qui, ut tibi dixi, sic appellabitur, et qui servabunt ea verba, et fidem habebunt in iis, et in illius cruce: his sunt repositæ.'—(Ascen. Isai. Vatis, ix. 24-26).
tween them is of brief duration, but represents the victims of the latter as the brethren of the martyrs of the former tyranny.

**THE SIXTH SEAL.**

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?—Rev. vi. 12-17.

It will readily be admitted that the correspondence between the sixth Seal and the predictions recorded in the Gospels is of such a perfect kind as to make it impossible to interpret the respective vaticinations of other than the same events. It is a consolation to find that this view is entertained by orthodox commentators. 'The interpretation of this sixth Seal (says Dean Alford) is a crucial point in Apocalyptic exegesis. We may unhesitatingly set down all interpretations as wrong which view as the fulfilment of this passage any period except that of the Coming of the Lord.' To this statement we give our unqualified assent, although we are unable to
regard that event from the same point of view as the writer, or to add our 'Amen' to his 'Come, Lord Jesus.' In our opinion the sixth Seal can only be interpreted with fairness of the convulsions¹ of animate and inanimate nature at the Coming of Messiah to judgment; no adequate solution for its sublime imagery is to be found in the political crisis of that, or of any other age, and it is a problem which we leave to the advocates of historical interpretation, to explain it of events which have already occurred in the fortunes of the world and of the Church. But when it is inferred from the impossibility of finding a solution in the past that it relates to a coming yet future, truth compels us to reply that this is contradicted by the declarations of immediate accomplishment found in the book itself. So long as the generation which had heard the words of Christ had

¹ That the Advent of Messiah was to be attended by a convulsion of the material universe may be inferred from 2 Pet. iii. 10, where the heavens are said to 'pass away with a great noise, the elements to melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein to be burnt up;' the effect of this calamity not being the entire dissolution of material things, but, as in the case of the deluge and the destruction of Sodom, the perdition of ungodly men. This sympathy of nature with the expected catastrophe is indicated in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts by the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of stars to the earth, as in the Apocalypse; phenomena employed by the prophets to describe previous executions of Divine vengeance upon particular cities and nations, and which were thought to be literally fulfilled. The belief that great events were attended by supernatural signs was deeply implanted in the Jewish and heathen mind (2 Macc. v. 1-4; Jos. Bell. Jud. vi. 5; Tac. v. 13); it was therefore natural that the catastrophe of the Advent should be accompanied by alarming portents. Apocryphal imitators of the Apocalypse not only describe the desolations about to fall on material objects, but determine the depth to which the purifying fire should penetrate the surface of the earth.
not passed away, there was room for the exercise of faith and patient waiting, but with the expiration of that term all reasonable hope must have fled for ever. Indeed, the faith of the second generation of Christians is a mystery which refuses to be explained. Be that as it may, the great day came not, but was continually put further and further into the uncertain future.

**THE SIXTH SEAL—continued.**

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the
elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—Rev. vii.

The sixth Seal brings us to the very threshold of the day of God. It has not yet arrived for no consummation can take place before the seventh, but it is imminent. The four destroying angels have their commission, and stand on the four corners of the earth ready to execute it, but are forbidden to commence their work of destruction till the elect are safe, and the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. As in the Gospels, so in the Apocalypse, the continuous burden is the gathering of the elect at Christ's appearing and his kingdom; the evangelists equally with the seer of Patmos proclaiming one grand and harmonious theme, we fear, but little understood, 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of
Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. If men refuse to learn and to teach the 'parable of the fig-tree' which follows, they must reap the consequences in the growing infidelity of the age.

After this (the words being the same as those rendered 'hereafter') the seer beholds 'a great multitude which no man can number out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands;' this innumerable multitude of heathen proselytes being evidently contrasted with the specific number from the twelve tribes. The white robes in which they are invested attract the attention of the seer, and the interlocutory explanation, as in Dan. viii. 13, is given by one of the twenty-four elders: 'These are they which came out of the tribulation, the great one, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' or, as the same idea is set forth by Pseudo-Esdras, 'These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now they are crowned and receive palms.' Among other passages

1 Matt. xxiv. 29-31. 2 Rev. i. 19; iv. 1. * 2 Esdras ii. 45.
to the same effect this may be adduced as an instance of the priority ever given in this book to the chosen people over the less favoured Gentiles. The elect of all the tribes of the children of Israel, distinguished by the obsignatory mark upon their foreheads, are alone privileged to stand upon Mount Sion, to sing the new song which no man could learn but the 144,000 which were redeemed from the earth, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: on the other hand, the proselytes from the Gentile world receive no seal of electing favour, walk by the 'pale reflex' of the light of the heavenly city, partake of the leaves instead of the fruit of the tree of life, and are ranked below these 'firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.'

In recapitulating the opening of the first six Seals, we may observe that they correspond in a marked manner with the predictions uttered by, or attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. Conquest, war, famine, death—that eschatological 'beginning of sorrows;' the impatient cry of the martyrs for vengeance upon their persecutors, the great tribulation, the sympathetic throes of material nature, convulsed, as it were, at the terrors of Messiah's Advent, the great day of the wrath of the Lamb, and the gathering of the elect from the four winds and the four corners of the earth, are traced with as firm a hand in the former as in the latter, and that interpretation would alone seem to be admissible which shall explain the respective anticipations of the same events. The identity perceptible between the imagery of the sixth
Seal in particular, and that employed in the Gospels, added to the reiteration of the pathetic words addressed by our Lord to the daughters of Jerusalem, would, in our opinion, so restrict the subject to the coming of the Son of Man to judgment, as to set the question of interpretation at rest for ever.

1 Luke xxiii. 28–31,
CHAPTER V.

THE SEVENTH SEAL.

Six of the seven Seals have been already opened. The seventh and last which introduces the consummation is not broken at once, but, like the tubes of a telescope, is drawn out over a period during which seven Trumpets are sounded and seven Vials are poured out—the seven Vials being only an intensification of the woes announced by the seven Trumpets. It is considered to be essential to a correct understanding of the book, that the identity of the Trumpets and Vials should be clearly recognised. We shall therefore explain these duplicate symbols of the same events, although perhaps at different stages of development, hoping by this means to make them mutually illustrative of each other, for it will be found that often where the Trumpet is less explicit the Vial is more diffuse, or where the Vial is incomplete the Trumpet supplies the deficiency.

1 For precedents of this duplicate form of announcing the same events, the reader is referred to the doubled dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh, the doubled signs of Gideon, and especially to the doubled visions of the four metallic kingdoms and the four great beasts of Daniel: the object of this reduplication being not (as Victorinus observes) to shew that the thing will be twice done, but that it will surely and effectually be done.
Opening of the Seventh Seal.

Before, however, we enter upon their examination we shall call attention to the scene by which they are introduced.

TRUMPETS.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. Rev. viii. 1-6.

VIALS.

And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.—Rev. xv. 5-8; xvi. 1.

Silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Seven Trumpets are

No man able to enter the temple till the seven plagues were fulfilled.

Seven golden Vials full
TRUMPETS—continued.

given to the seven angels which stand before God.

The smoke of the incense ascends up before God.

The seven angels which had the seven Trumpets prepare to sound.

VIALS—continued.

of the wrath of God are given to the seven angels.

The temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God.

The command is given to the seven angels to pour out the Vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

It will be seen that the features under which the respective Trumpets and Vials are introduced are confessedly similar. The scene is, in each case, the heavenly temple. The pause expressed by 'silence in heaven for half an hour,' significant, perhaps, of the deep sympathy of heaven with the expected sequel, would seem answered by the interruption of the temple worship during the pouring out of the seven plagues. The smoke of the incense which ascended up before God is repeated in the temple filled with smoke from the glory of God, whilst the preparation to sound made by the seven angels which had the seven Trumpets, is reproduced in the command given to the seven angels to pour out their seven Vials upon the earth. From this remarkable correspondence a presumption arises that a right chord has been struck in this principle of duplicate interpretation, and this will receive additional force if it can be shewn that an identity is preserved throughout. The seventh Seal unfolded under the
seven Trumpets is the last Seal, as the seven Vials are the seven last plagues. When these have been poured forth, no other plagues remain, for 'in them was filled up the wrath of God.'

**FIRST TRUMPET.**
The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.—Rev. viii. 7.

**FIRST VIAL.**
And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.—Rev. xvi. 2.

The first angel sounded; and hail and fire, mingled with blood, are cast upon the earth.

Under the first Trumpet, there is an evident allusion to one of the sore plagues of Egypt, when there was 'hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous; and the hail smote all that was in the field, both man and beast, and smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.'¹ Under the Vial, reference is made to the plague of the boils² which precedes the hail. The correspondence between them may be seen in the circumstance that the respective woes fall upon the earth, and that they resemble two consecutive Egyptian plagues.

¹ Exod. ix. 24, 25. ² Ibid. ix. 9.
SECOND TRUMPET.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.—Rev. viii. 8, 9.

The second angel sounded, and as it were a burning mountain is cast into the sea.

A third part of the sea became blood, and a third part of living creatures in the sea died.

SECOND VIAL.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.—Rev. xvi. 3.

The second angel poured out his Vial upon the sea.

The sea became as the blood of a corpse, and every creature in the sea that had life died.

In both Trumpet and Vial there is a plain allusion to another Egyptian plague—the waters of the Nile turned into blood. Under the Trumpet, a third part of the sea becomes blood, a third part of the creatures living in the sea dies, and a third part of the ships is destroyed; under the Vial, the sea becomes loathsome and corrupted as the blood of a corpse, and every creature in it that has life dies. The identity in this case is too marked to require comment. With the exception that, under the former, a third part only is smitten—a circumstance peculiar to the Trumpet woes, and significant not of distinct desolations but
of modified threatenings, two-thirds escaping while one-third is destroyed—no difference can be said to exist between them.

THIRD TRUMPET.

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

The third angel sounded, and a great star, burning as a lamp, falls upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters. They become bitter as wormwood. The star (or angel) is called 'Wormwood,' and many die of the waters.

THIRD VIAL.

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.—Rev. xvi. 7.

The third angel poured out his Vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters. They become blood. The angel of the waters says, 'Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.'

1 Ezek. v. 2, 12; Zech. xiii. 8, 9. 2 Cf. Rev. i. 20; ix. 1.
Under the Trumpet a great star,\(^1\) burning as a lamp, falls upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters. The name of this star, or angel, is Absinthus; and the effect produced is to make the waters, like those of Mara, too bitter to drink. Under the Vial, the rivers and fountains of waters are turned into blood, so that, as in the Egyptian plague, the heathen persecutors of the Church could not drink of the waters. Under the former, many die of the waters which the angel has made bitter; under the latter, the angel of the waters pronounces the judgment just.

**FOURTH TRUMPET.**

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.—Rev. viii. 12.

**FOURTH VIAL.**

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.—Rev. xvi. 8, 9.

The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars were smitten.

The third part of them Men are scorched with

\(^1\) 'And there I beheld seven stars, like great blazing mountains, and like spirits, entreating me. Then the angel said: This place, until the consummation of heaven and earth, will be the prison of the stars and the host of heaven.'—Book of Enoch, xviii.
was darkened, so that the day shone not; and the night likewise.

Under the Trumpet, the judgment upon the sun induces darkness—an allusion to the Egyptian plague, which overspread the land for three days and three nights; under the Vial, by a not uncommon inversion of ideas, the judgment upon the sun produces a contrary effect, and men are scorched with intense heat, the obscuration or increased splendour of that luminary having equally a disastrous effect upon mankind. And in recapitulating briefly the first four Trumpets and Vials, we may observe that they fall upon similar objects of nature, that they correspond with similar phenomena recorded in the Gospels, and that the variation between them is not greater than what is found in other Apocalyptic writings, where, by a change, or an expansion of figure, a wearisome tautology is avoided. With a close proximity to the Apocalyptic original, Pseudo-Esdras observes, 'The land that thou seest now to have root shalt thou see wasted suddenly . . . the sun (after the third Trumpet) shall suddenly shine again in the night, and the moon thrice in the day . . . and the Sodomitish sea shall cast out fish . . . and salt waters shall be found in the sweet . . . and even he shall rule whom they look not for that dwell upon the earth.'

1 2 Esdras v. 1-13.
sympathetic moanings of material nature with the approaching catastrophe. Greater and more appalling desolations follow as the prophecy draws to a climax; and an eagle (E.V. angel) flying in mid-heaven is heard to cry with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the Trumpet of the three angels which are about to sound.'

**FIFTH TRUMPET.**

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and

**FIFTH VIAL.**

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.—Rev. xvi. 10, 11.
and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.—Rsv. ix. 1-11.

The fifth angel sounds, and locusts rise out of the bottomless pit and darken the sun and the air.

Men are tormented five months, and their torment is as that of a scorpion when it shall have stricken a man.

The fifth angel pours out his Vial upon the seat of the beast, and the beast's kingdom is full of darkness.

Men gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores.
In accordance with the division common to the Apocalypse of the mysterious number 'seven' into four and three, a new terror is introduced with the fifth Trumpet and Vial, the calamity no longer falling, as in preceding symbols, upon material objects, but upon 'the seat of the Beast,' and upon the enemies of Messiah.

Under the Trumpet, Satan, here called 'a star which had fallen from heaven unto the earth,' opens the bottomless pit, from whence issue clouds of supernatural locusts, the object of whose mission is not, as in the case of the natural insect, to prey upon the green herbs and trees of the earth, but upon the men who 'had not the seal of God in their foreheads;' under the Vial, the scene of this terrible visitation is said to be the throne and kingdom of the beast, i.e. the Roman metropolis and the Roman kingdom. Their great number is represented in the former case by 'the smoke of a great furnace,' rising in such clouds out of the pit that the sun and air are darkened, or, as the same idea is concisely expressed in the latter, 'The beast's kingdom was full of darkness.' These unearthly locusts, unlike the natural locusts which are said to have no king, 'have over them a king, the prince of the abyss, the angel whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon,

1 Rev. xii. 9; Luke x. 18.
2 'I was walking in the Campanian road . . . . and I saw dust rising up to heaven . . . . and lo, I saw a great beast, like a whale, and from its mouth proceeded fiery locusts . . . So terribly that beast approached as if it could at a blow destroy the city. This beast is the emblem of the tribulation about to come.'—Hermas, Shepherd, vision iv.
Opening of the Seventh Seal.

but in the Greek tongue Apollyon.' Their power is said to continue five months (the usual duration of the locust plague), and the anguish they cause so severe, that men 'seek for death and do not find it, and desire to die, and death flees from them.' This Satanic irruption is described in the Apocryphal Apocalypse of Daniel in terms similar to those employed in the Revelation: 'Woe unto thee, O earth, because of the torments which the Lord omnipotent is about to send upon thee: locusts, fierce and very bloody, which will neither fasten upon the living creatures, nor the trees, but only upon those who have not repented of their numerous sins, and their lawlessness, and unrighteousness; and they shall torment them eighteen months until they shall call the dead happy, and shall say, Blessed are ye because ye have not attained to these days.' With the exception that the locust plague (which is founded on its Egyptian precedent, and is tinged by poetical colouring borrowed from the prophet Joel) is described at length under the Trumpet, while it is concisely rendered under the Vial, the respective symbols correspond in their main features, and the identity observable in former judgments is preserved. 'One woe is past; and behold, there come two more woes hereafter,' or after these.

SIXTH TRUMPET.

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the

SIXTH VIAL.

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that
SIXTH TRUMPET—continued.
sixth angel which had the trump- 
et, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four an-
gels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto ser-pents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their mur-ders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.—Rev. ix. 13-21.

SIXTH VIAL—continued.

the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.—Rev. xvi. 12-16.
SIXTH TRUMPET—continued.

The sixth angel looses the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates.

These are prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year.

Fire, smoke, and brimstone issue from the horses' mouths; by these three was the third part of men killed.

The number of the army of the horsemen is two hundred thousand thousand.

Under the Trumpet, with the loosing of the four angels who are bound at the river Euphrates (as in Rev. vii. four angels are seen holding the four winds of the earth), two hundred myriads of Parthian cavalry pass that Eastern boundary of the Roman empire:¹ under the Vial, the great river Euphrates is dried up, leaving the progress of the Eastern kings to destroy the seat of the beast unopposed. The peculiar mode of warfare adopted by these warriors is not unnoticed. They are horsemen armed with bows,² who shot their arrows with wonderful strength.

¹ Tac. Ann. xvii.
² ἰπποδίκτων.
and precision while their horses were in full career, and who were proverbially remarkable for the injury they inflicted with these weapons on an enemy who attempted to follow them in their flight;¹ or, to use Apocalyptic language, 'For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails, and with them they do hurt.' The forces led by these Eastern kings are said to be two myriads of myriads;² the same idea of numerosity being expressed under the Vial by the gathering together of the kings of the whole world 'to the battle of that great day of God Almighty;' 'the hour, the day, the month, and the year,' unto which they are prepared, indicating not so much the duration of their desolations as the determination of the time appointed for their irruption. Under the former, fire, and smoke, and brimstone issue out of their horses' mouths—an allusion perhaps to the fire, and smoke, and brimstone which the Lord rained upon Sodom;³ under the latter, three unclean spirits of devils, like frogs, working miracles, who persuade to war, proceed out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—an allusion probably to the triple wonders wrought by the Egyptian impostors, and especially to that of the frogs

¹ 'Nec patitur Scythas
Et versis animosum equis
Parthum dicere.—Hor. Od. i. xix. 10.

² 'Miles sagittas et celerem fugam Parthi' (timet).—Ibid. ii. xiii. 17.

³ 'Fidentemque fugæ Parthum, versisque sagittis.'
Virg. Georg. iii. 31.

² Cf. Ἐφρήτην διαβὰς πολλαῖς ἡμα μυριδεσσίν.—Orac. Sibyll. iv. 139; xi. 122–124.

which the magicians brought up by their enchantments upon the land of Egypt. The place to which the three unclean spirits gather together the kings of the whole world and their armies to battle, is called, in the Hebrew tongue, Harmageddon, the valley of Megiddo—a place celebrated as the scene of the defeat of Josiah, and significant of mourning and calamity.

SEVENTH TRUMPET.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God

SEVENTH VIAL.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the

1 Exod. viii. 7.  
2 συνήγαγεν.
SEVENTH TRUMPET—continued.  
was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.—Rev. xi. 15-19.

The seventh angel blew his Trumpet.  
The mystery of God is finished.  
The kingdom of this world becomes that of our Lord (God) and of his Christ.  
There are lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

SEVENTH VIAL—continued.  
plague thereof was exceeding great.—Rev. xvi. 17-21.

The seventh angel poured out his Vial.  
A voice proclaims, 'It is done.'  
Great voices are heard, saying, 'Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'

There are voices, thunderers, lightnings, a great earthquake, and great hail.

As the true principle of Apocalyptic interpretation is to find a consummation in a seventh, with the sounding of the seventh Trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh vial, a climax is reached. Under the former, the Messianic angel lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be no more delay (E.V. 'time no longer'), but that when the seventh angel shall (soon) begin to sound, 'the mystery of God shall be finished:' under the Vial, the seventh angel pours the contents of his vial into the air, significant, perhaps, of the conflagration of that element, 2 and a voice is heard,

1 Rev. xix. 6.  
2 2 Pet. iii. 10.
saying, 'It is done;' the Messianic reign commences, and the kingdom of the world becomes that of our Lord and of his Christ. The temple of God is opened in heaven to compensate, as it were, for the loss of the Jewish temple on earth, and within it is seen the ark of his testament. The holy city, of which, under the Trumpet, a tenth part only had been destroyed, is now, under the Vial, divided into three parts, and the earthquake, by which, under the former, seven thousand perished, is followed, under the latter, by 'a mighty earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.' Great Babylon comes into remembrance before God. The cities of the nations fall by earthquakes—an idea suggested to the writer by previous calamities. A sound is heard of the approaching Advent, 'Behold, I come as a thief;' the consummation being further indicated by the introduction into the respective Trumpet and Vial of phenomena expressive of completion—as 'voices, thunderings, lightnings, an earthquake, and great hail.'

We are content to leave the identity between the seventh Trumpet and Vial without further notice. Anything more complete could hardly be desired, and we cannot conceive that any serious objection

1 'Eodem anno ex illustribus Asiæ urbibus, Laodicea tremore pro-lapsa, propriis viribus revaluit.'—Tac. Ann. xiv. 27.

'In Asiâ tres urbes terræ motu ceciderunt, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ.'—Eus. Chr. p. 161.

'Ex motu terræ celebre Campaniæ oppidum Pompeiæ magnæ ex parte proruit.'—Tac. Ann. xv. 22.
can be offered against our duplicate system of interpretation. As chance alone could not have directed that the woes of the first four Trumpets and Vials should fall on similar objects of nature; as no fortuitous combination of ideas could account for the respective insertion of the darkness caused by the locusts and the pain created by their stings into the fifth, or for the mention of the great river Euphrates into the sixth, so no merely accidental circumstances could have deferred the consummation until the seventh, or could have introduced ideas nowhere else developed in the book within the range of these duplicate symbols. We may therefore conclude, from the continuous and undeviating resemblance between them, that they prefigure the same things, and that so full and minute a correspondence cannot be accounted for in any other way.

The correspondence hitherto maintained is continued in the events which follow the sounding of the seventh Trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh Vial. It will be seen that the seventh Trumpet ends with the coming of Messiah,¹ the seventh Vial being also exhausted by the same event.² The analogy, therefore, which we are about to institute, must, in either case, be comprised in the interval which precedes the triumphant Advent of the conqueror. This interval is occupied with the delineation of many striking events. 'In the trumpets and vials (says Victorinus, the earliest commentator on the Apocalypse, whose work has come down to us,

¹ Rev. xiv. 20 ² Rev. xix. 21.
and of whom Jerome says that he was "Great in thoughts, but unable to express himself in words," there are described the execution wrought by the plagues sent upon the world, the madness of Antichrist himself, the blasphemy of the people, the variety of their plagues, the hope in the kingdom of the saints, the fall of cities, and the fall of that great city Babylon, that is, Rome.' It may therefore be expected that the plot will now hasten forward to a consummation, and that the picture will be disclosed of the form to be assumed by Antichrist and by the False Prophet by whom he will be accompanied, that a sound of wailing will be heard over Jerusalem mingled with fierce rejoicing over desolate Babylon, and that the Advent of Messiah will be no longer delayed. These last and terrible things fill up the remaining portions of the seventh Trumpet and Vial, and, reserving for the present their interpretation, we proceed to lay them before our readers as they stand in the text itself, marking by italics the principal points of verbal and ideal agreement.

**ANTICHRIST.**

(Rev. xiii. 1–8.)

'I saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns... and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.'

'And I saw one of his

(Rev. xvii. 3–14.)

'I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.'

'The beast that thou
heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed.'

'And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain.'

'THE FALSE PROPHET.

(Rev. xiii. 11-16.)

'He doeth great wonders, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, and receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.'

'THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

(Rev. xi. 13.)

'And the same hour there was a great earthquake, such as was
Opening of the Seventh Seal.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM—continued.

quake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.' not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great, and the great city\(^1\) was divided into three parts.'

THE FALL OF BABYLON.

(Rev. xiv. 8.)

'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'

(Rev. xviii. 2, 3.)

'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'

THE COMING OF CHRIST.

(Rev. xiv. 14-20.)

'And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.'

(Rev. xix. 11-21.)

'And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and on his head were many crowns, and his name is called the Word of God, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword.'

'And the winepress (the

\(^1\) Rev. xi. 8.
great winepress of the wrath of God) was trodden and wrath of Almighty God.

'And blood came out in a vesture dipped in blood.'

'The remaining chapters of the Apocalypse, which are occupied with the delineation of events subsequent to Messiah's Advent, such as the millennial reign, the universal judgment, and the descent from heaven of the New Jerusalem, do not enter into the correspondence instituted between the Trumpets and Vials, but are merely corollaries to the grand catastrophe with the arrival of which the principal object of the book is attained.'
CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO WITNESSES.

The subject before us is, without exception, the most abstruse of all the mysteries of the Apocalypse. Every crisis of the ages that are past has been explored, and every phenomenon of this world’s history investigated, with the view of discovering a fulfilment for the recusant symbol. The Witnesses have been explained, with equal positiveness, of Moses and Elias, Elias and Enoch, Joshua and Zerubbabel, Christ and John the Baptist, James and Matthias, Peter and James, Jesus and Ananus, Pope Sylvester and Mena, Francis and Dominic, John Huss and Luther, the Waldenses and Albigenses, the Old and New Testaments, the Eastern and Western Witnesses, &c. &c. The solution of the Apocalyptic enigma would nevertheless seem as distant as ever, and it is at length advanced that they are supposititious personages who never did and never will exist. To this last conclusion we feel ourselves constrained to subscribe. Like other fictitious characters introduced into this book, the Witnesses, as it appears to us, exist only in the imagination of the writer, and have no more reality than the angel standing in the sun or the beast.
ascending out of the bottomless pit. Interesting, therefore, as it may be to examine from a new point of view a subject which has baffled the efforts of theologians from the days of Victorinus to the present time, it may at the commencement be remembered with advantage that we are dealing, not with historical fact, but with events which were supposed to accompany the advent of Messiah, and which the fervid expectation of the writer shaped out under the present form.

The episode of the Two Witnesses is introduced at the close of the sixth and before the sounding of the seventh trumpet; the sixth trumpet not being exhausted until xi. 14, when its completion is announced in the words, 'The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly.' The omission of this subject in the corresponding Vial may be of no more consequence than that the locust armies, described at length under the fifth Trumpet, should only be briefly alluded to under the fifth Vial, or that the fall of Babylon, cursorily touched upon, should be given in extenso; it being characteristic, not only of these visions, but of apocalyptic literature generally, that what is fully detailed in one place should be lightly passed over in another. Before, however, we enter upon it, it will be necessary to examine the preceding context,
The Two Witnesses.

which introduces, in highly figurative language, the important office which the Witnesses are about to execute.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples; and nations, and tongues, and kings.—Rev. x.

The tenth chapter commences by describing the descent from heaven of a strong angel, ‘clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, his face as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire’—imagery borrowed from the ancient prophets, and applied by St. John to the Messiah. He holds in his
hand a little book which had been opened (and not sealed, as in Dan. xii. 4) by the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He sets his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth, an act significant of universal dominion, and he cries with a loud voice (\textit{vocem plenissimam sonitus}), as when a lion roareth, expressive not only of the Messianic character of the speaker, but of the momentous and final import of the message he delivers. As his communication refers to the consummation which should take place at the sounding of the seventh angel, as soon as he had cried, 'seven thunders' (a number indicative of completion) utter their voices; and, as the seer is about to commit to writing the revelations which they disclose, he is prevented by the command, 'Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not;' the reason for this prohibition being the impending character of the approaching catastrophe. This proximity is still more clearly asserted in the oath which follows: 'And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand ("his right hand and his left hand") to heaven, and sware by him who liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer (no more delay), but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall (soon) begin to sound,'
the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.’

After this magnificent and solemn prelude to the sounding of the seventh and last Trumpet, the seer takes the little book, the opened one, in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth, as the Lamb had already taken the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and in obedience to his commands proceeds to eat it up. In his mouth it is as sweet as honey, but when he had eaten it his belly was made bitter. The correspondence between this imagery and that used by Ezekiel is too patent to need comment. The Prophet of the Captivity is commissioned to ‘speak unto the house of Israel.’ A hand is mysteriously sent unto him holding ‘a roll of a book’—a single parchment, perhaps, out of many—agreeing with the little book in the hand of the angel which is sent to St. John. It is opened or unrolled before him with the command, ‘Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel . . . . Then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. . . . and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.’ It will be seen that, with the unimportant variation that the eating of the roll makes the belly of the seer bitter, the descriptions harmonise. To the one it is said, ‘Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel;’ to the other it is declared, with a wider significance, ‘Take it, and eat it up

1 Jer. xv. 16.  
2 Ezek. iii. 1-14.
And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.—Rev. xi. 1-13.

A reed, or staff, is now given by the Messianic angel to St. John, and he is bid to 'measure the
The Two Witnesses.

The heavenly temple, with its altar and worshippers, is to be measured, with a view to its preservation, but the Jewish court, or palace, without the heavenly temple (as the winepress is trodden without the heavenly city), is to be cast out, and not measured, with a view to its destruction. Here is the first mention made in the Apocalypse of a calamity upon Jerusalem and the Temple as one of the signs of the last days; and it is remarkable that, as in the Synoptic Gospels, this calamity immediately precedes the advent of Messiah. The holy city is not, however, in this first announcement of its desolation, to be utterly overthrown like great Babylon, but to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles for the Danielic period of three years and a half, an idea borrowed from corresponding desolations in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

During the calamities which come upon the holy city, two individuals are suddenly introduced, who 'prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.' With a familiarity which betrays an intimate knowledge of their person and office, they are designated by the Messianic angel who stands upon the sea and upon the earth.

1 Cf. Rev. xxi. 15, 17. 2 Rev. xiv. 20.
as 'My Two Witnesses'; the features being merely given by which they are to be distinguished. They are to be witnesses, or martyrs for Christ, like John the Baptist, the ideal Elias, unto whom the Jews did 'whatsoever they listed,' or like 'Antipas, my faithful martyr, who was slain where Satan dwelleth.'

They are to be two in number, a marked dualism pervading the whole account, and making it difficult to explain them of Christian witnesses generally, or of any line of witnesses in particular. They are said to be clothed in sackcloth, possibly on account of the season of distress during which they exercise the prophetic office, and their prophesying is commensurate with the treading under foot of the holy city, and the flight of the woman (the Church) into the wilderness. They resemble Joshua and Zerubbabel, 'the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth,' inasmuch as they are trees of blessing and peace, and candlesticks of light in the midst of surrounding darkness. They have power to call down fire from heaven, as Moses did at the rebellion of Korah, and at Taberah, and as Elijah did at Dothan. The attribute is further assigned to them of being able to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, thereby creating famine, and of turning waters into blood; in a word, of repeating the miracles performed by two of the most celebrated Hebrew prophets, and of

1 Rev. iii. 13.  2  Kings i. 8.  3 Joel i. 13.  4 Numb. xvi. 35.  5 Numb. xi. 1–3.  6 2 Kings i. 10.  7 Luke iv. 25; James v. 17.  8 Exod. vii. 19.
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smiting the earth with all plagues as often as they will.

When these two prophets have finished their testimony, they are to be slain by the wild beast (Nero), ascending out of the bottomless pit, and their dead body shall lie upon the broad street of the great city Jerusalem,\(^1\) which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, 'where also their Lord was crucified.' These Witnesses may be supposed to defend the cause of Christ against the delusions of Antichrist, and to work miracles\(^2\) to counteract the great wonders whereby the beast deceiveth them that dwell on the earth. The writer of the Apocalypse seems to put

\(^1\) Jerusalem is called a great city (Jer. xxii. 8; Lam. ii. 15; Bell. Jud. vii. 8; Sibyll. Orac. v. 164). She is called Sodom (Isaiah i. 9; iii. 9; Jer. xxiii. 14), and Judea is styled Σωδομίτης γαλη (Sibyll. Orac. vi. 21). In Amos iv. 10, 11, the two emblems by which Jerusalem is here signified are employed in a combined form, and the desolation of Israel is compared to the woes sent upon Egypt and Sodom: 'I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt. . . . I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.'

\(^2\) The power of working miracles, especially of that kind which interfere with the production of food, is attributed to the Tishbite by the Sybil, who feelingly describes the miseries about to come on women with child and young babes in consequence of this scarcity (ii. 186–192). Similarly Lactantius says, 'When the end of the times draws near, God will send a great prophet, who will convert men to the knowledge of himself, and will receive power to work miracles. Whenever men refuse to listen to him, he will shut heaven and withhold the showers, he will turn water to blood, and will torment men with hunger and thirst; and whoever attempts to hurt him will be devoured by the fire that proceeds out of his mouth.' With manifest allusion to the scarcity produced by these Apocalyptic plagues, the author of Esdras ii. observes: 'And suddenly shall the sown places appear unsown; the full storehouses shall suddenly be found empty, . . . the springs of fountains shall stand still, and in three hours they shall not run' (vi. 22–24). Similarly it is said in the Apocryphal Apocalypse ascribed to John of the times of Antichrist, 'Then will I make the heaven brass
the words into their lips which they may be thought to have used: 'Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of his judgment is come;' 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured without mixture into the cup of His indignation.' Their testimony, however, is overborne. These precursors, not of the suffering, but of the triumphant Messiah, are slain; and they, i.e. some of the Gentile nations, see their dead bodies three days and a half, and with a refinement of barbarity hold festival over their downfall, and do not suffer their corpses to be put into graves. But their exultation is of short duration. After the three days and a half, the spirit of life from God enters into them; they stand upon their feet, and in obedience to the heavenly summons ascend up in the cloud while their enemies behold them. The same hour there is 'a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city (Jerusalem) fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand (a small portion only), and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.'

And now comes the vexata quaestio which has baffled the penetration of the wisest and defeated the labours of the most pious and painstaking—Who are the Two Witnesses? Are they to be in-

that it should not give dew upon the earth, and I will hide the clouds in secret places that they may not induce moisture upon the earth, and I will restrain the horns of the winds that the wind should not blow upon the earth' (7).
The Two Witnesses.

terpreted only of two individuals or of separate lines of witnesses, or do they represent abstract impersonalities, as the Law and the Prophets, or the Old and the New Testaments? We confess our adhesion to the theory which explains them of Moses and Elias;¹ Elias being certainly one of them, although some hesitation may exist respecting the other. And in conducting our inquiry, we shall not be careful to ask whether a real fulfilment may be found for them,

¹ The voice of antiquity pronounces strongly in favour of Enoch and Elias as the Two Witnesses. Not to mention the predilections of Tertullian and Hippolytus for Enoch as the second witness, in that remarkable production the so-called Second Book of Esdras, written perhaps within thirty years of the Apocalypse itself, it is said that in the day of the Messiah ‘they should see those men who have ascended, and who have not tasted death from their birth (words applicable only to Enoch and Elijah): and the heart of the inhabitants of the world shall be changed, and another heart shall be given to them’ (2 Esdras, vi. 26, 27). In the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Two Witnesses are said to be Enoch and Elijah, who would ‘return at the coming of Antichrist, and, armed with divine signs and miracles, would engage with him in battle, and be slain by him at Jerusalem, and would be taken up alive again into the clouds after three days and a half.’ In the Apocryphal Apocalypse of Peter mention is made (cap. lxvi.) of the descent of Enoch and Elijah, who should be slain by Antichrist. In the Apocryphal Apocalypse of Esdras, Enoch, Elias, and Moses are seen together in Paradise, in company with Peter and Paul, and Luke and Matthew: in that ascribed to Paul, Enoch is called ‘the witness of the last time;’ and in that ascribed to John, their office as champions of Messiah against Antichrist is distinctly asserted: ‘I will send Enoch and Elias to rebuke him (Antichrist), and they shall show him to be a liar and a deceiver—ψεύτην και πλάνον—and he shall destroy them at the altar’ (8). Maitland observes, ‘While everything points to Elijah as one of the witnesses, Scripture leaves us in uncertainty respecting the name of the other. Following Ben-Sirach and the Scribes, the Pseudo-Sybil, Justin, and Origen speak of Elias alone; Tertullian and Hippolytus add Enoch. Lactantius speaks of one only. Victorinus suggests Jeremiah as a second. The Pseudo-Hippolytus is disposed to make three tabernacles—one for John, one for Enoch, and one for Elias.’
for we can conceive of no historical personages to whom the description could possibly apply. Witnesses, it is true, and slain by the Roman beast, may be reckoned in the catalogue of Christian worthies. Peter and James, two of the ‘pillars’ who, together with John, constituted the apostolic triumvirate, or James and Matthias, who equally with the former attained the dignity of martyrdom, might seem to furnish a key to the apocalyptic symbol. These fail, however, to exhibit the peculiar features which mark the Witnesses, or to perform the miracles which the latter are said to accomplish. Our task is simply to realise the picture which the author proposed to himself when he depicted these extraordinary precursors of Messiah’s advent, and we are not so much concerned to show its agreement or disagreement with historical fact, as to give a faithful exposition of the vision as it presented itself to the imagination of the writer. In endeavouring to make good our position that these ancient Hebrew worthies are represented by the Two Witnesses, we shall first take the evidence of the book itself.

The passage which seems to refer to Moses and Elias with the greatest clearness is to be found Rev. xi. 6: ‘These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.’ In this verse certain definite qualities are attached to the Two Witnesses which fit in more closely with the circumstances of these two Hebrew
prophets than with those of any other historical personages with whom we are acquainted. Of Elijah alone could it be predicated that he had power to shut heaven for three years and a half, that it should not rain in the days of his prophecy; \(^1\) and of Moses alone that he had not only power to turn waters into blood, \(^2\) but to smite the earth with all plagues \(^3\) as often as he would. It may, therefore, be confidently affirmed that no two characters can be found who come so near the apocalyptic description as those already mentioned, and that the evidence of the book itself is decidedly in their favour. The terms, moreover, under which the Witnesses are described, as \textit{these two prophets}, would not seem inapplicable to the latter, of whom it was said that \textit{there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses}; \(^4\) or to the former, of whom it was written, \textit{Behold I send you Elijah the prophet (Elijah the Tishbite, \(^5\) LXX.), before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.} \(^6\)

To this it may be added, that not only was the coming of Elijah at that period the settled expectation of the Jewish people, \(^7\) but that tradition con-

\(^1\) 1 Kings xvii. 1. \(^2\) Ex. vii. 19. \(^3\) Ex. ix. 14. \(^4\) Deut. xxxiv. 10. \(^5\) Orac. Sibyll. ii. 246–248. \(^6\) Mal. iv. 5. \(^7\) 'How deep was the impression which he made on the mind of the
nal, the joint appearance of these ancient prophets with the times of Messiah, coupling, perhaps, the
nation may be judged of from the fixed belief which many centuries after prevailed, that Elijah would again appear for the relief and restoration of his country. The prophecy of Malachi was possibly at once a cause and an illustration of this belief. What it had grown to at the time of our Lord’s birth, and how continually the great Prophet was present to the expectations of the people, we do not need the evidence of the Talmud to assure us; it is patent on every page of the Gospels. Each remarkable person, as he arrives on the scene, be his habits and characteristics what they may—the stern John equally with his gentle successor—is proclaimed to be Elijah (Matt. xvi. 14; Mark vi. 15; John i. 21). His appearance in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration does not seem to have startled the disciples. They were ‘sore afraid,’ but not apparently surprised. On the contrary, St. Peter immediately proposes to erect a tent for the Prophet, whose arrival they had been so long expecting. Even the cry of our Lord from the cross, containing as it did but a slight resemblance to the name of Elijah, immediately suggested him to the bystanders: ‘He calleth for Elijah.’ ‘Let be, let us see if Elijah will come to save him.’... He is recorded as having often appeared to the wise and good Rabbis—at prayer in the wilderness, or on their journeys—generally in the form of an Arabian merchant (Eisenmenger, i. 11; ii. 402-7). At the circumcision of a child, a seat was always placed for him, that, as the zealous champion and messenger of the “covenant” of circumcision (1 Kings xix. 14; Mal. iii. 1), he might watch over the due performance of the rite. During certain prayers, the door of the house was set open, that Elijah might enter and announce the Messiah (Eisenmenger, i. 685). His coming will be three days before that of the Messiah, and on each of the three he will proclaim, in a voice which shall be heard all over the earth, peace, happiness, salvation, respectively (Eisenmenger, 696). So firm was the conviction of his speedy arrival, that when goods were found and no owner appeared to claim them, the common saying was, “Put them by till Elijah comes” (Lightfoot, Exercit. Matt. xvii. 10; John i. 21). The same customs and expressions are even still in use among the stricter Jews of this and other countries. (See Revue des deux Mondes, xxiv. 131, &c.).—Smith’s Bibl. Dict.

1 ‘Antiqua fuit apud Judæos traditio, Mosen et Eliam temporibus Messiae adparere debere.

‘Devarim rabba, sect. 3, fol. 255. 2. Dixit Deus S. B. Mose, per vitam tuam, quemadmodum tu vitam tuam posuisti pro Israelitis temporibus V. T., sic quoque temporibus N. T., scilicet Messiae, quando Eliam Prophetam ad ipsos mittam, vos duo codem tempore venietis.
mention of the law of Moses my servant\textsuperscript{1} with the appearing of the Restorer, which immediately follows. It was further believed, although with some hesitation, that neither of them experienced death; Elijah having been taken up to heaven by a whirlwind, and Moses, according to Josephus, having disappeared in a certain valley near the mount called Abarim, while he was conversing with Eleazar and Joshua.\textsuperscript{2} The appointment of more than one Witness receives additional significance from the circumstance that two or more witnesses were required in evidence by the Mosaic law; for 'at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established;'\textsuperscript{3} and it would have been difficult for the writer to have adduced any more calculated to impress, by the weight of their testimony, than the great Lawgiver and the equally great Prophet of the Jewish people.

It is confirmatory of our position that, at the Transfiguration—a vision intimately allied with that of the Two Witnesses—Moses and Elias appear as the precursors of the glorified Jesus, who is there revealed for the first time in the character of Messiah. According to the synoptic histories, the Transfiguration is the point which separates the ministry of Christ in Galilee from that in Jerusalem; it might, therefore, be expected that, as the earlier

\textsuperscript{1} Tanchuma, fol. 42. 1. Dixit Deus S. B. ad Mosen, Temporibus V. T. feci te principem super Israelem: sed temporibus N. T. quando justi venient mercedem accepturi, tu venies primus omnium.'
\textsuperscript{2} Schoettgen, i. 148, on Matt. xvii. 3.
\textsuperscript{3} Mal. iv. 4. \textsuperscript{1} Ant. iv. 8. \textsuperscript{3} Deut. xix. 15.
and simpler ministration was preceded by a fore-runner, John the Baptist, and attested by a voice from heaven, so the later and more distinct manifestation of his character would be introduced by the appearing of the expected precursors, accompanied, as in the former case, by a Divine recognition. In the context immediately preceding the synoptic account, Jesus had announced in the most positive terms his immediate return in the glory of his Father, with his angels, to reward every man according to his works, even before some of those then present should taste of death; and, with a view of impressing his solemn coming to judgment upon the minds of his disciples, as well as of giving them a cheering foretaste of the splendour with which his advent should be attended, after six (Luke, eight) days, he took Peter, and James, and John to a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; his face shining as the sun and his raiment white as the light, as he subsequently appeared to John in Patmos. That this was one, and possibly the principal object for which he was transfigured, may be inferred, not only from the context which is occupied with the subject of the return, but from 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, where the writer asserts that the scene upon the holy mount was the earnest of the glory with which the coming of the Son of Man should be accompanied. 'We have not (he says) followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the
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Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was during this extraordinary manifestation, whilst he was, as it were, rehearsing the character he should afterwards assume, and investing himself by anticipation with the glory in which the Son of Man should shortly be revealed, that he is seen to be accompanied by Moses and Elias; these Jewish heroes playing an important part in the prophetic anticipation of the Advent prefigured by the Transfiguration, as they do in the event itself delineated in the Apocalypse. The correspondence of ideas and language perceptible between the two accounts show, moreover, that either the one is borrowed from the other, or that both have a foundation of common tradition. As Moses and Elias (according to St. Luke, who appears to have been familiar with the apocalyptic narrative), speak of Christ's decease, 'which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,' so the bodies of the Two Witnesses lie in the street of the great city, 'where also their Lord was crucified.' As Jesus experiences a resurrection on the third day, so in imitation of, yet with less dignity than their Master, after three days and a half they live again and stand upon their feet; and as, when the celestial visitants 'departed' from the mount, a cloud hid them from the view of the disciples, so do the Witnesses ascend up to heaven in the cloud, and their enemies behold them. From this coincidence of ideal conception, as well as of verbal agreement, it
would seem probable that the episode of the Two Witnesses is only another phase of the scene delineated in the Synoptic Gospels. Instead, however, of regarding the Witnesses as celestial visitants sent down to encourage Jesus under the prospect of his approaching sufferings and death, the author of the Apocalypse prefers to consider them as the martyred precursors of his glorious appearing in the last and perilous times. From the fact, then, that the description of the Two Witnesses given in the book itself corresponds more closely with the circumstances of Moses and Elias than with those of any other ancient prophets; from the popular expectation, founded on Jewish tradition, which connected the return of one, if not of both of these Hebrew champions, with the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and from the confirmation afforded by the Synoptic Gospels, which introduce them as the precursors of Messiah in a vision prefiguring the glories of the Second Advent—we are led to the conclusion that the seer of Patmos portrayed Moses and Elias as the Two Witnesses whose office it was to contend with the beast and the false prophet, to counteract by exertions of miraculous power the Satanic prodigies of the latter days, to bring back an apostate world to humiliation and repentance, and to proclaim the final and triumphant Advent of Messiah. It need scarcely be said that the picture here drawn cannot be submitted to the test of historical proof. We have no hesitation, therefore, in expressing the opinion that the Two
The Two Witnesses.

Witnesses, like the beast and the false prophet, are imaginary persons, whose marvellous career is to be traced to the fanciful conceptions of the times. It gives force to this consideration that, after centuries spent in the fruitless endeavour to solve the mystery, no satisfactory interpretation has been found for them, and from the circumstance that no two individuals have answered to the description in past ages, it is reasonable to infer that none will answer to it in those which have to come.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up into God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in
them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.—Rev. xii.

During the period in which the Witnesses prophesy and the Gentiles tread down the holy city, the Woman (the Church) flies for protection into the wilderness. This symbol is attached to the preceding by identity of periods,¹ and must therefore be examined in connection with it. With the commencement of this chapter, St. John sees a great wonder in heaven; a 'Woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,'—an evident allusion to Gen. xxxvii. 9,

¹ It is remarkable that the periods of the Apocalypse are of equal duration. The Gentiles tread under foot the holy city forty and two months. The Witnesses prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth. The Woman is fed in the wilderness for the same period, or as expressed in other terms, 'for a time, times, and half a time.' Power is given to the Beast to continue forty and two months. The Ascension of Isaiah approaches closely to the Apocalyptic number: 'Et dominabitur tres annos, septemque menses, diesque viginti septem' (iv. 12). Hippolytus observes, 'These are the 1,260 days, even the half week, during which the tyrant will rule, persecuting the Church as she flies from city to city'—Opera, ed. Fabricii, p. 30.
and denoting the whole family of Jacob. The Woman is represented as ‘being with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.’ Before, however, this can take place, ‘a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, whose tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth,’ stands before the Woman to devour her child as soon as it was born; an allusion, probably, to the escape of Jesus from the Satanic attempt of Herod upon the young child’s life. The man-child, who is about to rule all nations with a rod of iron, is, beyond all controversy, the Messianic King, the child of his nation, to whom is given ‘power over the nations’; his being caught up ‘to God and to his throne,’ having also a plain reference to the resurrection of Him who is ‘the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.’ This symbol of the Woman in the wilderness is analogous to that of the woman mourning in the field, explained of ‘Sion our mother, full of heaviness, much humbled, mourning very sore.’ As the former, after tedious and painful travail, is delivered of a man-child, so does the latter bear a son after a barrenness of thirty years. As the child of the former is exposed to deadly peril as soon as it is born, so that of the latter falls down suddenly in his wedding chamber, and dies, a circumstance interpreted of ‘the destruction that came to Jerusalem.’ As the

1 Λαέβς ὁ δεισεκάφυς.  2 Cf. Dan. viii. 10.
2 S. Ign. ad Eph. xix.  4 Orac. Sibyll. viii. 248.
3 Rev. ii. 26, 27.  5 Rev. i. 5.  7 2 Esdras ix. 38; x. 50.
former is nourished, perhaps, by the Two Witnesses, so is the latter comforted by the prophet Esdras. As the fugitive and persecuted Woman is changed into the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, explained of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, so the woman mourning in the field is transformed of a sudden into ‘a city builded, and a large place showing itself from the foundations.’

Foiled in his attempt upon the life of the infant Jesus, that ‘old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan,’ next assails the Woman which brought forth the man-child. She, however, flies into the wilderness for safety, into her place, ‘where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent,’—a flight suggested by that of Elijah from Jezebel; the feeding of the Woman in the ‘place prepared of God’ being also prefigured by the miraculous support afforded to the prophet in his divinely selected retreat. The persecution instituted by this ringleader of the triple enemies of the church is shadowed forth by the casting down of Satan to earth to inaugurate the atrocities of the last times. This expulsion is graphically described under the magnificent symbol of ‘war in heaven;’ the hosts of the living God meeting, army against army, with the powers of hell and darkness. To use the sublime language of Milton and St. John, ‘Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in

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1 Rev. xii. 6.  
2 Rev. xvi. 13.
heaven.' Here again we are carried back to the Maccabæan age and to the book of that ancient prophet of which the Apocalypse is the voice and echo. Once more 'Michael, the great prince which standeth up for the children of the holy people,' contends against the adversary of the latter days as he contended against the Antichrist of the prechristian period. The issue of the contest is not left in doubt. The dragon is cast out of heaven, and his angels with him, and the song of triumph of which the first notes had been already heard is taken up afresh: 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night . . . Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.'

Ejected from the heaven of the victorious martyrs, who 'overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and who loved not their lives unto the death,' the adversary is cast down into the earth, and the mournful plaint is heard, anticipatory of the coming sorrows, 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' The result of this casting down of Satan is the extreme distress of the Church, for 'when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the Woman which brought forth the man-child.' To the Woman, however, are given the two wings of the

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1 Rev. xi. 15.  
2 Rev. xii. 10–13.
great eagle, to aid her in her escape to the wilderness, an idea which probably owes its foundation to the migration of the Christian Church to Pella 'before the (Jewish) war,'¹ and to the facilities of escape afforded by Vespasian. With a further effort at her destruction, Satan casts out of his mouth water, as a flood, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood;² but the earth helps the woman, and possibly, by means of an earthquake, swallows up the flood which the dragon casts out of his mouth.³ Defeated in his attempt to submerge the Church (for the 144,000 have yet to stand with the Lamb upon Mount Sion), the dragon makes war with the remnant of her seed, who 'keep the commandments of God (the Mosaic law), and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.'

¹ Eus. iii. 5. ² οὐσιάποφημι. ³ Psalm lxxiv. 13.
CHAPTER VII.

ANTICHRIST.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.—Rev. xiii. 1-10.

As we have already observed, the Apocalypse appears to have been written under circumstances of an unusually stirring character; the persecutions in which the writer bore a part being associated in his mind with a more terrible ordeal then supposed to
be imminent, and the political upheavings at that time shaking the nations with the arrival of a cata-
strophe which should convulse the world. In addi-
tion to existing causes of anxiety, anticipations of a strange and fearful nature contributed to increase 
the general alarm. As at a previous period of 
Jewish history a notable persecutor of the Church 
(Antiochus Epiphanes) had inflicted incalculable 
injuries upon the holy people, so now it was con-
fidently expected that a new adversary, whose form 

1 The manifestation and subsequent destruction of a great adversary of the Church previous to the Lord's Second Coming is an idea which finds expression in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians. It would seem that the converts at Thessalonica had been impressed with the notion that the day of the Lord was immediately at hand, and the object of the writer is to calm disquietude by showing that many things must happen before that event could take place; that there must be the falling away first, that Christ could not come till Antichrist had been revealed, that there was a hindrance in the way of this manifestation, and that when this obstruction should be removed, that lawless one should be revealed 'whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and annihilate with the splendour of his appearing.' In the opinion of M. Renan, 'He who now letteth' is the emperor Claudius (qui claudit, δ κατέφωρτ), upon whose name he supposes there is a play of words; the removal of this emperor whose death then (A.D. 54) appeared impending, seeming to him to be the time fixed by the Apostle for the appearing of Antichrist. Others again, and perhaps with better reason, have supposed that the date of the Epistle is later than Paul's own times, and that the aspect under which 'the man of sin' is pre-
sented corresponds with the view given of Antichrist in the Apocalypse. As in the former he is called 'the son of perdition,' so it is twice said of him in the latter that 'he goeth into perdition.' As he exalts him-
self 'above all that is called God or is worshipped,' so does the beast 'open his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.' As he may not be re-
vealed until he who withholdeth be 'out of the midst,' so 'the king that is' restrains the appearing of 'the other who has not yet come.' As the coming of the lawless one is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, so this exertion of superhuman power corre-
sponds with the miracles which Antichrist was supposed to perform.
was not inaptly suggested by that of the Syrian tyrant, would again enter into conflict with the saints of the Most High; and, after the commission of unparalleled atrocities, be vanquished and overthrown. This enemy, of whom an intense dread prevailed for many centuries in the Church, assumes a distinct form in the Apocalypse, the symbols by which he is delineated being partly accommodated from the Book of Daniel and partly taken from his peculiar idiosyncrasy. As the elder prophet beholds four great beasts (heathen kingdoms) rise up out of the sea, so does his apocalyptic imitator, standing upon the sand of the sea, behold a beast (the kingdom of heathen Rome) rise up out of that mighty element. Following the triple order of its Danielic precedents, it combines the emblems of the leopard, the bear, and the lion. Like the fourth great beast of Daniel, it has 'ten horns,' the 'seven heads' with which it is also furnished being subsequently explained of the seven mountains and the seven kings of Rome. After describing in general terms the kingdom out of which the beast arises, the particular form to be assumed by this adversary is next shadowed forth by an enigmatical figure of the most abstruse, yet most significant, kind. 'I saw (says St. John) one of his heads as it were wounded to

As, in the end, he is miserably destroyed at the Advent of Messiah, so is the beast cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. It is remarkable that in the epistle no mention is made of the false prophet who works miracles before the first beast, this significant omission being perhaps traceable to the fact that Paul himself is intended by the Apocalyptic symbol.
death, and his deadly wound was healed;’ the same mysterious qualities of existence and non-existence being also implied in the title by which he is continually designated, ‘The beast that was, and is not, and yet is,’ or, ‘and shall again be present’ (Sinaitic MS.), parodying in unholy imitation the threefold condition of Him ‘that liveth and was dead, and behold, he is alive for evermore,’—the features of the risen Messiah being repeated in that of the reappearing Nero, and the ‘mystery of godliness’ travestied in the ‘mystery of iniquity.’ This enemy is also spoken of as ‘the first beast,’ before whom the second beast coming up out of the earth works miracles, and whose statue he compels them that dwell on the earth to worship. He is also said to arise out of the bottomless pit, making it evident that he is not to be confounded with the beast (the Roman kingdom) arising up out of the sea. It is conceived that by these varied emblems, significant at once of the kingdom out of which Antichrist should arise, and of the particular form he would assume, an adversary is pointed out, whose opposi-

1 Rev. xi. 7; xvii. 8.
2 ‘His (Commodianus) Antichrist is Nero returned from the lower world accompanied by the false prophet (Apoc. xiii. 11, sqq.) who claims to be the Messiah and is worshipped as God.’ (Döllinger.) Victorinus describes him as ‘suscitatum,’ and at a later period Augustine uses the word ‘resurrecturum.’ The apocryphal Apocalypse of Esdras declares that ‘The opposer (δ ἀντικείμενος) shall ascend from Tartarus and shall show many (wonderful) things to men.’ The apocryphal Apocalypse of John declares, ‘Then shall appear the denier (δ ἀπερητός) the one kept apart in the darkness, who is called Antichrist.’ The Sibyl represents Antichrist under the name of Belial as arising out of the Cæsars (ἐκ Βεβιαστῶν), and performing notable yet deceptive miracles. (Orac. Sibyll. iii. 63–70.)
tion to Messiah is continued throughout the book, and who is finally cast with the false prophet into the lake of fire.

We are disposed to explain the mysterious qualities ascribed to the first beast which has the wound of the sword and lived, of a popular rumour current at the period when the book was written, that Nero was about to return as Antichrist, and, at the head of Parthian allies would ravage the Italian territory and destroy Rome—an expectation which, extravagant as it may seem, entered largely into the conception of those primitive times.1

1 'Et postquam elapsa erit (illa ætas) descendet Berial, magnus angelus, rex hujus mundi, quem possedit a tempore prime collocationis, et descendet a suo firmamento sub specie hominis, regis impii, interfectoris suae matris, nempe regis hujus mundi. . . . Angelus ille Berial, iste rex veniet, cumque eo venient omnes potestates hujus mundi, et servient ei in omnibus que voluerit. Et ejus voce exorietur sol noctu, atque is efficiet ut luna sextâ hora appareat. Et omnia que voluerit facere in mundo, faciet; et compellabit Dilectum, dicetque, Ego sum Deus, et ante me non fuit non aliquis. Et in eum credet unusquisque homo in mundo. Et ei sacrificabunt, eique subservient, dicentes illum esse Deum praeterque illum esse nullum . . . . Et potestas pro-digiorum ejus erit in singulis urbis et regionibus. Et erigit suum simulacrum ante faciem suam (Cf. ἐνιαυτῷ ἀφαδοῦ, Rev. xiii. 12) in omnibus urbis. Et dominabitur tres annos, septem quem menses, diesque viginti septem.'—Ascen. Isai. Vatis, iv. 1-12.

'Certe corpus illius (Neronis) interemptum. Unde creditur, etiamsi se gladio transfixerit, curato vulneris ejus servatus secundum illud, quod de eo scriptum est, "Et plagam mortis ejus curata est." Sub seculi fine mittendus, ut mysterium iniquitatis exercet.'—Sulp. i. Secer. Hist., ii. 29.

'Dejectus itaque fastigio imperii, ac devolutus a summo tyrannus impotens, nusquam repente comparuit, ut ne sepulture quidem locus in terra tam male bestia apparet. Unde illum quidam deliri credunt esse translatum, ac vivum reservatum, Sityllâ dicente maticridam profugum à finibus esse venturum, ut quia primus persecutus est, idem etiam novissimus persequatur, et Antichristi praecedat adventum, quod necas est credere, sicut duos prophetas vivos esse translatos in ultima
The first indication of this popular expectation is, perhaps, that of Dio Chrysostom, who says apparently of the partisans of Nero, 'Even now all wish and some suppose him alive.' Tacitus, about A.D. 70, asserts that 'Achaia and Asia were terrified as if Nero were coming, reports being various respecting his death; many, on this ground, believing that he was still alive—hence numbers asserted that Nero survived the fury of his enemies (many impostors actually personating that emperor), and they found credulity ready to believe them.'

The evidence of Suetonius is still more decisive: 'There were not wanting those who for a long time decked his grave with spring and summer flowers, and set up in the rostrum at one time his images dressed in robes, at another time his edicts, as if he were still living, and soon to return to the great discomfiture of his foes.'

Moreover, Vologeses, king of the Parthians, when proposing to the senate a renewal of friendship, begged earnestly that the memory of Nero might be

sæcula precursuros initium Christi sanctum et sempiternum cum descendere coeperit sanctis suis comitatus, pronuntiant: eodem modo etiam Neronem venturum putant ut qui præcursor diaboli ac prævius sit venientis ad vastationem terræ et humani generis eversionem.'—Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum, ii.

'Quidam putant hoe de imperio dictum fuisse Romano; ... ut hoc quod dixit, Jam enim mysterium iniquitatis operatur, Neronem voluerit intelligi, cujus jam facta velut Antichristi videbantur. Unde nonnulli ipsum resurrecturum, et futurum Antichristum suscipiantur. Alii vero nec eum occisum putant, sed subtractum potius, ut putaretur occisus; et vivum occultari in vigore ipsius ætatis, in qua fuit, cum crederetur extinctus, donec suo tempore revelatur, et restituatur in regnum.'—De Civitate Dei, lib. xx. cap. 19.

1 Hist. ii. 8. 2 In Neronem.
cherished. Lastly, about twenty years later, during my youth (says Suetonius) there was a man of unknown origin who boasted that he was Nero, and so popular was that name among the Parthians that he was supported with enthusiasm, and with difficulty reduced to submission. Victorinus supposes that the beast will reappear as Nero, or Antichrist, his deadly wound being healed. Such was the belief in those and subsequent days, respecting—

'The beast wounded to death whose deadly wound was healed.'
'The beast which has a wound by a sword, and did live.'
'The beast that was, and is not, and yet is,' or, 'shall soon again be present.'
'The beast with ten horns that shall hate the whore and burn her with fire.'
'The beast that shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and shall go into perdition.'

That the reappearing Nero answers to the Apocalyptic symbol may be inferred from the circumstance that the beast not only arises out of the great Roman kingdom, but is himself one of the seven heads or emperors of Rome. These heads are explained both of local situation and official dignity. 'The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman (Rome) sitteth, and there are seven kings.'

It is universally admitted that the seven mountains are the well-known seven hills of Rome, the seven kings would be therefore kings of Rome and not forms of empire or phases of political government, the explanation given in the book itself precluding any other interpretation. Of these seven kings, as

1 Rev. xvii. 9, 10.
we have already observed, five have fallen and passed away as monarchs of Rome; 'one is'—i.e., Nero, regarded by the writer as still living, although wounded to death; 'the other not yet come, who, when he cometh, must continue a short space' (the abbreviated times of Antichrist),\(^1\) still more emphatically defined as 'the beast that was and is not, the same also is the eighth' (not in addition to the seven kings already enumerated, for he is also 'of the seven'), being also Nero shortly about to return as Antichrist. It is conceived, therefore, that by 'the king that is,' and 'the other who is not yet come,' the same individual is represented under different stages of development, and perhaps it might be difficult to imagine one more suited to play the part of the great adversary than the tyrant of whom it was said by Augustine, 'Cujus jam facta velut Antichristi videbantur.'

The beast is further symbolised as having 'ten horns,' explained\(^2\) of ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet.'\(^3\) These, it is said, shall together with the Beast,'\(^4\) hate the whore (Rome), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;

\(^1\) 'And thus Antichrist shall reign and shall do wonderful and marvellous things, and shall exalt the Jews, and shall rebuild the temple which had been destroyed. And there shall be famines, and earthquakes, and floods upon every place, and the waters shall be dried up, and rain shall not be given upon the earth, and the thrice-accursed demon shall prevail for three years. Then a season shall pass away as a month, a month as a week, a week as a day, a day as an hour, an hour as a moment, for the sake of the elect of God and his servants.'—*Apocryphal Apocalypse of Daniel.*

\(^2\) *Rev. xvii. 12.*

\(^3\) Cf. Dan. vii. 24.

\(^4\) Sinaitic and Alexandrine MSS.
the mode of herdest ruction corresponding with previous atrocities committed by this imperial incendiary. It may also be observed that these Parthian allies called 'the kings of the East,' were the staunch partisans of Nero, and appear to have entertained the belief that he was still alive, and after a concealed sojourn beyond the Euphrates, would regain his former empire. Moreover, the characteristics of the beast repeat the features of Nero's history while he was yet alive. Like his prototype, he is a blasphemer against the God of heaven, and 'takes up arms against that very religion which acknowledges the one true God.' As the follies of former emperors seem to have been surpassed by Nero, to whom divine honours were paid before his death, so it is affirmed of Antichrist that 'he opened

1 Rev. xvi. 12.  
2 Eus. E. H. ii. 25.  

*In the journals of the senate I find an entry by which it appears that Cerealis Anicius, consul elect, moved in his place that a temple should be raised at the public expense to the Deified Nero, who, in his opinion, had risen above the condition of human nature, and was therefore entitled to religious worship.'—Tac. Ann. xv. 74. As an instance of the worship offered to his statue we may also mention the circumstance related by the same historian of Tiridates laying down his regal diadem at the foot of it. 'The two armies (says Tacitus) were drawn out with great military pomp. On one side stood the Parthian cavalry, ranged in battalions, with all the pride of eastern magnificence. The Roman legions appeared on the opposite ground, the eagles glittering to the eye, the banners displayed, and the images of the gods in regular order forming a kind of temple. In the centre stood a tribunal, and upon it a curule chair supporting the statue of Nero. Tiridates approached. Having immolated victims with the usual rites, he took the diadem from his brow and laid it at the foot of the statue.'—Ann. xv. 29. 'On his entrance into Rome, on returning from Greece, sacrifices were offered to him all along the road. He counted it a crime in Thraseas that he did not offer to his Divine voice.'—Döllinger.
his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.' It need scarcely be said that he is a furious persecutor of the Church, and that the terrors of Nero's reign are reproduced with intensity in that of Antichrist; the time during which the calamity extends, 'forty and two months,' being equivalent to the 'time, times, and an half,' of Daniel, a period significant of a season of distress. This unique symbol, as the exegetical history of the book abun-
dantly shows, defies the records of any other period to furnish an adequate solution. The wards are so complicated that no key but the true one can fit the lock, and it does appear strange when an exposition can be given suited to the requirements of the case, that interpreters should travel out of their way for far-fetched theories which offend the intelligence of a child.

1 'And again I said, O Lord, and how many years will he (Anti-
christ) continue upon the earth. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Listen, O righteous John. Three years shall be those times: and I will make the three years as three months, and the three months as three weeks and the three weeks as three days, and the three days as three hours, and the three hours as three moments (στρευμά) as said the prophet David.'—Apocryphal Apocalypse of John, 8.

THE FALSE PROPHET.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.—Rev. xiii. 11-18.

We are free to confess that among the mysteries of the Apocalypse few are surrounded with greater difficulty, or have been made the subject of more unsatisfactory exegetical treatment than that of which we are about to attempt an interpretation. While the local area, as well as the official character occupied by the 'first beast whose deadly wound was healed,' are set forth by symbols of so peculiar a kind as almost to preclude further explanation, the data seem hardly given with sufficient clearness to fix the meaning to be assigned to the Beast coming up out of the earth. At the outset, it may be well to
remember that the second beast, called 'the false prophet,' has an existence only in the mind of the writer; the antichristian king, equally with his high-priest and prime minister, being simply ideal reproductions of persons who have already appeared on the stage of history. In endeavouring, therefore, to find a meaning for this abstruse symbol we shall look, not for historical fulfilment, but for a precedent which may have given shape to the character attributed to the false prophet.

Not only does the false prophet come up out of the earth, the abode of disembodied spirits, but he is further described as having 'two horns like a lamb whilst he speaks as a dragon;' qualities which fit in with the circumstances of Simon Magus, who, according to Hippolytus, was buried alive at his own request, in the confident assurance that he would rise again, like the Messiah, on the third day,

and who 'pretended he could assume the appearance of a serpent, exhibit himself with two faces, and transform himself into whatever shape he pleased.' Irenæus also speaks of magic arts practised by Simon with a view to ingratiate himself with Nero, and Justin Martyr declares that 'Simon, a Samaritan, performed many magic rites by the operation of demons.' The most remarkable circumstance applied

1 Adv. Haer. vi. 20.
2 Suetonius observes, 'He himself (Nero) was surrounded by Jewish magicians and soothsayers, who assured him, connecting their prediction with the expected Messiah, that, after his fall, he would become ruler of Jerusalem, and live to see from thence the restoration of his former power.'
to him in connection with our subject, is that he is made to boast of having moved statues, ‘Ego statuas moveri feci,’ 1 corresponding closely with the Apocalyptic description, ‘He had power to give life to the image of the beast.’ It is therefore conceived that Simon Magus, a name held in intense abomination among the first Christians, and which eventually became a proverbial term for designating an impostor, may have supplied the foundation of the Apocalyptic symbol, and that as the features of a previous adversary are recognisable in the first beast rising up out of the sea, so those of a well-known impostor are discernible in the second beast rising up out of the earth; the sorceries of the Samaritan magician suggesting the thaumaturgical qualities exercised by the false prophet, as the persecutions of the sixth Cæsar furnished the basis of the Anti-christian tribulation. The second Apocalyptic beast will therefore ally himself with the first beast as his witness and prophet, will take the part of Antichrist against Messiah, as Jannes and Jambres take the part of Pharaoh against Moses, and as Balaam encourages Balak against Israel. In this capacity he will work miracles before the first beast, as Elymas the ‘False Prophet’ (who in Acts xiii. occupies the place of Paul in the Revelation) exercises magical arts before the deputy Sergius Paulus, and will cause that as many as would not worship his image or receive his mark in their foreheads and in their hands, should be killed. 2 In a word, he will be

1 Clem. Hom. ii. 34. 2 Plin. ad Traj. Epist.
John; or, the Apocalypse of the New Testament.

the arch-deceiver of the whole world, and the embodiment of heathen superstition and idolatry. In the end, he will be taken together with the beast (a distinct proof of his individuality) and cast into the lake of fire.¹

It has been surmised (with what amount of probability we leave the reader to judge) that St. Paul, who appears to have provoked the vehement indignation of the Seer of Patmos, is shadowed forth under the features of the Samaritan magician. It is, perhaps, with reference to the name of the great Apostle of the Gentiles (for with St. John, he is Saul of Tarsus, and not Paul the Apostle, his claim to Jewish origin and apostleship not being recognised by the former) that the second beast is said to 'rise up out of the earth,' as Samuel was evoked by Saul,² and to which abode of disembodied spirits it was said to Saul that he should himself descend.³ The title again of 'the False Prophet,' by which he is distinguished, may have its origin in the extraordinary hallucination which befell his royal namesake, whence arose the proverb, 'Is Saul also among the


² 1 Sam. xxviii. 13.

³ Ibid. xxviii. 19.
Antichrist.

prophets?—an allusion the more pointed, as the writer had mean thoughts of Paul's prophetic office and ministry. This coincidence of name between the Apostle and the impious monarch afforded an opportunity of exhibiting him in the light of a magician and an impostor, as the sobriquet of Nicolas and Balaam is elsewhere applied to him by virtue of identity of name with that of the tyrannical king of Israel. It is probable that Jewish prejudice may have regarded him not only as an alien from the sacred college, but as a heathen magician who works miracles before Nero, a supposition supported by the circumstance of Paul's personal defence before that emperor. It has been further urged, from a comparison of Rom. xiii. 1, 2, with Rev. xiii. 12, that Paul, who enforces subjection to the higher powers, is shadowed forth under the emblem of the beast procuring homage for the statue of Nero. To this it may be added, that in Pseudo-Clementine literature the name of Simon Magus is a common pseudonym of St. Paul. Be this as it may, it is superfluous to observe that the wonder-working qualities attributed to the false prophet were never exercised, and their unreality is enhanced by the circumstance that no better solution than that suggested by Dean Alford of 'moving images, and winking, and speaking pictures' can be discovered for them.

The number of the beast's name denoted by the monogram χξη', whose numerical value is equivalent to 'six hundred, threescore and six,' may now be

1 Sam. x. 12. 2 2 Tim. iv. 17.
said to be ascertained with a considerable amount of certainty; the solution of this cabalistic problem being discoverable in the Hebrew letters of the words \textit{Cæsar, Nero}.\footnote{\(\pi = 100, \mu = 60, \rho = 200 : \nu = 50, \tau = 200, \gamma = 6, \lambda = 50. \text{ i.e } \text{ קסר נרו \textit{Nero}} = 666. \) The omission of the final \(\lambda = 50\) at the end of the shorter or Latin form of the word \textit{Nero}, reduces the arithmetical enigma to 616, the number preserved by \textit{Irenæus}. To the objection that the beast's name is in Hebrew whilst the numerals are expressed in Greek characters, it may be answered that the names of the locust king, which in the Hebrew tongue is \textit{Abaddon} but in the Greek \textit{Apollyon}, of the old serpent called the Devil and Satan, and of the false teacher symbolised by Nicolas and Balaam, are rendered in both languages. An additional motive for the employment in this case of the Hebrew language may be traced to the effort after concealment which penetrates the Apocalypse. Hence Rome is Babylon, and Antichrist the head wounded to death whose deadly wound was healed. A further reason for selecting the imperial name may be gathered from the circumstance that the marks (\textit{στίγματα}) of emperors alone could be branded upon the hands of soldiers (\textit{ἀλιείαν}), and that the prohibition forbidding the exercise of civil rights till they had sacrificed to the detestable idols of old Rome (see \textit{Bede's hymn on Justin Martyr}) seems best to harmonise with the edicts of the Roman tyrants.
student to expect equal reality for the prophetic anticipations of the book as for the events by which they are suggested, puts him upon a wrong track. We desire to record our conviction that the Apocalypse will continue to be unintelligible so long as the fallacy is suffered to exist that its visions are capable of an historical fulfilment. Bound by this à priori consideration, the interpreter labours to accommodate them to past events, and failing to do this, either passes by 'things hard to be understood' without notice, or else postpones their accomplishment to a doubtful future. But if it were understood that his business is not to reconcile the Apocalypse with irrelevant facts, but to give the meaning which the writer proposed to himself, and which he intended his readers to adopt, the visions themselves might not only yield their secrets more easily, but be capable of a more satisfactory interpretation.
CHAPTER VIII.

BABYLON.

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron,
and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! and they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great milstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a milstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.—Rev. xviii.

The task before us is to find a city which fell, or was supposed to fall, in St. John's day, and whose destruction cannot be deferred, except at the sacrifice of exegetical consistency, to a remote period. We are concerned, moreover, not with the overthrow of an ecclesiastical system, however palatable such a
theory might be to Protestant invidiousness, but of a literal city; for it surely cannot be predicated of a religion that it should be destroyed by 'death, mourning, famine, and burning with fire;' neither does it appear reasonable that a prophecy occupied with the triumphs of Messiah should be distorted to signify the downfall of an important branch of the Catholic Church. It is also evident that the prophecy is concerned with the destruction of a city then exercising universal empire over the kings and nations of the whole world, and not with that of some great city which might hereafter exercise similar dominion; for it is simply impossible to interpret the words 'which reigneth' \(^1\) in any other sense than that of a city which was then holding dominion over the kings of the earth. This great city, it is well-known, could only be Rome Pagan; and it is more logical to infer that the writer may have fallen into error when he drew the picture of its destruction, than to suppose that the symbols point to some other city, or to the same city at a future stage of its existence. We adduce the following proofs in support of our position:

1. Our first argument to show that Babylon must be Rome Pagan is taken from the definition given of the great city in the book itself. 'The seven heads,' it is said, 'are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth'—a definition which points beyond all reasonable doubt to that city described by every poet and historian of the day as built on seven

\(^1\) \(\xi\)\(\chi\omega\nu\sigma\alpha\) \(\beta\alpha\sigmaι\lambda\iota\alpha\nu\).
hills. This is so generally admitted that it only needs to be said that the history of Apocalyptic literature knows of no other interpretation, and that it was not until the fifth century, when the Roman Church was in the ascendant, that it was made an open question whether Babylon meant Rome. The propriety of applying the mystical title of Babylon to Rome may also be inferred from the correspondence observable between the circumstances of the 'Great Babylon' of the ancient prophet, and those of the eternal city. As ancient Babylon 'dwelt upon many waters,' and exercised unlimited authority over the heathen world, so the mystical Babylon is called, 'The great whore that sitteth upon many waters,' explained of 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,' i.e. heathen nations—an interpretation not only sanctioned by the book itself, but confirmed by a reference to Rev. vii., where the 144,000 Jews sealed 'of all the tribes of the children of Israel' are contrasted with the innumerable multitude of heathen proselytes 'of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.' To this it may be added that Babylon is defined as 'The great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,' i.e., heathen princes: 'the kings of the earth' bringing the glory and the costliness of the nations (the Gentiles) into the New Jerusalem.
It is matter of common knowledge that the magnificent dominion of Rome was established in all parts of the habitable earth; the kings of the then known world receiving and ruling their kingdoms in subordination to the fiat of the seven-hilled city—the city itself, and not its domestic or foreign territorial dependencies, giving laws to the world.

2. The woman is not only arrayed 'in purple and scarlet colour,' but sits upon a 'scarlet-coloured beast;' purple and scarlet being enumerated in connection with other articles of regal furniture, as 'fine linen, and gold, and precious stones, and pearls,' among the riches of the seven-hilled city. It is well known that to assume the purple was a phrase equivalent to the official investiture of the Roman emperors: thus Jesus was clothed in mock dignity with a purple robe, and Vespasian and Titus, at their triumph, were arrayed in those 'ancient purple habits which were proper to their family.' The purple and scarlet, therefore, in which the woman and the beast are arrayed, may signify the imperial character of the city itself, as well as that of her rulers. That Rome, of the time of Nero, answered to this description, is plain from the fact that the emperor, not content with the improvements made by those who had preceded him, sought to imitate the grandeur of the great oriental city from which its mysterious name is derived; the boast of Augustus, 'that he had found the city of brick and left it of marble,' being surpassed by the restoration

effected by Nero in a style of truly eastern and even Babylonian magnificence. The apparently conflicting statement which represents the woman sitting on the beast subsequently destroyed by the beast which carries her, finds, as we shall presently see, its unique solution in the popular expectation that Rome should be destroyed by one of its seven heads; the ascription of these Protean shapes to one and the same individual, who now sustains the eternal city in more than its wonted magnificence, and again accomplishes its miserable and complete overthrow, making the Apocalypse not only the most extraordinary, but the most unintelligible book in the world.

3. The woman (the emblem in apocalyptic language generally referring to a city) is described as 'The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies;' terms evidently borrowed from Isaiah xxiii. 15-18, and descriptive not only of commercial enterprise, but of the contaminating effect produced upon those nations which came into contact with the harlot city. The nature of this wealth is noticed as peculiarly Asiatic; 'gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thine (citron) wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and
frankincense,' being included among its costly treasures—treasures which had been brought from Asia to Rome in ships, and which, according to the Sibylline prophecies, Rome should again restore to the east. The wealth, moreover, of great Babylon was such as could only be found in an ancient city; for it surely cannot be affirmed of Rome Papal, or of an European city of modern times, that it contained 'chariots, and slaves, and souls of men'—perhaps human beings, put up for sale. It gives confirmation to our position that, in the account given by Josephus of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, many of the precious things here enumerated, plundered from the city of Jerusalem, were carried in procession through the streets of Rome.1

4. The woman is further said to be 'drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus, and in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.' Applicable as this description might be to that city of which it was emphatically said, 'it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem,' it may be used with still greater propriety of imperial Rome, then putting forth her savage edicts against the Christian faith, and literally 'drunken' with the blood of Apostles and Prophets, by which last title not merely the seers of the Old Testament, but Christian teachers, were not unfrequently designated.2 It ceases, therefore, to be a wonder that the triumphant

1 Bell. Jud. vii. 5.
2 Ephes. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Acts xiii. 1; xv. 32; Rom. xii. 6.
song of those who had 'gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,' should be heard over Babylon, saying, 'Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.'

Indeed, throughout the Apocalypse, Babylon is held in intense abomination, and every epithet expressive of horror and disgust is showered upon her with lavish profusion. Among the sublime contrasts with which the book abounds none is perhaps more striking than that instituted between the whore and the bride. What the beast is to the Lamb, and what the false prophet is to the two prophets of Messiah, Great Babylon is to the New Jerusalem.

We come, therefore, to the conclusion that the woman sitting on the seven hills, elsewhere described as 'the great whore, sitting upon many waters,' exercising oecumenical sovereignty over the kings and nations of the earth, arrayed in purple and scarlet, holding commercial and polluting intercourse with the merchants of the earth, and who, in addition to other enormities, was drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus, represents that great city, existing in St. John's day, which alone can answer to the conditions of the Babylon of the

1 Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1, 2.
2 νόμιμη.
3 θηρλων.
4 ἀρνρν.
5 ἀρνλν.
Apocalypse. It is satisfactory to find that the Church has never seriously held any other interpretation, although, from the impossibility of finding a fulfilment in the circumstances of the required period, it has been led to transfer the application of the prophecy from Rome Pagan to Rome Papal. The arbitrariness of this last theory is too palpable to need refutation. Proceeding upon the assumption that the communications made in this book are infallible, it resolves to coerce by violence the symbols that will not admit of gentle pressure, and determines to find a fulfilment even where it is patent that a fulfilment may not be had. An ignorant piety has therefore pronounced in favour of an interpretation which adapts the visions of the Revelation to the circumstances of the Roman Catholic Church, which discovers Antichrist in the harmless old man who presides over its councils, and explains the burning of Babylon of the vengeance which is expected to descend on the Italian metropolis. We desire to expose this uncharitable and ill-founded accusation by all the means in our power, and shall not think our time or our labour wasted if we can lessen this senseless clamour against a cognate Church. This we hope, to some extent, to have already accomplished. If it shall have been proved that the great Babylon of the Apocalypse is not a Christian but a heathen city, then, not until Rome Papal shall have experienced a relapse from Christianity to heathenism can the symbol be interpreted with fairness of the seat of Papal power, which is the
source of so much anxiety in the present day. It is needless, therefore, to observe that the time when alone it was possible for the Apocalyptic denunciations against Babylon to receive an accomplishment has gone by never to be recalled; and that it is only by a forced and unnatural construction that they can be twisted to apply to an ecclesiastical system in whose fortunes the sympathies of the Church of that period were not enlisted. Should it be objected that the overthrow of ancient Babylon may be typical of that of modern Rome, it may be fairly replied that the fall of a heathen city can no more be said to prefigure that of a Christian Church than the destruction of Jerusalem can be said to be typical of the Last Judgment; a correspondence 'not only in general outline but in minute particulars between the events compared being a necessary condition in every analogy instituted between type and antitype.' It should, perhaps, be mentioned that this last theory owes its existence to the supposition that 'a cyclic development of history lies at the basis of all prophecy,' which not only implies that history always repeats itself in the same form, but makes it uncertain to which form the prediction originally referred.

II. But whilst, perhaps, it will be admitted that Babylon is Rome Pagan, a crux interpretūm remains to be solved. It will scarcely be denied that the Apocalypse describes the complete and sudden overthrow of this great city; its speedy and irremediable
desolation being announced in language whose positiveness does not admit of question. The work of destruction is assigned in the prophecy to the ten horns of the beast—the Euphratean allies of the Neronic Antichrist. These are said to 'have one mind, and to give their power and strength unto the beast,' who, together with the beast, 'shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.' And then arises the fierce rejoicing over the persecuting and bloody city: 'Babylon, the great, is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' To complete the picture, 'A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying: Thus with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.'

It would be difficult to express in more definite terms the destruction of the great city which was then reigning over the kingdoms of the habitable world, or the means by which it was to be accomplished. This expectation, we know, was never realised. Rome did not fall in the way described in the Revelation; the writer merely delineating a catastrophe which he supposed would happen, and which continued to be a subject of confident expectation for many centuries. And here it may be interesting to inquire whether anticipations respecting the fall of Babylon, corresponding with those expressed in the

1 Rev. xvii. 12-17.  
2 Cf. Isaiah xiii. 19-22.
Babylon.

Revelation, may be discovered in apocalyptic books of a nearly contemporaneous period; for, if this could be established, it would relieve St. John of the charge of singularity, by showing that the vaticinations of the Apocalypse have been repeated by succeeding writers.

1. The supposed destruction of Babylon, or Rome, by the returning Nero would appear to be abundantly indicated by writings of a kindred and almost contemporaneous character, and especially by that extraordinary composition entitled the Sibylline oracles, of which the second and eighth books contain a sort of paraphrase on the Apocalypse. A storm of disastrous war proceeding from Italy falls upon the holy city and temple, in consequence of which a great king, like a star, who has committed a horrible murder upon his own mother (the stigma with which Nero is ever branded in these oracles), passes over the Euphrates at the head of many myriads of Eastern allies, 1 and many stain with their blood the sacred soil of Rome. 2 Babylon (Rome) and the land of Italy are to be destroyed by the matricide Nero with the aid of the Median and Persian kings: this retribution overtaking the imperial city in consequence of the desolation brought upon the heaven-built temple and the holy people. 3 A heaven-sent destruction elsewhere falls on haughty Rome; she is to be bowed down to the earth never to lift up herself again, and the glory of her eagle-bearing legions is

1 Cf. Rev. ix. 16.  
2 Orac. Sibyll. iv. 115–139.  
Continuing her sorrowful burden upon Rome, the prophetess, in terms similar to those employed in the Apocalypse, declares that she shall be desolate for ever, because she practised sorcery: that, in return for her boasting, she should sit as a widow by the banks of Tiber answering to her moan: that retribution should be executed upon her for her wickedness, and that she should be cast into the lake of fire.

Indeed, to quote all the passages which bear upon this subject would be to transcribe no inconsiderable portion of the Sibylline books. Enough, perhaps, has been said to show that the approaching fall of Rome was the belief of a very early period, and to account for the expression of that belief in the Apocalypse.

2. The fall of Babylon, or Rome, is followed in the prophecy by the Advent of Messiah, and the connection between these two events is reproduced with marked reference to the visions of the Apocalypse in the leaves of the Sibyls. In the second book, the burning of Rome is followed by the Coming of Christ and the Millennial reign. In the fifth, after bewailing the doom which the matricidal fugitive (Nero) will bring upon Rome, the announcement is made of the coming of a heavenly ruler who should make the city beloved of God more splendid than the sun, moon, and stars. In the eighth, after repeating that Rome shall be Rume (a street), the Sibyl depicts the Advent of a pure and holy king who shall

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1 Orac. Sibyll. viii. 68-78.  
2 Ibid. v. 168-178.  
3 Ibid. ii. 16-51.  
4 Ibid. v. 414-427.
reign for ever. Indeed, throughout these wild and rhapsodical poems the Advent of Christ follows the destruction of Rome as naturally as the kingdom of the saints succeeds the overthrow of the heathen kingdoms of Daniel. In whatever estimation these may now be held, there was a time in the history of the Church when their authority was considered equal to that of Holy Scripture itself,—the recollection of the reverence with which the Sibylline books were regarded being preserved in the well known hymn:

'Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæculum in favillâ,
Teste David et Sibyllâ.'

With the truth or falsehood of this theory of the latter days, the interpreter of the Apocalypse is not primarily concerned; his office being rather to exhibit the intention than to vindicate the historical accuracy of the writer. His duty is accomplished when he has shown that in the mind of the seer of Patmos the Advent of Messiah is indissolubly bound up with the destruction of Rome, and that the same connection is observable in subsequent imitations of the Apocalyptic original. At the same time, it appears to him a difficulty fatal to the prophetic character of the Revelation, and from which apparently there is no escape, that the author should have placed these events in order of prophetic sequence, and that an essential point of Christian

1 Orac. Sibyll. viii. 167-173.
belief should be chronologically associated with the fall of a heathen city.

3. In the apocryphal book of Pseudo-Esdras II., a work framed after the model of the Johannic Revelation and written most probably about thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Advent of Messiah is said to follow the punishment of the Roman oppressors of the holy people. The prophet is supposed to be in Babylon (Rome) in the thirtieth year after the ruin of the city (Jerusalem), and grieved because he saw 'the desolation of Sion, and the wealth of them that dwell in Babylon.' He is anxious to know if they that inhabit Babylon are better than they of Sion, and why Israel is given up as a reproach to ungodly nations. To this mournful complaint the answer is given, that the climax of the iniquity of the heathen had not yet come, but that the days were at hand when 'God would begin to draw nigh and to visit them that dwell upon the earth, and begin to make inquisition of them what they be that have hurt unjustly with their unrighteousness, and when the affliction of Sion shall be fulfilled, and when the world that shall begin to vanish away shall be finished.' Signs are then given of the approaching consummation similar to those of the Apocalypse, and it is added, 'Whosoever remaineth from all these that I have told thee shall escape, and see my salvation and the end of your world:' thus, equally with the author of the Apocalypse, making the destruction

1 2 Esdras iii. 1, 2.  
2 Ibid. iii. 31; vi. 57-59.
of the Roman power contemporaneous with the Coming of Christ and the end of the age.

In the subsequent vision of the eagle (the Roman kingdom) that came up from the sea, which had twelve feathered wings and three heads,¹ 'the last things (and among them the destruction of the eagle by fire) which the Most High will do unto them that dwell upon earth in the last days' are described under emblems of great Apocalyptic beauty and significance. An eagle, spreading her wings over all the earth, unto whom all things under heaven were subject, and against whom no man spake, is seen coming up from the sea having 'twelve feathered wings,' 'eight contrary feathers,' and 'three heads.' The 'twelve feathered wings' may refer to the six great emperors of the Julian family, Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; each emperor, according to M. Völkmar, being described as furnished with two wings.² The 'eight contrary feathers' are Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Nerva. The 'three heads' being Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. Of the 'twelve feathered wings' it is simply said that the first (Julius) 'reigned over all the earth,' i.e., became absolute master of the Roman Empire; that the second (Augustus) 'had more time than any of the twelve,' having reigned fifty-six years; then arose the third (Tiberius) . . . So went it with all the residue, one after another, as that everyone reigned and then appeared no more.'

¹ 2 Esdras xi. xii.
² Cf. 'The two wings of the great eagle,' Rev. xii. 14.
Of the 'eight contrary feathers,' i.e., the four usurping emperors whose 'times are small and their years swift,' 'one (Galba) is set up, but shortly it appeared no more,' having reigned seven months and seven days; the second (Otho), whose reign lasted only three months and two days, is 'sooner away than the first;' the third (Vitellius), 'who thought to reign,' is destroyed by Vespasian; the fourth (Nerva) is 'kept to the end'—'this is the small kingdom, and full of trouble, as thou sawest,' the two feathers being here explained of one small kingdom, a circumstance which confirms the correctness¹ of the interpretation which assigns two wings to each emperor. Of the 'three heads,' the great head in the midst (Vespasian), so called from his pre-eminence over the other two heads Titus and Domitian, who 'put the whole earth in fear and bare rule in it over all those that dwelt upon the earth with much oppression,' after a reign of ten years 'dies upon his bed, and yet with pain'—an illness mentioned by Suetonius and Dio. Cassius, Vespasian himself, in the crisis of his disorder, demanding to be raised upright, saying, that an emperor ought to die standing. Of the two remaining heads, 'the sword of the one (Domitian) devours the other (Titus), and at the last he (Domitian, slain by Stephanus) falls, through the sword, himself;' Titus having died suddenly, not without suspicion of treachery from his brother. Domitian is succeeded

¹ This is confirmed xi. 27, where the second (Otho) is rendered in the Latin version by the plural secundae.
by Nerva, the two little feathers 'divided from the six,' whom the Highest has kept unto their end. It is during the short and turbulent reign of this last-named emperor that the Roman kingdom is to be destroyed, and that the command is issued, 'Appear no more thou eagle, nor thy horrible wings, nor thy wicked feathers, nor thy malicious heads, nor thy hurtful claws, nor all thy vain body.' This, in the opinion of the writer, is the time for the Advent of Messiah, and 'the Lion' rising up out of the wood, and roaring, and speaking to the eagle, rebukes her for her unrighteousness. This, adds the prophet, is 'the anointed (or breath) which the Highest hath kept for them and for their wickedness unto the end; he shall reprove them and upbraid them for their cruelty; for he shall set them before him alive in judgment, and shall rebuke them and correct them.'

After the extermination of the eagle (the Roman Empire), the coming of the Son of Man to destroy the enemies of the Church and to establish the Messianic kingdom is delineated in terms which correspond with almost servile fidelity with those employed in the Apocalypse. 'I beheld,' says Pseudo-Ezdras, 'and lo, that man waxed strong with the thousands of heaven, and when he turned his countenance to look, all the things trembled that were seen under him.' An innumerable multitude are gathered against him to subdue him; 'And lo, as he saw the violence of the multitude

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1 Cf. Rev. v. 5.  
2 2 Esdras xii. 31-33.
that came, he neither lifted up his hand, nor held sword, nor any instrument of war; but only I saw that he sent out of his mouth as it had been a blast of fire, and out of his lips a flaming breath, and out of his tongue he cast out sparks and tempests, and fell with violence upon the multitude which was prepared to fight, and burned them up every one. The interpretation of this remarkable vision, given in the next chapter, is merely a paraphrase of the Apocalyptic original. The nations who have assisted at the desolation of Babylon 'leave the battle which they have one against another,' and are gathered together against Messiah. 'But he shall stand upon the top of Mount Sion, and Sion shall come and shall be showed unto all men prepared and builded, and this, my Son, shall rebuke the wicked inventions of these nations, and he shall destroy them, without labour, by the law which is like unto fire.' It only remains to be noticed that the vision is said to be of immediate accomplishment, 'for the world has lost its youth, and the times begin to wax old.'

4. It may be added to the proof already adduced from the Sibylline books and from Pseudo-Esdras, that the ancient Fathers connected the destruction of Rome with the coming of Christ and the end of the world. Tertullian enjoins upon the Christians to pray for the welfare of the eternal city and the whole Roman empire 'so long as the age stands, for

1 Cf. Rev. xix. 20; 2 Thess. ii. 8.  
2 Cf. Rev. xiv. 1.  
3 Cf. Rev. xxi. 2.  
4 2 Esdras xiii. 21–38.  
5 2 Esdras xiv. 10–18.
so long will the empire stand.' And again: 'We have even greater need to pray for the emperors, and for every condition of the empire, and for the affairs of Rome, knowing that by the safeguard of the Roman empire there is kept back that time of extreme violence which hangs over all the world, even the very end of the age which threatens horrible calamities.'

Lactantius observes: 'That desolation and confusion will be thus caused. The Roman name by which the world is now governed (I tremble to say it, but speak it I must, for it will take place), the Roman name will be taken from the earth, and empire will revert to Asia. Once more the East shall rule, and the West obey.'

'It is evident (he says again) from the state of affairs that the end of all things would not be distant, save only that while Rome is safe there seems no room to fear. But when that head of the world shall fall and begin, as the Sibyls say, to be a ruin, who does not see that the end of human affairs, yea of the world itself, will have arrived?'

Ephrem-Syrus considered the precursory signs of the Second Advent fulfilled in his day, with the exception of the fall of the Roman empire; 'for, when the Roman empire ends, all things must be fulfilled.'

Chrysostom remarks in his commentary on 2 Thess. ii.: 'What then is that which withholdeth, that is, which hinders the revelation of Antichrist? Some say the grace of the Spirit: others, the empire of the Romans: with

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1 Ad Scap. cap. ii.  2 Apol. cap. xxx. 11.  3 Institut. lib. vii.  4 Cap. xxv.  5 Sermo de Vld Religiosd.
these last I fully agree.' Jerome, who says that he had 'dwelt in Babylon, and was an inhabitant of the purple-bearing harlot, and lived after the manner of the Quirites,' invites Rome to fresh repentance, in the hope that she may yet escape from the doom still hanging over her: 'The curse with which the Saviour hath threatened thee in the Apocalypse, thou mayest escape by repentance; thou hast the example of the Ninevites.'

From the evidence afforded by these cognate writings, it may not be unreasonable to conclude that Rome Pagan is the city whose fall is so graphically described in the Revelation. It is not only that popular rumour associated the return of Nero with the discomfiture of his enemies, and reported that by the assistance of the Parthians he would regain his former empire: nor yet that, according to the Sibyl, the imperial city is to be destroyed by the matricide Nero, with the help of Median and Persian kings from beyond the Euphrates, an event to be followed by the coming of a Messianic prince who shall reign for ever: nor yet, again, that Divine wrath is denounced by the prophetess upon Rome and the soil of Italy in retaliation for woes inflicted by Roman invaders upon the Jewish city and temple: neither is it that in the magnificent Apocalypse of Esdras II., a book of the highest value, and which deserves the careful consideration of students of prophecy, Rome is styled by the familiar name of

1 Homily IV.
Babylon, and that the period of the extermination of the eagle (the Roman empire) is fixed with historical minuteness and chronological precision: nor yet, again, that the catastrophe upon the Roman kingdom is to be immediately succeeded by the end of all things, and the coming of the Son of Man to judgment;—but it is all of these combined, which not only establishes a complete harmony between these Apocryphal books and the superb original of which they are the copy, but confines their respective vaticinations to the same events. If the predictions, whether of the seer of Patmos himself, or of his prophetic imitators, have not been verified by the result, the failure may be classed with that of similar eschatological theories. Heathen Rome, it is true, gave place to Rome Christian, and the supreme power migrated from the Tiber to the Bosphorus; but no desolation corresponding to that described in the Apocalypse attended the political change. Rome Papal, again, like Rome Pagan, has never fallen; and if she waits for the fulfilment of the denunciations of modern hierophants, may never fall: the introduction of the subject of the Papacy into the Revelation at all being an anachronism of the most absurd as well as the most violent kind. A supreme regard for truth will, it is hoped, lead to the acceptance of the interpretation put upon Babylon by the Sibyls and the pious author of the Second Book of Esdras—an interpretation supported by the universal

1 "Sic et Babylon apud Joannem nostrum, Romanæ urbis figura est."—Tertullian.
consent of the early Christian Fathers—and to the belief that the writer intended to depict the overthrow of the great heathen city which had deserved such retribution by many a deed of blood; that he described events as he supposed, and, possibly, with a feeling natural to one who had experienced the acuteness of religious persecution, desired they should happen; that he drew the original picture which has been imitated in Apocryphal books of a subsequent period, the expectations which his prophecies aroused indicating the shape which he intended they should assume.

The crucial point in this Apocalyptic theory, which is considered to be most fatal to traditional views, is that the Advent of Messiah is connected in order of prophetic sequence with the destruction of Pagan Rome—a fact asserted with clearness in the book itself, as well as abundantly recognised in subsequent imitations of the original. This circumstance stamps the Revelation with the charge of historical inaccuracy, and presents a dilemma from which it is impossible to escape. With whatever difficulties the coming of Christ is encompassed in other writings of the New Testament, these are increased in the Revelation a thousandfold; the catastrophe being associated in the latter with an event which the course of history has rendered anachronous, and therefore hopeless. 'It would not be easy,' says an able writer on the subject, 'to find language which should convey, as briefly, simply, and naturally as that of the Apocalypse, the author's expectation of
the almost immediate arrival of the crucified Jesus to be the conqueror of the pagan empire of Rome, and the founder of the millennial kingdom. St. John, in common, we suppose, with all the apostles, confidently anticipated the approaching Advent of the Messiah. The non-fulfilment of the prediction shows the futility of the hope, and demonstrates the fallibility of the prophet.
CHAPTER IX.

THE MILLENNIUM.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—Rev. xx. 1-10.

In a previous treatise,¹ we entered at some length on the subject of the Messianic ideas which Jesus ap-

¹ Daniel; or, the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. By Philip S.
pears to have adopted from the book of Daniel, and amongst them on that of the approaching kingdom of heaven which He and His apostles made the principal theme of their public preaching. We endeavoured to show that they anticipated the establishment of a theocratic sovereignty upon earth, asserted its imminent character, and defined the limits within which it should be inaugurated. These expectations were not found to be justified by the event, a painful yet manifest discrepancy being observable between the predictions recorded in the synoptics and the facts themselves. We have deemed it not improbable that the mistake of the Gospels might extend to, or probably take its rise from, the Apocalypse, and that the eschatology of the latter, like that of the former, might rest on an insecure foundation—a suspicion confirmed by the introduction into the visions of the Revelation of events of a purely fictitious character, such as the reappearing of the Neronic Antichrist, and the destruction of Babylon, or Pagan Rome. To this may be added the unique conception of a Millennium, or a reign of Christ and His saints upon earth for a thousand years. This we are unable to regard either as a fact which has received, or is likely to receive, an accomplishment, and we proceed to state the reasons which incline us to the opinion that its origin is to be traced to the fanciful conceptions of those extraordinary times.

1. After the fall of Babylon, or Rome, which is

destroyed by the reappearing Nero at the head of his Parthian allies, the vision is unfolded to St. John of the overthrow of the antichristian enemies of Messiah previous to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. He sees ‘heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war:’ in other words, he sees the conquering Messiah, armed with his two-edged sword and his rod of iron, treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. The scene which follows represents the great Messianic battle-field, in which ‘the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and his army.’ The issue of this contest is not left in doubt. ‘The beast is taken, and the false prophet that was with him, and the two are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone;’

'And they (Michael and Gabriel) led me to the north, and I saw there a man bound with iron bars. And I asked, Who is this? And one said to me, This is he who saith, I am the Son of God who maketh the stones bread, and the water wine. And the prophet (Esdras) said, Tell me, O Lord, of what form he is, that I may announce it to the race of men lest they believe in him. And he said to me, The form of his countenance is as a field, his right eye as the morning star, and the other immoveable (or as of a lion), his mouth one cubit, his teeth a span, his fingers as sickles, the print of his feet two spans, and upon his forehead an inscription, Antichrist. He was exalted unto heaven, he shall descend unto hell.'—Apocryphal Apocalypse of Esdras.

'The unclean spirits (will be judged first) with the Opposer: I will command them to depart into outer darkness: there are abysmal wheltings. And I said, O Lord, of what sort is the place? And I heard a voice saying unto me, Hear, O righteous John. Should a man of thirty years of age cast a stone into the abyss: let it roll for twenty years it would not reach to the bottom of hell.'—Apocryphal Apocalypse of John xx.
The remnant being slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.\textsuperscript{1} This victory lays the foundation of the Messianic reign. Christ now establishes His kingdom upon earth, and He and such of His saints as 'have not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither have received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands,' reign in the midst of the conquered nations for a thousand years. This extraordinary theory of the Messianic reign is repeated with, however, a most important difference, sensibly affecting the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus, in Pseudo-Esdras vii. 28–33. 'My son Jesus (\textit{Filius, Messias meus}, Arabic) shall be revealed with those that be with him, and they that remain shall rejoice within (i.e. for the space of) four hundred years. After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life. And the world shall be turned into the old silence for seven days. And after the seven days the world that yet awaketh not shall awake, and the old world shall die. And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them. And the Most High shall appear on the seat of judgment, and misery shall pass away, and the long-suffering shall have an end.'

2. During the time that Messiah and His saints exercise undisturbed dominion over the Gentile world, Satan, the prime mover of antichristian wickedness,

\textsuperscript{1} Rev. xix. 11–21.
is cast into the abyss, and bound. At the expiration of the millennial reign, he is loosed from his prison to renew his former machinations against the Church, and the result is that the outlying heathen nations, 'the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,' revolt against the priests of God and of Christ, besiege the camp of the saints and the beloved city. The whole passage is a transparent accommodation of a prophetic anticipation of a former period to the times of the Messiah. As the prophet of the captivity under the bold figure of a resurrection of the dry bones foreshadowed the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own land, so the millennial reign of the saints is said to be the 'first resurrection.' As, after their settlement in their own land under David their king, 'Gog and all his multitude ascend and come up like a cloud to cover the land,' so the heathen nations which are in the four quarters of the earth symbolised by Gog and Magog, encamp against the saints. As, according to the ancient prophet, 'great hailstones, fire, and brimstone' descend upon Gog and the many people that are with him, so, according to St. John, fire comes down from heaven and devours the invaders. That the writer of the Apocalypse meant to assert a literal reign of Christ and His saints upon earth for a thou-

1 Tobit. viii. 3.
2 'In fine extremitatis dierum Gog et Magog et exercitus eorum ascendent Hierosolyma, et per manus regis Messiae ipsi cadent, et vii annos dierum ardebunt filii Israel ex armis eorum.'—Jesus. Targum on Numb. xi. 27.
3 Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.
sand years receives confirmation from the fact that
the Church of the three first centuries was essentially
chiliastic. 'Observe, my children (says St. Barnabas)
why it says, He ended in six days: this means that
the Lord God will finish all things in six thousand
years. . . . And he rested on the seventh day: this
means, when His Son shall come, and shall abolish
the time of the wicked one, and shall judge the
ungodly, and shall change the sun and moon and
stars: then shall he rest gloriously on the seventh
day.'

'One of our own people (observes Justin
Martyr) named John, an apostle of Christ, pro-
phesied in the Apocalypse that for those who believe
in our Christ there will be a thousand years in
Jerusalem; and afterwards there will come the
Catholic, or universal and simultaneous resurrec-
tion of all men.' Irenæus alludes to 'the times
of the kingdom; that is, the rest, even the seventh
day made holy.' Tertullian supports the literal
Millennium: 'We confess that a kingdom is promised
us upon earth, but before heaven, and in another
state, even for a thousand years after the resurrec-
tion; in the city of divine workmanship, the Jeru-
salem brought down from heaven.' Hippolytus also
adds his testimony to the same effect: 'The sabbath
is a type and image of the future kingdom of the
saints, when they shall reign with Christ after his
coming down from heaven, as John declares in the
Apocalypse.' To these may be added Nepos, Cyprian,
Victorinus, and Lactantius, the last of whom ob-

1 ὑμοῖος. 2 Barnab. xv. 3 Dial. cum Tryph. 4 Adv. Marc. iii. 23.
serves: 'Those who are then living in the body will not die; but will, during the same thousand years, bring forth a countless multitude, and their offspring shall be holy and beloved of God.'

3. In this millennial kingdom, according to the Chiliasts who adduced the latter chapters of Ezekiel in support of their position, marriages were to be held, and festivals kept, the temple was to be restored, and offerings resumed,—in short a sensuous kingdom of risen saints was to be established upon earth. This was the undoubted opinion of those who lived early enough to remember apostolic teaching on the subject. During the third and fourth centuries, however, a reaction set in against millennial theories; the original idea of a reign of Christ for a thousand years became modified, and was finally rejected altogether. Whether the narrow and Judaic views expressed in the Revelation were found to be unsuited to the more liberal tendencies of the age, or whether chiliastic theories seemed likely to run into excess; it is an historical fact that the orthodoxy of one period was the heterodoxy of another, and the Apocalypse fell into disrepute. The first and most able opponent of millennial theories was Dionysius of Alexandria, who, in his controversy with Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, in the third century, ascribed the book to John Presbyter, and not to John the Apostle. Eusebius rejected both the Apocalypse and the Millennium. The opinion of Jerome, although deterred by the

1 Lact. vii. 24.
difficulty of the subject he wrote no commentary on the Apocalypse, was opposed to that of the primitive Church. 'The Jews (he says) believe that Jerusalem will be restored to them golden and jewelled, and that there will be once more victims and sacrifices, the marriage of the saints, and the kingdom of the Lord and Saviour upon earth. All which, though I do not support, yet I am not able to condemn, since many churchmen and martyrs have said the same. Therefore, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let all things be reserved for the decision of the Lord.' Augustine, who appears to have once been a millennarian, thought fit to alter his opinion. We find him saying, 'A thousand years. They, who, from these words, infer that the first resurrection will be corporeal, are, among other things, chiefly influenced by the number of the thousand years, as if it were necessary that there should be in holy things a Sabbatism of that length. . . . Now, this opinion would be, in a certain degree, tolerable, if they would allow in that Sabbath some spiritual delights procured to the saints by the presence of the Lord. For I myself was once of the same opinion. But when they describe those who have risen as doing nothing but pass their time in most immoderate carnal banquets, in which the quantity of food and drink will exceed not only all decency but even all power of belief, they will find none but carnal persons to believe them.'

1 Jerome, On Jeremiah, ch. xx. 2 De·Civ. Dei, xx. 7.
hesitation expressed by the Fathers, and in affirming
the doctrine of a Millennium to be as unworthy of
the attention of the Church of the nineteenth as it
was of that of the third century.

THE JUDGMENT.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from
whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was
found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great,
stand before God; and the books were opened: and another
book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were
judged out of those things which were written in the books,
according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which
were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which
were in them: and they were judged every man according to
their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.
This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written
in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—Rev. xx.
11-15.

The millennial reign, an idea unknown to other
writers of the New Testament, is followed by the
Universal Judgment. The seer of Patmos now be-
holds the great white throne of Almighty God and
Him that sat upon it, from whose august presence
‘the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was
no place found for them.’ He further sees ‘the dead,
half and great, stand before God; and the books
were opened: and another book was opened, which is the
book of life: and the dead were judged out of the
things which were written in the books according to
their works. And the sea gave up the dead which was
in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead
that were in them, and death and Hades were cast
into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the
lake of fire'—the last clause being omitted in the Authorised Version. This description is taken with some unimportant variations from the judgment delineated in the book of Daniel. As the elder prophet beholds the thrones placed and the Ancient of days sitting,\(^1\) so does the seer of Patmos behold 'a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it.' As, according to the former, 'many that sleep in the dust of the earth awake,'\(^2\) so, according to the latter, 'the dead, small and great, stand before God.' As 'the judgment is set and the books opened,'\(^3\) so, 'the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.' As every one shall be delivered who is found written in the book,\(^4\) so 'whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' It is remarkable that the judicial office is here executed, not by Christ as in the Gospels, but by God Himself; the Un-named One who sits upon the throne being always in this book the Almighty God, before whom the dead, small and great, stand in judgment—a view also entertained by Pseudo-Ezrash, who declares that judgment is executed by the Most High, by whom the times are ended and by no other.\(^5\) A somewhat similar scene is delineated in the book of Enoch. Not to refer to the great Messianic section\(^6\) in which terms are employed evidently borrowed from the Apocalypse, such as the mention of the 'sealed books,' 'the book

\(^{1}\) Dan. vii. 9.  \\
\(^{2}\) Dan. xii. 2.  \\
\(^{3}\) Dan. vii. 10.  \\
\(^{4}\) Ibid. xii. 1.  \\
\(^{5}\) 2 Esdras vii. 43.  \\
\(^{6}\) C. 37-71.
of the living,' 'death and hell,' 'the throne of glory,' 'the earth delivering up from her womb, and hell delivering up from hers, that which it has received, and destruction restoring that which it owes . . . . and it shall be, that those who have been destroyed in the desert, and who have been devoured by the fish of the sea and by wild beasts, shall return and trust in the day of the Elect One, for none shall perish in the presence of the Lord of spirits;' we may observe that the vision of the seventy shepherds, which doubtless forms a part of the original book, and which may have been written about the beginning of the first century before Christ, supplies the data from which the Apocalyptic judgment may have been, to some extent, derived. In this remarkable vision, which bears a close affinity to that of the Apocalypse, the Jewish people, who have been ill-treated successively by seventy shepherds, are rescued at last by a lamb with a large horn, supposed to be John Hyrcanus. After a sword has been given to the sheep to wage a victorious warfare with the heathen round about, the Lord of the sheep sits upon the throne of judgment, causes the books to be opened, and casts his enemies into subterranean fire. The new temple then descends from heaven, the sheep who are white and pure enter it, whilst the heathen who have not perished obey them, and also enter it. It is, therefore, probable that the writer

of the Apocalypse also drew largely on the book of Enoch for his pictorial representation of the judgment, as he borrowed his description of the invasion of Gog and Magog and of the New Jerusalem, from Ezekiel. Whilst, however, we willingly accord to the seer of Patmos facility of accommodative power, as well as genius, if not of a strictly original, yet certainly of the most spiritual and exalted kind, we are disposed to attach no greater reliability to the vision of judgment presented in the Apocalypse than to the startling phenomenon of the Millennium which precedes it. Rather we prefer to regard it as a phase of that solemn expectation of approaching doom which finds such frequent utterance in the Gospels, tinged, it may be, by colouring from the books of Enoch and Daniel.

And in giving expression to our want of sympathy with millennial theories, and with the events by which they are said to be accompanied, it is a consolation to remember that similar misgivings have been entertained in former ages, and that the Revelation has not descended to our times as a book 'of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.' Not to speak of the exceptions raised by Dionysius of Alexandria and Eusebius, in the third and fourth centuries, possibly with a view of shielding St. John from the charge of being the author of millennial fables, nor of the fact that the Apocalypse was formally rejected by the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 360, nor yet again of the circumstance that the doctrine of the Millennium was con-
demned by the Augsburg Confession in the sixteenth century, not merely as a speculative, but as a dangerous practical error, we may adduce the learned testimony of the Reformers to a like distrust. Erasmus questioned the apostolicity of the Apocalypse, thinking it strange that one writing revelations should repeat his name so carefully—"I, John," "I John." Luther went further, and observed, "To me this book lacks not a single proof of its being neither apostolic nor prophetic. Moreover, it seems too much for him to commend his own book—a thing done by no other sacred writer, even when it would seem more fitting, and to threaten that, if any man shall take away from the words of it, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life; and moreover to declare that they shall be blessed who hold to what it contains, although no one is able to understand what that is, much less to keep it, which is equivalent to not having it." Availing ourselves of our Protestant privilege, we too have been led to reject the extravagant theories, of which the Revelation is the exponent, and to consider them, not as predictions of actual events, but as the offshoots of a pious yet wayward imagination, the creations of a loving and trustful, yet fevered and heated brain. Our conclusion is strengthened by the fact that, after two thousand years spent in the fruitless attempt to square its recusant symbols with events past, present, or to come, no result has been obtained which commends itself to the intelligence of reasonable men. Under these circumstances, scepti-
cism is not impiety but wisdom, and honest doubt preferable to unthinking credulity. In spite of the grandeur of its prophetic utterances and the sublimity of its poetical conceptions, experience has abundantly shown that the Revelation has uniformly had an unhealthy and fanatical tendency, whilst its exegetical history exhibits a sad memorial of the follies of interpreters and the uncharitableness of rival theologians. A book which deals in theological invective of a bitter kind, which displays Jewish predilection in an exclusive and unamiable light, which represents Jesus as a tyrannical and sanguinary Messiah and the Almighty himself as a vindictive and avenging Deity, which abounds in monstrous prodigies and revels in incredible phenomena, which founds the millennial kingdom upon the defeat of the armies of Antichrist, and which connects the coming of Christ at the end of the world with the calamity which came upon Jerusalem and the destruction of Pagan Rome—whatever its claim to apostolical authorship or canonical position—can neither be valuable as a prediction, nor be regarded as a safe guide for the performance of the duties of this life nor for the attainment of that which is to come.

And the conclusion at which we have arrived must not be put down to ignorance, or to want of due and careful examination. The best years of our life and the most matured energies of our mind have been devoted to the fruitless task of endeavouring to reconcile the visions of the Revelation with the facts
of history, and the only alternative now left to us is to take refuge in that dernier ressort of hard pressed expositors—their postponement to an indefinite, and therefore unassailable future. Our sense of exegetical honesty, as well as our habits of critical investigation, preclude our having recourse to this convenient theory, and we deem it more in accordance with a supreme regard for truth to question the credit to be attached to the visions themselves, than to uphold their prophetic character by a system of interpretation requiring for its support a violation of the grammatical sense of words, as well as a disregard for the first principles of hermeneutical science.
CHAPTER X.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city

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had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx, the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.—Rev. xxii. 1-5.
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With the beginning of chapter xx. a vision is seen of surpassing beauty and grandeur. Caught up in the spirit to a great and high mountain, the seer beholds the descent from heaven of the New Jerusalem, and the triumph and bliss of the saints in the kingdom of Christ and of God. A new heaven and a new earth take the place of the first heaven and the first earth which have passed away, and the sea, out of which dreaded element arose the heathen persecutor of the Church, exists no longer. The sufferings of the martyrs are forgotten in the rest of the joyous city, and the impatient cry 'How long,' is hushed amidst the praises of grateful and adoring saints; for 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain (terms expressive of the agonies of martyrdom), for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.'

1. It is distinctly asserted of this heavenly city that it is to be located upon earth;¹ the manner in

¹ 'I will send an angel from heaven, and he shall cry with a loud voice, saying, Hear, O earth, and be strong, saith the Lord, for I am coming down to thee. And the voice of the angel shall be heard from one end of the world to the other, and unto the uttermost part of the abyss. And then all the host of the angels and of the many-eyed ones shall be shaken, and there shall be great confusion in heaven, and the nine petals (πτεραλα) of the heaven shall be shaken, and fear and astonishment shall be upon all the angels. And then the heaven shall be
which its earthward descent is pointed out to the
seer reminding us of the scene at the Temptation,
when, in order to show to Jesus the kingdoms of
this world, 'the devil taketh him up into an exceed-
ing high mountain,' from which lofty eminence he
might see things below him. Hence it is described
as 'coming down from God out of heaven,' 'New
Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from
my God.' Extravagant as the idea may appear to
us, the writer evidently contemplated the descent
from heaven to earth of a magnificent metropolis,
'prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,' and
fitted for the immediate reception of its blessed and
glorious inhabitants. Ancient Rabbinical writings ¹
confirm this supposition, and prove that the expec-
tation of a new heaven, a new earth, and a new city,
was not peculiar to the Apocalypse. The writer of
Pseudo-Ezdras, as he contemplates the woman
mourning in the field for the loss of her son—ex-
plained as an image of the destruction that came
upon Jerusalem—sees her all at once changed into
'a city builded, and a large place showing itself
from the foundations,' so resplendent with 'the
brightness of her glory and the comeliness of her
beauty,' that the former city is no longer remem-

1 'R. Jeremias dixit, Deus S. B. innovabit mundum suum et ædifi-
cabit Hierosolymam et ipsam descendere faciet in medium sui de cælo,
ita ut nunquam desstruatur.'—Sohar. Gen. f. 69, c. 271,
bered; 'for in the place where the Highest beginneth to show his city there can no man's building be able to stand.' The Sibyl declares that Messiah will make the chosen city more splendid than the sun, moon, and stars, and will build a tower extending over many furlongs and reaching to the very clouds; the site being probably identical with that of the ancient Jerusalem. The Montanists believed that the New Jerusalem would descend from heaven on Pepuza, the centre of their religious community in Phrygia: 'After me (said Maximilla, one of their prophetesses) comes the end of all things.' A literal acceptance of this theory demands such an abandonment of common sense, that we are compelled to place the descent of the heavenly city amongst other sublime yet extravagant visions of the Apocalypse. It might be difficult to conceive of such a city now existing, or hereafter to exist, in the heavenly world; but the difficulty is enhanced when it is borne in mind that the new city is to be located amongst the nations of the earth. It ceases, therefore, to be a wonder that interpreters should have endeavoured to transfer its site from earth to heaven; and, in spite of positive statements to the contrary, to restore the city which cometh down from heaven to the sphere from which it is said to descend.

2. The description of the celestial city, given in the book itself, is calculated to deepen the impression of its unreal and visionary character. We confess

1 2 Esdras x. 50–54. 2 Sibyll. Orac. v. 414 427.
that we experience a difficulty\textsuperscript{1} in realising the notion of a city forming either a quadrilateral of twelve thousand stadii in circumference, or, as some have supposed, a cube of three thousand stadii in length, and breadth, and height. The precious gems, moreover, of which the gates are composed, and with which the foundations of the walls are garnished, however familiar such ideas may have been to more ancient writers,\textsuperscript{2} present conceptions which do not seem to come within the range of sober reality. The nature of the inhabitants who shall occupy the celestial city presents a further obstacle to the acceptance of the Apocalyptic vision. In the idea of the writer, they are heavenly and spiritual, and, at the same time, terrestrial and corporeal beings. Their immortality is described under a variety of significant emblems. They eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God, and of the hidden manna; their names are inscribed in the Book of Life, and they are not hurt of the second death; whilst at the same time they exercise qualities purely human and material, for they tread down the Gentile nations, and rule them with a rod of

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Dixit Rabba, R. Jochanenem dixisse, Deum S. B. tempore futuro Hierosolyma everturum in altitudinem xii. milliarium.} S. D. Zach. xiv. 10. \textit{Quid est 'in loco suo'? talem esse futuram superna, qualis est infra. Rabba dixit, Senex mihi narravit, se vidisse Hierosolymam priorem, quae xii. milliarium erat. Dices, difficilem fore adscensus? sed scriptum est Isa. lx. 8: "Jerusalem tempore futuro dilatabitur ita ut pertineat usque ad portas Damasci," Zach. ix. 1. \ldots et exaltabitur ut pertingat usque ad thronum gloriosum, donec dicatur "Locus mihi angustus est.""—\textit{Bava Bathra}, f. 75, 2.

\textsuperscript{2} Tobit. xiii. 16–18.
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It need scarcely be said that things earthly and things heavenly are here mixed up in wild confusion; the Apocalyptic vision presenting the anomalous view of a celestial city set in the midst of surrounding heathen nations, who pursue their avocations much as usual.

3. Moreover, the narrow and exclusive spirit in which the privileges and glories of the new and heavenly city are conceived, betrays at once the partiality of the writer as well as the ideal nature of the city itself. With pardonable and patriotic consistency he inscribes it with the name of his own beloved Jerusalem, assigns to it 'twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel . . . and twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles (St. Paul excluded) of the Lamb;' places in it 'the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month;' measures the length and breadth of it twelve thousand furlongs, and the height of the wall an hundred and forty and four cubits—twelve by twelve; locates in it the hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel, and puts in their mouth a new song, which no man could learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand, the first fruits to God and the Lamb, which were redeemed from the earth. On the other hand, the Gentiles, although not altogether excluded, occupy a subordinate position; such of them as are saved walking by means of the light of the
heavenly city, and their kings, in meek submission, bringing (like the Persian monarchs of old) the glory and the costliness of the nations into it. Perhaps no figures could more adequately denote 'the children's bread' than those which are here employed; the writer evidently contemplating that the chosen people must 'first be filled,' the heathen proselytes only 'gathering up the crumbs which fall from their Master's table.' We would charge this exclusiveness, in part, upon the vision seen by Ezekiel, of which the picture drawn in the Apocalypse is a palpable imitation. The restored city equally with the restored land, according to the elder prophet, was an inheritance to be divided by lot, among the twelve tribes alone, 'they that serve the city serving it out of all the tribes of Israel.' The imagery by which the celestial city is shadowed forth is also evidently borrowed from that employed in the latter chapters of Ezekiel, and accommodated by the writer to the times of the Messiah. As, after the destruction of the old Jerusalem, which has now passed away, St. John is 'carried away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shown that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,' so, in the visions of God, 'after the city was smitten,' Ezekiel is set upon a very high mountain 'by which was as the frame of a city on the south.' In the vision of the elder prophet, which the writer of the Apocalypse has imitated with an almost servile fidelity, its measurements are given with minute

1 Ezek. xlvii. 13.  
2 Ibid. xl. 2.
exactness, the names of its gates are according to the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, it has the glory of God, waters of life issue from the sanctuary, and trees bear fruit according to their months, whose leaves are 'for medicine,' or, as the same idea is expressed in the Revelation, 'for the healing of the nations.' It seems difficult to believe that these points of resemblance should find a place in the respective prophecies, had not the former originated the conceptions, and, to some extent, supplied the terms of the latter. Whatever encouragement the earlier prophecy might have afforded to the Jews of the captivity, it wears the aspect rather of what might have taken place had the twelve tribes returned from Babylon as a nation, than of the partial restoration effected by the two tribes which came back with Zerubbabel. The imperfect fulfilment, therefore, of the first prediction, left room for a second application, and, by the exercise of wonderful accommodative genius, the seer of Patmos has transferred the vision from the days of the Babylonish captivity to those of the last times.

4. The Advent, moreover, of the Messianic king, equally with the descent of the Messianic city, is from heaven (a doctrine abundantly recognised in other Scriptures of the New Testament), and his reign is to be not in heaven, but on earth. In the salutation to the seven Churches which are in Asia,
Jesus is called 'The Prince of the kings of the earth,' a title which cannot be explained with fairness merely of spiritual sovereignty. In the epistle to the Church at Thyatira, the promise is made to the victor, of 'power over the nations,' and of ability to rule them with a rod of iron, and to break them in pieces as a potter's vessel, 'even as He (Jesus) received of His Father;' referring, beyond doubt, to the dominion to be exercised by Jesus and His saints over the nations of the heathen world. This is reduced to certainty by the declaration, 'Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.' Hence, when He cometh with clouds, from heaven to earth, 'every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.' Hence the kings of the earth and the great men, etc., conceal themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and call upon them to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Hence the Son of Man sitting upon the white cloud treads the wine press of the earth, and summons the fowls of heaven to feast on the flesh of kings and captains at the supper of the great God. Hence, too, with the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, great voices are heard saying, 'The kingdom of this world is become that of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.' It is conceived that these passages point to a reign of Jesus and His saints over the nations of the Gentile world, corresponding to the kingdom

1 Rev. v. 10.
described by Daniel, which should break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and which should stand for ever. Examined from a literal point of view, and we have no evidence that any other was contemplated by the writer, they appear capable of the meaning we have assigned to them, and fully justify the Chiliastic expectations of the primitive Church. And not only was the doctrine of a personal reign of Christ upon earth, during the millennium, the settled belief of the age which followed the times of the Apostles, but the nineteenth century is bold enough to revive an opinion which the wisdom of the third century was content to repudiate. 'That the Lord (says Dean Alford) will come in person to this our earth; that His risen elect will reign with Him and judge . . . . this is an expectation, not mine alone, but that of multitudes of Christ's waiting people, as it was that of His primitive Church before controversy blinded the eyes of the Fathers to the light of prophecy.' If views like these are entertained by men from whom the Church has a right to expect learning and soberness, we cannot wonder at the follies of modern hierophants, nor be surprised that the latter should claim for their vaticinations the sanction of ecclesiastical authority.

5. Such to the sincere yet extravagant expectation fostered by national vanity and Jewish predilection is the new and heavenly Jerusalem. In delineating the gorgeous picture, the seer of Patmos has passed out of the region of sober thought into that of dreamy fiction; the vision is seen not in the understanding
but in the spirit, and the portrait limned with such artistic care is a splendid creation of sanctified genius rather than a trustworthy prediction of literal fact. It is, however, by no means improbable that the apocalyptic picture exhibits the earliest and most exclusive form of primitive Christian teaching. Three phases of religious thought may be recognised in the writings of the New Testament. The first, preserving the oldest Palestinian traditions respecting the person and ministry of Jesus when the conception of a future state took the form of a mundane theocracy, and the kingdom of heaven, with partial exceptions, was preached only to the Jews. The second, when the admission of the heathen to an equality of privileges with the favoured people in the new kingdom began to be entertained, a circumstance mainly attributable to the liberal teaching of St. Paul. The third, when Christianity had not only ceased to wear a Jewish aspect but had acquired a philosophical and even an Alexandrine shape, of which altered state of feeling abundant traces may be seen in the Fourth Gospel. The Revelation unquestionably belongs to the first of these divisions, and hence its narrow and Judaic, as well as its chiliastic and rabbinical character. In no other book of the sacred canon is the misapprehension which pervades the whole literature of the New Testament respecting the sudden and speedy advent of Messiah so conspicuous as in the Revelation. In no other book is the expectation of an approaching end of all things which negatives the probability of an indefinite future and
leaves neither room nor time for remote calculations, asserted with such positiveness or said to be accompanied with such alarming and incredible phenomena. But although as time went on the theocratic vision of the seer of Patmos gave place to less material theories, it is not for us to look with disdain upon the anticipations of an earlier period, as the statesman who has risen from obscurity to eminence may not regard with contempt the humble cottage which gave him birth. If, as it has been said, it took three hundred years to mould the Christian Church into its present form, its original and most crude aspect, as presented to us in the Revelation, is entitled to a tender consideration as well as a deserved respect. To us it stands out, grey with age and venerable from association, as a landmark of a rude and primitive period; bearing on its front the scars and seams inseparable from the imperfect apprehension of a past antiquity, yet clothed with a dignity which the feebleness of succeeding generations has vainly sought to imitate or to excel.

EPILOGUE.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he
which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.—Rev. xxii.6-21.

The Apocalypse closes, as it began, with the assertion expressed in distinct and positive terms, that the great catastrophe, of which it is the principal exponent, is of immediate accomplishment. 'The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.' Indeed so impending is the event that the prophecy may not be sealed like that of Daniel, 'for the time is at hand;' the tide of approaching judgments rolling onwards with such rapidity that its waves overtake the unjust and the filthy, the righteous and the holy,
just as they are, without space or opportunity for further change. We hesitate not to say that it would be difficult to express in terms of more definite precision the proximate and sudden character of Messiah's Advent, and that, to the mind of a person unbiased by previous considerations, this conclusion would be *prima facie* inevitable. One note rings through all its seals, trumpets, and vials, 'The Lord is at hand.' One burden is distinguishable through all its highly-wrought and varied symbols, 'Maranatha'—The Lord cometh. One cry is heard amidst the calamities brought upon Jewish and heathen cities, 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.' One word, uttered in a voice of thunder, by each of the four living creatures, reverberates through every page, *Come, come, come, come*, till the last verse of the Apocalypse takes up its dying echoes, 'Amen, even so: come, Lord Jesus.'

It will, then, we trust, be acknowledged that, as we premised, the Apocalypse can be interpreted as a whole of events which were expected to usher in the coming of Christ and the Messianic reign. From the prologue to the epilogue our exposition has been kept within the limit of these anticipations, and if the hope which they encouraged has not been verified, it is because the visions of the Revelation revolve around a 'grand chimera of the approaching kingdom of God,' which never has, and never will be realised. It remains to be seen if this most serious misapprehension extends to the other writings of the New Testament.
The belief in the Second Advent, in spite of the pictorial delineation of this event in the Apocalypse, is beginning to lose its hold upon the public mind. This may be owing to the circumstance that many idle and distressing calculations have been made respecting the time of its arrival, which experience has shown to be untrue. Whilst a disposition exists on the part of more prudential Divines to pass by the prophetic question with as little notice as possible—an indication of the difficulties with which the subject is surrounded, less cautious interpreters, by determining without fear 'the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power,' betray still more conspicuously the weakness of their cause. To refute these would only be a waste of words, as from the days of Mede, who fixed the period of the Advent twice in his own life-time, to the present, their history has been a continual refutation of themselves. Equally anomalous is the case of those who endeavour to postpone an event which was declared to be of almost immediate accomplishment, beyond its natural limits. The violent manner in which they continue to hew the text in pieces in the determination to preserve at
any cost, whether of scholarship or integrity, the infallibility of stereotyped opinions, savours almost of desperation. A more painful position can hardly be imagined than that of the student of prophecy who, by postponing the latter-day anticipations of the New Testament to the future because no fulfilment can be found in the past, endeavours to reconcile the Scriptural theory of the Advent with traditional teaching. He is anxious to maintain that the final consummation is an event yet in the womb of the future, whilst inspired teaching assures him that 'the end of all things is at hand.'¹ He endeavours to separate the coming of Christ to judgment from the destruction which fell upon Jerusalem, whilst the synoptic Gospels, that of St. Luke especially, connect the two events in terms which defy the efforts of theologians to dissociate them. He labours to support the theory that the Gospel must be preached, as a witness, to every creature before the end should come, and that the various missionary societies of Christendom are diligently fulfilling that object; but he finds that in Apostolic days the sound of evangelical truth had already gone forth into 'all the world,' and that, in St. Paul's time, the Gospel was 'preached to every creature which is under heaven.'² Although the end of the world, or age, is among those events which are asserted to take place within the term of the natural life of those who listened to the predictions of Jesus, his religious sensibilities are pained to learn that the end of the world having been vainly

¹ 1 Peter iv. 7.  
² Col. i. 23.
assigned to former periods, is definitely fixed for the present era, the falsification of previous calculations being found unequal to deter modern prophets from hazarding other attempts, to be again falsified and deferred in their turn. Neither is he much assisted in his inquiry by calling to his aid that safety-valve of modern interpreters called the double sense of prophecy. Under the application of this principle, Scripture becomes, as Mr. Jowett has observed, 'Gallus in campanili,' the weathercock upon the church-tower, and may be made to mean anything. Surely it is time that this desperate mode of reconciling difficulties should be given up. They who suppose the calamities pronounced upon Jerusalem to prefigure the general judgment upon all mankind, appear to us to fall into the error of making the prediction of a distinct historical event typical of an indefinite spiritual transaction with which it is not even remotely allied.

It may indeed be argued that some deference is due to the united voice of Christendom, which in all ages has interpreted these prophecies, partly of the destruction of Jerusalem and partly of the end of the world; a theory faulty in its first principles, as a system of interpretation is demanded which shall recognise in the celebrated prophecy recorded in the Synoptics, not two separate events sundered from each other by a great interval, but two distinct parts of the same event bound together by a common period of accomplishment. But the universal consent of expositors, especially when the literary complexion
of ancient times is taken into account, when the majority of men held certain interpretations for no better reason than that others had held the same before them, as it confers no warrant for immunity from mistake, so it does not relieve from the charge of abuse of criticism. Errors are not the less errors, because through the want of ability to detect them they have been perpetuated through many generations; they are only more difficult to eradicate, in consequence of their universal acceptance and their long standing.

And not only is the reason of the honest interpreter insulted by the conclusions at which they have arrived who have wandered from the simple statements of Scripture, but it is also pained by the uncritical methods by which a so-called orthodoxy has endeavoured to reconcile the statements of Holy Writ with traditional theology. Justice compels us, however unwillingly, to give our assent to the accusation, that 'orthodox Biblical criticism has been hitherto found truer to the traditions of the Church than to the words of Christ,' and that, in order to preserve intact the sayings of antiquity, the 'resources of knowledge have been turned into the means, not of discovering the true rendering, but of upholding a received one.' Thus γενέα, contrary to the sense in which it is used in the whole range of the New Testament, has been HomERICALLY made to mean a 'race' instead of a 'generation,' and when Scripture has been found inadequate to furnish the sense required to support a foregone conclusion, no feeling
of shame has been experienced in adopting a more congenial signification from heathen writers. Added to this, the same words and phrases have been made to have opposite meanings not only in writings of the same age but in the mouths of the same men. When Jesus says, 'My time is at hand,' or St. Paul, 'The time of my departure is at hand;' the expression 'at hand' is allowed to mean something near and impending; but when the same Apostle says: 'The Lord is at hand,' or St. Peter, 'The end of all things is at hand,' the phrase is distorted to signify something distant and future. In like manner when St. Paul says, 'I will come unto you shortly if the Lord will,' the passage is properly and naturally explained of a visit which was soon to take place; but when the same Apostle says, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short,' the event is dishonestly postponed. So, in the exhortation of St. Paul to Timothy, the phrase, 'Till I come,'¹ is allowed to refer to a visit which he hoped shortly to pay to his own son in the faith: but the limitation expressed in the words, 'If I will that he tarry till I come' is interpreted of a very different interval. So when Jesus affirms 'Yet a little while I am with you,' it is allowed that he referred to a brief sojourn with his disciples of a few months; but when the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declares 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,' the same phrase is interpreted of an interval of hundreds of years. 'If (says Mr. Maurice) the writer told the hearers

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 13.
and readers of his day that the time was at hand, did he not mean them to understand that it was at hand? Can he possibly have designed that what he expresses so definitely should be taken indefinitely? Can he have supported a divine promise with an assurance which was belied by the event, or else with what, in an uninspired writer, we should call a pious fraud? It may then be legitimately asked upon what principle can the same expressions be interpreted of something impending in one case and something distant in another; and how can an event declared A.D. 70, or thereabouts, to be 'at hand,' 'nearer,' 'approaching,' 'drawing nigh,' 'ready to be revealed,' about to take place 'shortly,' and within 'a little while,' be wiredrawn to refer to an event which has not yet been consummated? Such an elastic system of interpretation finds no countenance from the Bible itself. Jeremiah rebukes the false prophets for saying that a long time was a short one. 'Hearken not (he says) to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying: Behold the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you.' In his opinion short and long were not convertible terms, but seventy years was a long time, and not a short one. The principle we have condemned is vicious enough, if carried to its full extent, to hold up the interpretation of Scripture to the merited scorn of the infidel, and to make 'the more sure word of prophecy,' the most uncertain of all.

1 Jeremiah xxvii. 16.
It is time, therefore, to call attention to the false position occupied by those who, either from ignorance or to suit a purpose, ignore the difficulties with which the subject of the Second Advent is encompassed, and who, without fear of contradiction, give utterance to unmeaning platitudes respecting an approaching end of all things which contrast strangely with the conclusions of more sober minds. But however we may deplore, we are unable to condemn this positiveness, as these alarming theories are sanctioned, if not encouraged, by the formularies of the Church of which they are ministers; and it is evident that no more blame is to be attached to the clergy for their advocacy of such opinions than to others who claim upon similar authority the power of forgiveness of sins. It is plain that to cure the evil we must get at the root of the matter, and this is the object we have proposed to ourselves in this undertaking. We shall endeavour to show from the writings of the New Testament that the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven was an event expected, although not realised, within the limits of the then existing generation, and that consequently the so-called orthodox view which defers that event to an epoch yet future, is in direct antagonism to the most explicit declarations of Holy Writ. As the dogma we are about to call in question is expressed in the Creeds, not only of the Established Church but of universal Christendom, it would seem necessary that the arguments advanced to establish a
The Second Coming of Christ.

contrary position should be of the most sure and convincing kind; resting not merely upon solitary and isolated texts, but affording an uninterrupted series of proofs which, interlacing one with another like the shields of warriors of old time, should form so strong a phalanx of evidence, as not only to justify an attack upon a recognised article of faith, but to leave its defenders without excuse. To this conflict we now address ourselves, and we are not ashamed to say that we enter upon it with feelings subdued by the magnitude and importance of the issues involved. We desire no victory but that of Truth. We anticipate no advantage, but rather loss, even if it should be proved incontestably that we are in the right. If a different verdict should be pronounced, it will still be a satisfaction to remember that we err in closest sympathy with our Lord and his Apostles, whose Advent theories, and not our own, we proceed to enunciate.

For the sake of perspicuity, it will be necessary to have recourse to the following divisions.

I. Texts which define within prescribed limits the time of the Coming.

II. Texts in which the speediness of the Coming is either directly asserted, or indirectly implied.

III. Texts which represent the end of the world as imminent in the Apostolic age.

IV. Texts which speak of the days of the Apostles as the last days.
I. Texts which define within prescribed limits the time of the Coming.

1. The great prophecy uttered by, or attributed to, our Master respecting his Second Advent, which is here treated as the direct prediction of Jesus, is found Matt. xxiv., xxv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi. Four of his disciples, Peter and James, and John and Andrew, ask him privately as he sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the temple, when the magnificent building should be destroyed, the ruin of which he had just foretold, and what should be the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world, or age. That the questions proposed to him did not relate to events separated by great intervals, is evident from the fact that the accomplishment of both is comprehended, in his answer, within the limits of the then existing generation,—a position confirmed by the direction given to the disciples to provide for their own personal safety, not only during the calamities coming upon Jerusalem, but during those which should accompany his Advent at the end of the age. To a straightforward question he gave a straightforward answer. He said, indeed, that the precise day and hour when 'these things' should be was not known to the angels, nor to himself; but that 'all these things' (including not only the foregoing signs, some of which were more or less accurately fulfilled, but his stupendous coming in the clouds of heaven attended by the convulsions of the
material universe) should be accomplished before that generation had passed away.

'Tell us,' they say to him, 'when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world.' Did Jesus determine that 'when'? We give the answer in the words of St. Matthew. 'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place—then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains—and woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days—for then shall be great tribulation—and except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved, but for the elects' sake those days shall be shortened. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, &c.—and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.'

We affirm confidently and without hesitation, that according to St. Matthew, the glorious advent of the Son of Man to judgment was expected 'immediately after the tribulation of those days.'

Similar circumstantiality with regard to time and place is observable in St. Mark. 'Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?' The answer corresponds with that of the preceding Evangelist. 'When ye shall see the abomination of desolation,
spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth—the book of Daniel—understand) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days; for in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days no flesh should be saved, but for the elects' sake whom he hath chosen he hath shortened the days. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there, believe him not. But in those days after that tribulation the sun shall be darkened, &c., and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.'

St. Luke, with some variation from the preceding accounts significant of a time of composition later than the invasion of Judea by the Romans, adds his testimony to the same effect. 'Master, but when shall these things be, and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?' To which it is replied: 'When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies—then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, &c.

1 Mark xiii. 4-26.
—and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'

We are persuaded that it is simply impossible for an unprejudiced and honest inquirer, who reads the New Testament with the view of finding out the truth and not for the sake of maintaining a foregone conclusion, to avoid the force of all these 'whens' and 'thens,' or to escape the conviction that Jesus was giving directions for an immediate and not for a far distant emergency. Our Lord, moreover, confirmed these statements in a manner which leaves no room for doubt. He appealed to common sense from the course of nature by the parable of the fig-tree, and wound up the most minute and circumstantial prophecy in the New Testament, with the clenching words,

'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.'

'Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.'

'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.'

'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.'

2. The passages which precede the accounts of the Transfiguration afford additional proof of the limits within which the Advent was expected to take place.

For the Son of Man shall (soon) come in the

1 Luke xxi. 7-27. 2 Matt. xxiv. 34. 3 Mark. xiii. 30. 4 Luke xxi. 32. 5 Matt. xxiv. 35; Mark xiii. 31; Luke xxi. 33.
glory of His Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works: Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

'Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels; and he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.'

'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels; but I tell you of a truth there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.'

That these texts do not relate to the circumstances which took place at the Transfiguration, although that remarkable event may have been an anticipation of 'the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,' or, perhaps, as Strauss has supposed, an effort to make good the disappointed expectation of the actual coming, is evident from the fact that mention is made of a coming with the holy angels to reward every man according to his works, which certainly was not the case at the Transfiguration; neither is it probable

1 Matt. xvi. 27, 28.
2 Mark viii. 38; ix. 1.
4 2 Peter i. 16.
that the solemn asseveration, 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,' could have been employed in reference to an event which occurred some six or eight days afterwards.

3. The next proof which we adduce as assigning a prescribed limit for the Second Advent is found in the answer given by Jesus to the high priest immediately before his execution, and this comes to us with the greater force because of the solemnity of the inquiry as well as the critical situation in which Jesus was placed. The question, as given by the three Evangelists, is as follows:

'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?'

'Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'

'Art thou the Christ, tell us?'

What reply did our Lord make to these interrogations, dictated, perhaps, not by a spirit of captious inquiry, but by a feeling of deep and reverential piety?

'Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'

'And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son

1 Matt. xxvi. 63. 2 Mark xiv. 61. 3 Luke xxii. 67. 4 ἀνωτέρω—from just now. 5 Matt. xxvi. 64.
of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'¹

'Hereafter² shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God.'³

It will be observed that in answer to the most weighty and solemn question which the Jewish nation, in the person of their high priest, ever put to Jesus, he gave out as a proof of his Messiahship that from just now (an expression never used except of events shortly to take place), or, from the now (words found in five other places of the New Testament, and invariably employed of things immediately about to happen), they whom he addressed should 'see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'

4. Another passage determining the period of the Advent is found in Matt. x. 23: 'But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have exhausted⁴ the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.' Should it be said that ministers generally are included in this charge, and not the disciples in particular; how is the statement of Matt. xi. 1 to be got over, 'When Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples?' Should it be thought that the cities of Israel are not yet gone over, we answer that not only have the cities of Israel ceased to exist; but that the cities of Israel then existing are the cities meant, for it is said, 'Go not into the way of

¹ Mark xiv. 62. ² ἀνὸ τοῦ νῦν—from the now. ³ Luke xxii. 69. ⁴ τελέσατε.
The Second Coming of Christ.

the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' It is conceived that it is out of the power of logic to controvert, or of sophistry to evade this decided testimony to the precise period of the Advent. Indeed we cannot conceive of any reply being made to it, unless it should be thought that by the expression 'till the Son of Man be come,' is meant only until the destruction of Jerusalem: an interpretation which would be indignantly rejected if applied to the duration of that sacramental act whereby the Lord's death was to be annunciated 'till he come.'

We are disposed to think the passages now adduced, examined in their natural and non-controversial sense, conclusive with regard to the limits within which the Advent was expected to take place. If we could admit, which no honest critic could possibly do, that the phrase 'this generation' means in this solitary instance the present state of the Jewish people, how is the statement to be got over that the Son of Man would come 'immediately after the tribulation of those days'? If, in defiance of the natural sense of words, we could allow that the term 'immediately' is to be deprived of its obvious meaning, the difficulty meets us that another evangelist, by declaring that Christ would come 'in those days after that tribulation' (the days and tribulation before referred to), still further precludes the possibility of any interval between the tribulation and the Advent.

1 1 Cor. xi. 26.
itself. If the expression 'those days,' so often repeated, could be made to refer to other than the evil days about to come upon the Jewish people, still the force of the declaration, 'Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come,' remains untouched. Besides, no man with a reputation for scholarship will be anxious to explain away the sense of proximity implied in the terms, 'From just now,' 'From the now,' or to deny that, according to the common acceptation of words, the Advent was to be seen by the men whom Jesus addressed. It is

1 That an actual objective appearance of Christ was intended may be gathered from the fact that the Advent is uniformly represented in the New Testament as an event which 'in God's times he shall shew' (1 Tim. vi. 15), which the inhabitants of the world should see, which should surprise them in the midst of their usual avocations, and on account of which they should either rejoice or mourn. It is further described as accompanied by events perceptible to human sense, as the resurrection of the dead from their earthly graves, the rapture of the living to meet the Lord in the air as he descends in clouds to this world, and the partial destruction of the material universe. Messiah is said moreover to be attended by all his saints and to come with all the holy angels with him. He is also to sit upon the throne of his glory, to summon all the nations of the earth before him to judgment, and to consign some to everlasting life and some to everlasting fire (Matt. xxv. 31-46)—a description of which it has been said that it 'resists every attempt to give it a merely symbolical meaning, and as the Church always understood it in the literal meaning of the words, so it was also certainly meant by Jesus if it was really given by him.' The positiveness and circumstantiality with which this doctrine is insisted upon throughout the New Testament are too plain to require comment. 'This same Jesus,' it is said, 'which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner (ἐν ῥάπτον) as ye have seen him go into heaven' (Acts i. 11); the heavens receiving him until the times of the restitution of all things, when God shall send Jesus Christ in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (Acts iii. 19-21). Hence believers are said to look for the Saviour from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10); 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels' (2 Thess. i. 7). Hence it is declared that 'The Lord shall descend from
not, however, with feelings of exultation but of sorrow, that we call attention to the fact that this anticipation of an immediate Advent was not verified by the result. That and succeeding generations passed away without witnessing the realisation of the much-desired event. Wrought to the highest pitch of expectation by the assurances of their Master's speedy return, the Christians of that age looked upwards till their eyes were weary, yet saw no Messiah coming in the clouds of heaven. The recorded prophecy was true only in part, and failed at the crisis to which the foregoing signs had served to direct attention. It is plain then that we must make our choice between two alternatives, each equally distressing and subversive of traditional views, and must allow that either our Lord himself was in error, or that the latter-day anticipations recorded in the Gospels did not proceed from him. It will be the task of the Church of the future to grapple with this momentous question, and to reconcile, if it may be done, the conflicting theories evoked by a comparison of the teaching of Scripture on this subject with received opinions; a task that will try her powers to the utmost, and in the execution of which former heaven with a shout' (1 Thess. iv. 16), and hence the characteristic title of the second Adam, 'The Lord from heaven' (1 Cor. xv. 47). Hence too at the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory, his disciples (supposed to be still alive upon earth) are bid to look up and lift up their heads (towards heaven), for their redemption draweth nigh (Luke xxii. 27, 28). It is thought that these passages assert a real and visible descent of Jesus from heaven to earth. To interpret them figuratively as many, and we ourselves, have done, betrays, we now think, an imperfect apprehension of their meaning.
II. Texts in which the speediness of the Coming is either directly asserted or indirectly implied.

The most prominent of these we lay before our readers without comment, leaving the letter of Scripture to be its own, and its best, interpreter.

'Now is our salvation nearer (ἐγευμένοις) than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand (ἐγεύμενν).'

'The time is short (συνεσταλμένος τὸ λαοῖν ἔστω).'

'The Lord is at hand (ἐγώ).'

'So much the more as ye see the day approaching (ἐγγίζουσαν).'

'For yet a little while (μικρὸν δῶον δῶον—brevis-simum adhuc temporis spatium), and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.'

1 Rom. xiii. 11, 12. 2 1 Cor. vii. 29. 3 Phil. iv. 5. 4 Heb. x. 25. 5 Heb. x. 37.
The Second Coming of Christ.

'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh (ηγγυμε)'\(^1\)
'The end of all things is at hand (ηγγυμε)'\(^2\)
'A little while not seeing him (ἀρτι μὴ ὀρῶντες)'\(^3\)
'Behold, I come quickly (ταχύ)'\(^4\)
'The time is at hand (ἐγγύς)'\(^5\)
'Surely, I come quickly (ταχύ). Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus.'\(^6\)

1. To this it may be added that the writers of the New Testament do not appear to have entertained the idea that the Advent could be delayed beyond the limits assigned by their Master. The solemn declaration of Jesus recorded in the Synoptics, that he would return within the lifetime of the then existing generation had sunk deeply into their hearts, and the expectation of this event ever rose up prominently before them like some huge mountain set in the midst of a plain, visible from all points and at all times. Hence the absorbing idea, either expressed or implied, which runs, like a thread, through the literature of the New Testament and which is incorporated into every form and phase of Christian doctrine. Hence the Advent is the starting point from which spring all motives to obedience, zeal, and holiness; in which centre all hopes of salvation, and blessedness; and without which, the religion of Jesus would indeed have been an admirable system of ethics, but could hardly have deserved the name of Christianity. The apostles may be said to have been men not of one book but of one thought. Would

\(^1\) James v. 8.  \(^2\) 1 Pet. iv. 7.  \(^3\) 1 Pet. i. 8.  \(^4\) Rev. xxii. 7, 12.  \(^5\) Rev. xxii. 10.  \(^6\) Rev. xxii. 20.
they urge upon their countrymen the necessity of immediate repentance, they exhorted them to 'save themselves from this untoward generation.'

Would they stimulate watchfulness, they pleaded, 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.'

Would they deter from apostacy, they spoke of 'fiery indignation which shall (soon) devour the adversaries.'

Would they exhibit the doom of the false teachers of those last days, they represented their 'judgment as now of a long time lingering not, and their damnation slumbering not.'

Would they quicken ministerial fidelity; they gave a charge 'before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall (soon) judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.'

Would they constrain affection, they employed the threat, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maran-Atha.'

Would they inculcate obedience to apostolic precepts, they besought 'by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Would they terrify the ungodly and the unbelieving: they drew the picture of 'the Lord Jesus revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Would they sum up the substance of Christian doctrine in a single phrase, they taught that 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, right-
eously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

2. Moreover many of the precepts of the New Testament appear morally defective, except on the supposition that they were delivered in the anticipation of the immediate dissolution of the material world. The improvident command 'Take therefore no thought (not merely excessive thought as has been wrongly suggested) for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself;' can only be justified by the more important consideration of 'seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' The apparently harsh prohibition to the son who wished first to bury his father, can only be excused by the urgent necessity of preaching the advent of the impending kingdom. The charge of the Apostle to the Philippians, 'Be careful for nothing,' is only intelligible when read in the light of the preceding clause, 'The Lord is at hand.' The vindication of celibacy on account of 'the present distress,' as well as the disregard of domestic and social obligations, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by the superior influence of the all-absorbing expectation: 'The fashion (outward form) of this world passeth away.' The indifference to change of social condition implied in the words, 'Art thou a slave? care not for it. Mayest thou be free? use it rather.'

'Art thou bound to a wife? seek not release. Art

1 Titus ii. 12, 13. 2 1 Cor. vii. 26-31. 3 1 Cor. vii. 21.
thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife:’¹ can only be explained by the fact that no time was supposed to be left for the alteration of outward circumstances. Under the overpowering conviction of the nearness of the impending Advent, the disciples are further exhorted by their Master to indiscriminate charity and to unconcern respecting their worldly possessions. They are bid to give to every one that asked an alms, and not to lay up property for future necessities. The salvation of those who having great possessions failed to comply with this demand is despaired of, and the rich, simply because they are rich, are pronounced unqualified for the kingdom of God. Indeed of what use could riches be to those who were taught to expect every moment the dissolution of earthly things and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven? To such the world had no future, but was already passing away. Unprovided with the common necessaries of life,² required to abandon all worldly schemes of advancement, and to forsake, nay even to hate, those whose claims upon their services were most natural and pressing,³ occupied, at the risk of their lives, and to the neglect of all other duties, with the office of preaching the good news of the approaching kingdom to the very time of the Advent itself,⁴ the first emissaries of Christianity lived in an atmosphere of thought and feeling within which it is difficult for us to penetrate. As the motives which directed their

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 27. ² Matt. x. 9, 10. ³ Luke xiv. 26. ⁴ Ibid. x. 23.
conduct were beyond the level of human experience, so their actions are not to be judged by the rules applied to those of ordinary men. Suffice it to say that they were the willing subjects of an enthusiasm which perhaps has never been equalled, and which then seemed to have reasonable grounds for its exercise; the 'necessity' of announcing to mankind without delay the important message with which they had been intrusted being, in their estimation, a sufficient excuse for the neglect of other, and even of the most sacred, obligations.

III. Texts which represent the end of the world as imminent in the Apostolic age.

According to Jewish notions, time was divided into two portions, the age which preceded and that which followed the Advent of Messiah. The end of the world, or age, is not therefore, as has been conjectured, the consummation of the Jewish economy, but a supposed literal 'end of all things' introducing the Messianic reign. We proceed to adduce some passages which represent this 'end of the world' as supposed to be imminent in the Apostolic age.

1. Not to repeat the question put by the disciples to their Master which elicited the reply that 'the end of the world' should take place before that generation had passed away; nor yet to insist on the fact that in the parables of the tares and the wheat, and of the net cast into the sea, 'the end of the

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1 The αἰὼν ὁ νῦν and the αἰὼν ὁ μιᾷνου.
2 Matt. xxiv. 3.
3 Ibid. xiii.
world,' or age, is the season of final separation between the bad and the good at the Advent of Messiah, a period already sufficiently defined—other texts assert with greater distinctness 'the end of the world ' to be imminent in the Apostolic age. Amongst these we may instance 1 'Now all these things happened unto them, for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the worlds are come,' 2 where the days of the Apostles themselves are evidently thought to conclude the age. So it is affirmed of the sacrifice of Christ, 3 'Now once in the end of the worlds' 4 hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' where the death of Christ is said to take place at the end of the ages, proving incontestably that the consummation was then supposed to be very near. So St. Peter declares, 5 'The end of all things is at hand,' 6 this tense of the verb always implying something near and impending. 7 So in the text so much misrepresented and misunderstood, 'Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age,' 8 Jesus promised to be with his disciples in a miraculous 9 way unto the then approaching consummation, and not, as has been ignorantly asserted, with the ministers of the Church unto the so-called end of the world. 10 To these may be added

1 1 Cor. x. 11. 2 τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων καθήκοντος. 3 Heb. ix. 26. 4 ἐκ συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων. 5 1 Peter iv. 7. 6 ηγίσκε. 7 Cf. Matt. xxvi. 46. 8 ἐν τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. 9 'Rise up, therefore, and go into the city of the barbarians and preach in it, and I will be with you in the wonders that are done in it by your hands.'—Acta Petri et Andreae. 10 Cf. Mark xvi. 20; Heb. ii. 3, 4.
such passages as 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved:' \(^1\) 'Who shall confirm you unto the end:' \(^2\) 'I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end:' \(^3\) 'If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;' \(^4\) the end in these, and numerous other passages, being not the end of the Jewish dispensation, but the end of the age to be accomplished, as was confidently expected, at the advent of Messiah.

And in marked contrast to modern hierophants, the teachers of the apostolic age gave practical evidence that they believed 'the end of all things' to be 'near, even at the doors.' Their words, at any rate, were not belied by their actions, and do not suffer in comparison with anachronous fulminations respecting an impending conflagration of the material universe which exert no perceptible influence upon the transactions of business, or the pursuits of daily life. Awakening as these alarming theories may have been to the Church of that primitive period when it was thought that even the term of natural life would be anticipated by the Coming of the Lord, they appear now to have lost their power over strong minds, and to have only a tendency to cause weak and silly women to part with their possessions and goods, and to become hysterically expectant of an imaginary convulsion of all things. It is a matter of observation and experience that the Advent is no longer regarded with the 'earnest expectation' mani-

\(^1\) Matt. x. 22. \(^2\) 1 Cor. i. 8. \(^3\) 2 Cor. i. 13. \(^4\) Heb. iii. 6, 14.
fested by the Apostles. To them it was an intense reality: to us, it is practically an indifferent, if not a questionable event. To them, it was a consideration paramount to that of death itself: to us, death is the Coming of the Lord, an idea the furthest possible from that of the writers of the New Testament. The prepossessions,\(^1\) moreover, in favour of traditional theories which crop out in our English version, show that the translators were under the influence of a foregone conclusion, and that a difficulty had been experienced with regard to the proximity expressed in the Scriptures which it was desirable, if possible, to overcome. It is true that the Coming being either directly or indirectly alluded to in almost every page of the New Testament, the speediness of the event is not always insisted upon, just as Alison does not upon every occasion mention the exact period of the French Revolution, or Macau-

\(^1\) Not to speak of the misleading tendency of the headings of chapters we may call attention to the paragraphs inserted at verse 36 of Matt. xxiv., and at verse 32 of Mark xiii., implying that the latter portion of these chapters is occupied with a different subject from the former, and conveying the idea that Jesus had been previously speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, but that at the part thus indicated, a transition is made from the original subject to that of the end of this present world. We may notice also the absence in the English version of the force of the conjunction \(\&\) in Matt. xxiv. 29; xxv. 31, which connects the signs of the Advent with the preceding subject, and makes it impossible to believe that the author could have intended to place an interval of 1800 years or more between the two predictions. We may add to this the separation of Mark ix. 1 from its legitimate context at the conclusion of chapter viii., with a view perhaps of applying to the Transfiguration a passage descriptive of the Second Advent of Christ; and the omission of the sense of proximity expressed in the verb \(\mu\alpha\lambda\nu\), so constantly employed to denote the speediness of the Coming.
lay describe the geographical position of England with every notice of this country. Hence texts are to be found which speak of the Advent without further qualification, and at last, to avoid a needless repetition, it simply came to be called 'that day'—that well-known day which needed no further definition. But notwithstanding these general allusions, sufficient indications of its proximity are interspersed throughout the writings of the New Testament to satisfy honest and unprejudiced inquiry, and to establish the fact that the Church of the Apostolic period entertained the expectation of an immediately impending catastrophe.

2. The promulgation, moreover, of the Gospel within an almost incredibly short period amongst the kingdoms of the then known world is a proof not only that an urgent necessity existed for its rapid proclamation, but that it was attended by revelations of a startling character: and it is perhaps as much to the fear created by its extraordinary disclosures as to the enthusiasm of its first preachers, that the success of Christianity during the first century is to be attributed. Mr. Layard relates that he has known the whole population of a Mussulman village moved to fasting and repentance by the preaching of a Dervish foretelling a coming plague. What then must have been the effect of such an appalling doctrine as that of an immediate consummation of all things among a people credulous enough to believe that it was actually impending? It might be more easy to imagine than to describe the consternation
likely to be produced, especially in an ignorant and superstitious age, by an unqualified acceptance of the words, 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day'—announcing not only the immediate and terrible Advent of Messiah, but holding out the promise of exemption from these calamities to those who should give credence to the Apostolic message. So long as the teaching of the first emissaries of Christianity confined itself to the direct proclamation of the Advent of Jesus in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels with him, to judge the quick and the dead, to dissolve the material universe, and to inaugurate the Messianic reign, it was probable that it would be attended, as was actually the case, with immense effect; the announcement of an approaching end of the world having seriously affected the minds of men, at subsequent and less critical periods of this world's history.

1 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

2 It is worthy of remark that the delusion which may be traced, if not to Christ himself yet certainly to his disciples, that the world was coming rapidly to an end, has again and again repeated itself in the history of Christianity, and each time, with due allowance for the varying circumstances of different ages, much in the same form. During the last seven or eight hundred years there has not been an epoch or a
IV. Texts which speak of the days of the Apostles as the last days.

1. It is remarkable that the writers of the New Testament not only spoke of their own times as the last times, but defined them still more clearly as 'these last times,' or 'these last days'—the period thus carefully designated necessarily preceding the time of 'the end,' or the last of the last days. Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that God, who in many portions and in many ways 'spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son,' where crisis in the history of Europe of which the hierophant of the day has not said that it was the opening of the sixth Seal, the commencement of the pre-millennial age, or something of the sort, and in which it has not been discovered that all the events exactly fitted the 'wonderful prophecies' of the Old or New Testament. 'It was the universal belief of the middle ages (says Michelet in his 'History of France') that the thousandth year from the Nativity would be the end of the world,' a belief which induced universal terror, and a disposition to surrender property for the good of the soul. The Abbot Joachim, at the close of the twelfth century, predicted that the final consummation would take place in the year 1260, his vaticinations giving rise to the two mendicant orders of the Dominicans and the Franciscans; the epoch, however, having passed without witnessing a fulfilment, the 1,335 days of Dan. xii. 12, were next taken, and the year 1335 fixed upon as the date of the destruction of Antichrist. In the sixteenth century there arose among the Lutherans a sect headed by Nicholas Storck and Thomas Munzer, announcing a consummation in five, six, or seven years, which led to a bloody war, quenched only in the destruction, at last, of Munzer and his associates. Bengel, it is said, calculated that the millennium would begin in 1836, while Joseph Woolf assigned 1848 as the true period. If the predictions of modern prophets seem to be losing somewhat of their authority, it is not perhaps so much from want of credulity on the part of the multitudes, as because their assertions have been so often and so glaringly refuted.

1 Heb. i. 1, 2.
the days of Christ's public ministry and those which immediately followed are called 'these last days.' The period of our Lord's manifestation upon earth is described in almost similar terms: 'Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you.' So with reference to the punishment of the unrighteous Jews at the Advent of Messiah, it is declared of the unscrupulous accumulators of wealth in the last days, 'Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall eat your flesh as it were fire;' whilst, on the other hand, it is affirmed of the holy elect of the same period that they are 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.' With equal determination of the period expressed by 'the last days,' St. Paul informs Timothy that 'in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves,' &c., from such he is exhorted to 'turn away;' this command implying that the last days in which these monstrous forms of iniquity should be manifested were those in which Timothy was himself living. So in the second Petrine epistle it is affirmed, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his Coming?'—the writer evidently speaking of his own as the last days; and St. Jude points out the 'mockers in the last time' as easily distinguishable from Christians of his own age by their separation from the Church,

1 1 Peter i. 20. 2 James v. 3. 3 Ibid. i. 5. 4 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.
their sensuality and lack of the spirit. To this may
be added the testimony afforded by the first Epistle
of St. John, the writer of which plainly considered
his own times as the last times: 'Little children it
is the last time (hour): and as ye have heard that
(the) Antichrist shall come, even so now are there
many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the
last time.'

It is conceived that the texts now adduced esta-
ablish the position that the Apostles considered their
own days as 'the last days,' and that these were not
the last days of the Jewish dispensation only, how-
ever circumstances might seem to favour such a sup-
position, may be inferred from the mention of them
in writings (such as the second Epistle of Peter and
the first Epistle of John) allowed to be posterior to
the overthrow of the Jewish city and polity. Alto-
gether, it would seem more probable that they are
the last days of that 'present evil age,' as contrasted
with 'the ages to come;' the end of the 'things
present,' which were shortly to be followed by the
'things (soon) to come;' the last days of the then
existing age, during which Timothy was directed to
'charge the rich in this world,' to treasure up 'a
good foundation for the time (soon) to come,' where
the present age is evidently contrasted with the ap-
proaching age of the Messiah; the expiring term of

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1 John ii. 18. 2 ἐνεστάτως αἰῶνος πονηροῦ, Gal. i. 4.
8 τοῖς αἰῶνι τοῖς ἐπερχομένους, Ephes. ii. 7.
4 ἐνεστάτως. 5 μέλλοντα, Rom. viii. 38. 6 εν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι.
7 εἰς τὸ μέλλον. 8 1 Tim. vi. 17, 19.
that old world of which Satan was supposed to be the god; \(^1\) the concluding course (age) of this world when the heathen walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit then working in the children of disobedience: \(^2\) in a word, the extreme verge of the then existing state of things whose outward form was passing away; \(^3\) the utmost limit of this mundane kingdom ere it became that of our Lord and of his Christ; \(^4\) the dawn, as it were, of the world (soon) to come \(^5\) of which the Hebrew converts already tasted the powers. The phrase, then, 'the last days,' significant as it is of an approaching consummation, would seem to be consistent in the lips of those who expected the end of all things within the term of their own natural life, and falls in harmoniously with other anticipations of the period. If employed of a later age than that of the Apostles themselves, the circumstance may be attributed to an intense desire of finding an accomplishment for the predictions of Christ; each succeeding generation fondly supposing their own to be the last days, and destined to witness a fulfilment denied to that which had preceded.

2. The exhortation to patience perceptible in the writings of the New Testament, implying that a suspicion had arisen which it was necessary to remove that the time appointed for the Advent was passing away without fulfilment, tends to give weight to the position that the Apostles considered their own as the last days. Not to mention the distress which had

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1 2 Cor. iv. 4; Luke iv. 6; John xii. 31.  \(^2\) Ephes. ii. 2.  
2 1 Cor. vii. 31.  \(^3\) Rev. xi. 15.  
3 Heb. ii. 5; vi. 5.  \(^4\) Rev. xi. 15.
filled the minds of the Thessalonian converts respecting 'them which were asleep' who had died in the interval between the promise and the expected Advent, which the Apostle endeavours to assuage by the assurance that the survivors 'who should be alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord' should not take precedence of the departed saints, for 'the dead in Christ should rise first;' we may observe that a general uneasiness appears to have prevailed respecting the tardy fulfilment of Messianic hopes, and it is perhaps to this cause that the question, expressive of half-concealed doubt, is to be traced: 'Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall he find (the) faith on the earth?' Hence the frequent exhortations to patience, coupled with the assurance that, although the event was delayed, it was nevertheless sure of accomplishment. Hence, too, believers are exhorted to 'wait for (God's) Son from heaven,' and the prayer is offered on their behalf, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.' Hence St. John describes himself as being 'in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,' and St. James adds, 'Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the

1 Luke xviii. 8.  
2 1 Thess. i. 10.  
3 2 Thess. iii. 5.  
4 Rev. i. 9.  
5 Writing to the twelve tribes, St. James had said in the passage immediately preceding, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come (that are coming) upon you: Ye have heaped treasure together for (in) the last days: Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.' If the 'ye' who condemned and killed the just are the Jews who had slain their Messiah, why are the 'ye' who were to be patient to the Coming of the Lord transformed into
Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, establish your hearts; for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' These passages, and more might be added, prove that at an early period suspicions had arisen respecting the non-arrival of the promised Advent, and that it had become necessary to inculcate the duty of further patience—a position only intelligible on the supposition of the event taking place within a briefly extended term. The writer of the second Petrine epistle apologises for this delay in terms which show that the time for the expected Advent had already expired. 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is Christians of our times? If the 'miseries' which were coming upon them refer to the troubles about to come on the Jewish people, why should the patience recommended to Jewish Christians of that age be thought to be addressed to Christians of the nineteenth century? If the days in which they are said to have heaped up treasure are 'the last days,' why are those days prolonged to signify the whole extent of the Christian dispensation? St. Paul equally with St. James connects the Advent with the calamities about to come upon the Jewish people. Writing to the Christian converts at Thessalonica, he says, 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels' (2 Thess. i. 6, 7). Surely to encourage these converts with the promise of rest from their tribulation contemporaneously with the destruction of their Jewish adversaries at the Advent of Messiah and to couple the deliverance of the former with the overthrow of the latter, argues a conviction in the mind of the writer that the two events were not only near at hand but were intimately connected with each other.

1 James v. 7, 8.
long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'¹ So again, with the view of gaining time, the Advent which had been considered immediately imminent by the Thessalonians, is postponed till other events, such as the apostacy and the appearing of the man of sin, should have taken place.² As time, however, advanced without bringing the desired accomplishment, these doubts, as was extremely natural, ripened into positive denial. In the second Petrine epistle the scoffers of the last days are represented as saying, 'Where is the promise of his Coming; for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?' — a taunt repeated in the Epistle of Jude, and which also finds expression in an Apocalyptic writing of an early period: 'Afterwards, upon the subject of the Second Advent his disciples shall forsake the doctrine of the twelve Apostles, their beloved and pure faith: while much contention shall take place respecting his Coming, and the proximity of his approach.'³

It is conceived that the proofs which have been adduced in support of our position are so conclusive as to make it morally certain that the Second Advent of Christ was expected within a period whose definite character an honest criticism is bound to respect. It is not only that texts, neither few nor obscure, asseverated with the deepest solemnity and under circumstances of peculiar interest, confine that event within

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.  
² 2 Thess. ii. 1-12.  
³ Ascn. Isai. Vat. iii. 21, 22.
the limits of the then existing generation; nor that the writers of the New Testament (the author of the fourth Gospel alone excepted) assert, or imply with one voice, the speediness of the Coming; neither is it that the end of the world is represented as imminent in the Apostles' days; nor yet again that their times are said to be the last times—but it is all of these combined which constitute a chain of proof not quickly broken, the analogy of faith flowing uniformly in one direction, and never for a moment deviating from its wonted channel. And when to this is added the pictorial delineation of the Advent itself recorded in the Apocalypse, it would seem impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Scriptures of the New Testament point beyond all reasonable doubt to the expectation of a grand catastrophe whose sudden and speedy approach was the devout expectation as well as constant and unvarying theme of the Church of the Apostolic period.

3. But is there nothing to be said on the other side? We answer confidently, Nothing; at any rate, nothing that cannot be satisfactorily accounted for. There is a aint leaning, on the part of Luke, on the side of delay, which may be gathered from the qualification or omission of the urgent phrases employed by Matthew and Mark, and there is an almost total silence on that of the writer of the Fourth Gospel. These peculiarities, however, are easy of explanation when the late date of the respective writings is considered. Other and less formidable objections melt into thin air at the touch of patient and candid cri-
ticism. It is in vain that we shall be told that the Coming to destroy Jerusalem is typical of a more glorious Coming at the end of the world. The New Testament speaks only of two Advents: the first, in the flesh, as man; the second, in the glory of the Father with all the holy angels. No such idea is mooted as a third Coming. It is said indeed 'He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation,' but it is nowhere said he shall appear the third time. Besides, if the Coming is to be repeated, then must the premonitory signs be repeated also; the abomination of desolation must stand again in the holy place; Jerusalem must again be compassed with armies; they which are in Judea must once more flee to the mountains, and the disciples must renew their mission to the cities of Israel. However events may repeat themselves in the history of the world, it is plain that judgments predicated of particular cities and nations cannot, with fairness, be said to be typical of other judgments with which they may chance in some degree to coincide, still less of judgments of a different kind. In order for one event to be typical of another, it is necessary that they should agree in general outline as well as in minute particulars; and to admit a second application of prophecy where a partial resemblance is alone attainable, not only savours of arbitrary selection, but makes it uncertain to which of the two events the prophecy originally referred. Neither can we

1 Heb. ix. 28.
accept the theory proposed by an eminent divine,¹ that in the celebrated eschatological prophecy² 'two distinct sets of predictions run together in artless parallel,' and that while 'a period for the fulfilment of the first series, the human judgment, is fixed within the lifetime of a generation, we, on the contrary, are told of the last judgment, "Of that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father."' To this it may be answered that the disciples do not ask for the signs of two independent transactions, but for the sign of two parts of the same transaction; and that even if it could be shown that there is a distinction in the question put by the disciples to Jesus between 'the human judgment' and 'the last judgment,' it is impossible to discover in the answer a period of fulfilment for the one, remote from that assigned to the other. To this it may be added that it is highly improbable that two distinct sets of predictions would have been thus mixed up in inextricable confusion, thereby misleading the disciples, as well as the Church of future times, on a point on which, above all others, a strict explicitness was required. Neither shall we be appalled by the argument from antiquity, as it is called, fortifying its opinions grey with the consentient acceptance of eighteen centuries by the anathemas of ecclesiastical terrorism; for we know that the voice of Jesus himself is before the symbols of the Church, and that if the above-mentioned argument were in

¹ The author's lamented friend and patron, Dr. Rowland Williams.
The Second Coming of Christ.

every case conclusive, then would the Mosaic law be above the religion of Jesus, and Protestantism itself little better than a criminal schism. Neither, again, can we any longer entertain the view that the Advent of Christ is a past event which had its accomplish-

ment at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. We may ask in vain for any proof of the personal manifestation of Christ at the time of the destruction of the holy city, or of the fulfilment of the stupendous events which were to accompany the Advent, such as the resurrection of the dead, the rapture of the living, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, the myriad host of attendant angels, the sound of the trumpet of the Archangel, the convulsions of the material world, and the universal judgment. Add to this, that the Com-
ing of the Son of Man is represented as a terrific con-
summation with which the whole world is concerned, and to give timely notice of which event the Gospel should be preached 'as a witness unto all nations' before the end should come; a proclamation hardly needed in the case of a local calamity, and irrelevant when addressed to Gentile converts in no way con-
cerned with the destruction of a Jewish city. Nor can we be led away from the point at issue by a theory of perfection which, dwelling exclusively on the immense superiority of Christ's moral and intel-
lectual character, as well as on the unparalleled success which attended his efforts as the founder of a new society, infers the impossibility of mistake in a person of such high pretensions and such gifted powers. Our investigation is not concerned with the
colouring which pious imagination or romantic enthusiasm may throw around the form of Jesus, but with the stern bare documents which predicate of Christ Messianic qualities which experience has found to be untrue. Neither, again, can we suffer ourselves to be influenced by the consideration that our repudiation of the common theory of a day of judgment at the period of Christ's appearing has a tendency to impair belief in a future retribution. On the contrary, it seems to us more reasonable to suppose that the work of judgment, accomplishing itself even now upon ourselves, affords more reliable assurance of a righteous sentence hereafter than the vague expectation of an uncertain Advent. To the objection that St. Paul seems to have thought that his own death might take place before the Advent,\(^1\) it may be answered that such an expectation, even if it were entertained by him, is not inconsistent with the idea of the Lord's speedy coming, for in the same Epistle he adds, 'The Lord is at hand:'\(^2\) whilst to the specious argument so confidently adduced to counteract the uniform teaching of the New Testament on this subject, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,'\(^3\) it may be replied that Eusebius rejected the second Epistle ascribed to Peter from the Canon, that it gives internal signs of a late date as there was no room to scoff until the promise had failed of its fulfilment, and that the Christians therein addressed are exhorted to look for the Advent not as for some-

\(^{1}\) Phil. i. 23. \(^{2}\) Phil. iv. 5. \(^{3}\) 2 Pet. iii. 8.
thing which should happen at some distant period, but during their own lifetime.

And in following out the eschatology of the New Testament to its natural conclusion, we are supported by the conviction that we have pursued our investigation not only in accordance with the rules of careful criticism, but also with those of strict morality. There are subjects upon which simple minds are as capable of forming a correct opinion as more highly cultivated and philosophical intellects. No amount of sophistry could induce a man possessed of common intelligence to believe that two and two make five, or that an event may be said to be near and far off at the same time; and the question at issue, however its elucidation might be promoted by an acquaintance with the original language of the New Testament, demands little more than the exercise of a calm and unbiased judgment to enable ordinary readers to arrive at a sound conclusion. For ourselves, we should cease to believe in Christ, if we thought that our Master would require us to lie for him, or to falsify our convictions in order to maintain the integrity of his sayings. It did not come within the compass of his sincere, although mistaken, anticipations, that reflecting men in after years should be compelled to stereotype dogmas of the truth of which they are not fully assured, or that from one Advent season to another, the enlightened and conscientious clergyman should be placed in the anomalous position of vainly endeavouring to reconcile the plain and unequivocal declarations of Scripture with traditional
opinions. The cause of this most sad and hopeless confusion arises, as we have elsewhere observed, from the circumstance that no fixed date being assigned in the Gospels for the re-appearing of the Son of Man, the Christians were enabled to slide gradually into a different acceptation of their Master's words, and thus to defer a catastrophe which had been the object of expectation to a particular generation, to their own—an error perpetuated to subsequent generations, and even to our own times. Doubtless there was a period in the history of the Church when men felt themselves justified in expecting the immediate Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven; but when that generation had passed away within the limits of which 'the end of all things' was confined, further hope could only lead to disappointment. But whilst we have not shunned to express our conviction that a serious mistake went hand in hand with the promulgation of Christianity, we have also thought that misapprehension on this point confers no warrant for believing that, in a life so pure and self-sacrificing as that of Jesus, there was room for the faintest attempt at deception. If he deceived others, he also in the first instance deceived himself. He founded his kingdom upon the Messianic ideas of his nation, 'and the anticipation which appears so extraordinary to us, was nevertheless a natural growth out of the whole previous existence of the Jewish people.' To this it may be added, that as he did not assert for himself perfect goodness,\(^1\) so neither

\(^1\) Luke xviii. 19.
did he claim for himself perfect knowledge;¹ and it is worthy of special notice that he admitted a qualified apprehension, if not a complete ignorance, respecting the arrival of the event which should consummate his predictions.

It is, moreover, a consolation to remember that, in venturing to call in question the hermeneutical verdict of eighteen centuries, our arguments have been drawn from the sacred source alone, and not from our own ideas of the fitness or the unfitness of things. We have not called in question the improbability of a sudden and convulsive 'end of all things,' because of the proof afforded by the law of continuity and the fact that nature does nothing per saltum, that all things will continue to-morrow as they have done to-day; neither have we repudiated the destruction by fire of the material world because of the recoil which tender minds might experience at the thought of a conflagration of this beautiful earth kindled by the hand of the benevolent artificer himself. We have not concluded the Second Advent to be unworthy of the attention of reasonable men because of mediaeval representations of that event which invest it with a ludicrous and childish terror, nor have we framed an argument against it because of the impossibility of conceiving a Coming with the clouds of heaven which should at one and the same time be visible to all mankind—an idea which could only have been entertained on the supposition that the earth was a plane. We have not ventured to

¹ Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32.
indulge suspicion respecting the fitness, religious or social, of the country to which Messiah is expected to return, nor to inquire how far the inhabitants of the world in general, and of Palestine in particular, are prepared for his reception. We have not rested our case upon the physical difficulties involved in the notion of a pilgrimage of all nations to Jerusalem to offer the sacrifices and join in the worship of the Temple, neither have we denounced such a proceeding, although it might not be unreasonable to do so, as a relapse from Christianity to Judaism. These, and similar objections, might possibly have been overruled, had we been able to find in Holy Writ that a real foundation existed for the event with which they are supposed to be connected. A critical and careful examination of all the passages which bear upon the subject has led to the painful yet inevitable conclusion, that the dogma of a Second Coming of the Lord at some imaginary end of the world, yet future, is one which, however naturally it might be the result of tradition, is not justified by those texts of Scripture which are generally adduced in its support. 'My study of the New Testament at this time,' says a deep thinker, 'made it impossible for me to overlook, that the Apostles held it to be a duty of all disciples to expect a near and sudden destruction of the earth by fire, and constantly to be expecting the return of the Lord from heaven.' This is the conclusion at which all honest minds must, sooner or later, arrive—a conclusion compelled by the obvious and natural sense of the terms employed, and
which can only be evaded by processes which savour of critical disingenuousness and literary equivocation. Religion, more than anything else, demands perfect intellectual sincerity, and should not even be suspected. It ceases to be regarded as of value when it upholds anything doubtful, or palpably untrue; and it presses upon our mind with a weight which we cannot describe, that the doctrine whose authority we have ventured to dispute is not only calculated to inspire thinking minds with distrust of religion, but has a tendency, because of the connection in which it stands with more important teaching, to impair the reverence due to what have been justly called "the granite sayings of Christ."

We are free to confess that while no man yields to us in respect for the latter, we have not an equal regard for alarming conjectures respecting the dissolution of this material universe, which neither commend themselves to our reason by their agreement with natural laws, nor by soundness of the Scriptural interpretation by which they are defended; and are disposed to think that the eschatological might be dissociated from the moral element in Christianity with gain to the efficiency as well as to the permanence of the religion itself.
CHAPTER XII.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

The position we have dared to occupy in the preceding chapter is one for which too much can be said to admit of superficial or contemptuous refutation. It has been shown, and we think conclusively, that the writers of the New Testament indulged the sanguine prospect of a speedy realisation of an ideal future; an anticipation which pervades the whole of the Sacred Canon (the fourth Gospel excepted) and which is as conspicuous in the Synoptic Gospels as in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles as in the Revelation. Paul who received his Gospel not by man 'but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;' John, directed by special vision to write those 'things which must shortly be done,' equally with the rest of the apostles who listened to the teaching of Jesus and were commissioned by him to make known that teaching to the world, appear to have been deeply impressed with the conviction of the sudden and speedy Advent of Christ and the immediate end of all things. This expectation, so firmly entertained during the first century, has been corrected by the course of history. 'The fact (as has been honestly said) stares us in the face: we feel no satisfaction or security in attempting to conceal it: we cannot do
so if we would.' In spite, however, of the grave difficulties with which the mistaken anticipation of an approaching end of all things is encompassed, efforts have been made to save the predictions recorded in the New Testament from the condemnation which their failure might be thought to deserve. Three theories of reconciliation have been put forward with a view of making the eschatological anticipations of the first century coincide with actual events. The first, which we have seen cause to reject, explains the coming of Christ and the phenomena which should attend that astounding parousia by the destruction of Jerusalem and the spiritual triumphs of Christianity. The second supposes that the coming of Christ at the end of the world is an event yet future—a theory which, although it has the sanction of so-called orthodoxy, is contradicted by the concurrent testimony of the New Testament. The third, which has many and respectable defenders, maintains that Jesus did not share the Messianic beliefs of his countrymen, and that the predictions of the last things recorded in the Gospels never proceeded from his lips, but were attributed to him,

1 It has been objected, and we think with great fairness, that the predictions put into the mouth of Jesus in the long eschatological discourse (Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.) cannot have been uttered by him as they are reported, not only because there are important variations in the different reports, but because the substance of the discourse, if truly reported, would combine a supernatural foresight of events up to the destruction of Jerusalem, with a gross blunder as to what should follow. Now a supernatural insight into the future cannot be supposed to cease at a certain point of time, so that the predictions relating to events before that time should be true, and those subsequent to it be
after his death, by the Jewish notions of his followers—a theory which not only cuts at the root of the inspiration of the New Testament, but makes the disciples of a Divine Teacher propagate as essential truths anticipations which their Master never entertained. It is hard for us, however, to believe with the New Testament in our hands, that the expectation so prevalent in the early Church, of the speedy Advent of Messiah and the approaching end of all things, had no deeper foundation than the imagination of the disciples themselves; and to exclude the eschatological element from the teaching of Jesus, with a view of placing him on a platform above that of ordinary Jewish expectation, looks like an attempt to vindicate the dignity of the Master at the expense of the records which contain his history—an attempt which, if it were successful, would not relieve the New Testament from the charge of error, but would only shift the burden from the Teacher to the taught. To an unprejudiced mind it will not appear more mistakes. Consequently, since the prediction of the end of the world by the Coming of the Son of Man, immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, has proved to be a mistake, the previous predictions of the events up to the taking of Jerusalem could never have been uttered by Jesus. The supposed prophecy must have grown up after the event, and have been erroneously attributed to Jesus by the tradition recorded in the Synoptics. But whilst we are willing to admit that the Apocalyptic form of this great prophecy may have been put into the mouth of Jesus after the accomplishment of the signs it appears to predict, other predictions which do not assume this peculiar shape and which are unconnected with preceding signs (e.g. Matt. x. 23; xvi. 27, 28; xxvi. 64) shew that he had given cause for this application to him of ideas either common to the period or borrowed from the Revelation, and that he had himself announced or had suffered it to be implied that he was the great Deliverer at that time anxiously expected by the Jewish nation.
strange that Jesus should have adopted the Messianic theories of his countrymen, than that he should have shared the common notions of the Jews on the subject of demoniacal possession, or on that of the relation of disease to sins: and we confess that we find it difficult to reconcile a limited apprehension of natural phenomena with an infallible knowledge of supernatural events. Should the objection be raised that Jesus in his human nature was liable to error, but that in his higher and divine nature it was impossible for him to be mistaken, it might be sufficient to answer that the Synoptists had faint, if any, perception of the divinity of Jesus, and that but for the Fourth Gospel that doctrine might never have been made known to the world. Or should it be urged that Jesus accommodated his teaching to the prejudices of those whom he addressed, it might be said again that such accommodation is unworthy of a teacher sent from God. With the deepest respect for the reverential feeling which has suggested this mode of saving the Great Master from the charge of error, we regret that the interests of truth will not permit us to accept this ingenious apology. To ascribe the eschatological theories recorded in the New Testament solely to the misconceptions of the followers of Jesus, argues either culpable indistinctness on the part of the Teacher or gross incapacity on that of the taught—an imputation the more painful when the claims to infallibility usually ascribed to them are taken into account. Is it too much, then, to say that neither of these ingenious theories meets
the difficulties of the case, and that the adjustment of the eschatology of the New Testament with the facts of history is a problem which has yet to be solved? We desire to express our conviction that this want of agreement between the anticipations prevalent in the apostolic age and their legitimate fulfilment, creates a dilemma of the most serious kind; the falsification of only one point of supposed evangelical truth, like a drop of poison absorbed into the human system, affecting the whole fabric of Christian doctrine. Give me a spot, said the mathematician, on which I may place my foot, and I will move the world; and the honest sceptic may say with equal confidence, give me a point from which I can demonstrate the unreal character of one Scriptural doctrine, and I shake the credit to be attached to the theories with which it is connected. Theological propositions, perfectly consistent in the lips of those to whom the Second Advent was an immediate reality, are simply anachronous, and therefore irrelevant, when the period within which their influence extended has passed away, their application to the religious wants of future ages being frustrated by the falsification of the great event around which, as a centre, they cling. But in order to see the nature and extent of this misapprehension, whose effects no human ingenuity can remove without first proving the alleged mistake to be without foundation, it will be necessary to inquire what that Gospel was which Jesus and his disciples laboured to make known to the world.
1. The Gospel, as first preached by Jesus and his disciples, proclaimed, not the degeneracy of human nature and its remedy in Christ, but the good news of an approaching Messianic kingdom to be developed at the end of the age, then thought to be imminent. To make known the joyful tidings of this 'kingdom of heaven' was the great work of our Master upon earth, and the key-note of his teaching, as well as that of his disciples. The Gospel of Jesus, according to the Synoptics, is 'the Gospel of the kingdom,' 'the word of the kingdom,' elsewhere called 'the Gospel of the kingdom of God,' 'the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.' The proclamation of the near approach of this kingdom formed the basis of the habitual discourses of Jesus, as he taught the people.

1 The terms, 'The kingdom of heaven' and 'The kingdom of God,' so frequently employed in the Synoptics appear to take their origin from the kingdom to be set up by the God of Heaven (Dan. ii. 44), which was expected to succeed the Syrian kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes. That these terms were used by Jesus in a literal sense seems probable from the habitual accommodation to his Messianic career of other ideas taken from the book of Daniel with which he seems to have been thoroughly familiar. Amongst these may be mentioned his appropriation of the peculiar title, "Son of Man," in a sense different from that used by Ezekiel; the unique conception of a coming in the clouds of heaven, which has its counterpart in Daniel vii. 13; the resurrection with which this Advent was to be attended, an idea which finds its original expression in that apocalyptic book; the accompanying judgment corresponding with 'the judgment set and the books opened' of Daniel; the rise and subsequent destruction of an adversary of the Christian Church, which owes its foundation to the Antichrist of the pre-Christian period; and the direction given to readers of the book of Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 13) to trace events in the circumstances of the Church of that period which should correspond with the predictions of that ancient prophet.

2 Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; xxiv. 14.
3 Mark i. 14.
4 Matt. xiii. 19.
in the temple and preached the Gospel, and its elucidation formed the subject of many of his exquisite parables. 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say (as the Baptist had done before him), Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ¹ 'As ye go (he said to his twelve apostles) preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ² Into whatever city the seventy disciples whom he is reported to have sent two and two before his face, should enter, they were bid first to say, 'The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,' ³ whilst, of those who would not receive them nor hear their words, it is declared, 'It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city,' thereby connecting the period of its arrival with that of the last judgment. This was the kingdom for whose approach the disciples were bid to pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' and until whose inauguration at the time of the Advent, they were to hold trust, 'Occupy till I come.' ⁵ The terms of proximity in which its speedy approach is indicated, whilst they assert its impending and all but present character in language which cannot be mistaken, preclude at the same time the supposition that the influence of moral qualities, such as goodness, meekness, purity, &c., could be described under the figure of a kingdom—these being simply the requisite preparations for participating in its glories when it should come suddenly upon them while they were yet alive upon earth, and without which they should not

The Gospel of the Kingdom.  

'enter the kingdom of heaven.' So far from being the kingdom itself, these moral qualifications were to be the harbingers of its approach, by the exercise of which the Church of that age was looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,¹ and blotting out their sins by repentance and conversion, in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord²—expressions which imply not only that the day was not far distant but that its arrival might be speeded by active preparation. Surely that could not have been a purely spiritual kingdom in which the disciples were to 'eat and drink, and to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,'³ in which 'many should come from the east and west, and should sit down (ad coenam) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,'⁴ to 'eat bread in the kingdom of God.'⁵ Surely that kingdom was not conceived to be purely spiritual which included various degrees of official responsibility (Parable of the Talents and of the Ten Pieces of Money), and of celestial glory,⁶ and about which the question of precedence was fiercely contested.⁷ That could not well have been only a reign of 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' distinct from more literal Messianic expectations, for which Joseph of Arimathea 'waited;'⁸ unto which Paul prayed that he might be 'preserved;'⁹ until whose appearing Timothy was to 'keep the commandment without spot

and unrebukable; ¹ the adjuncts of which Hymenæus and Philetus supposed already past; ² and whose sudden coming during the lifetime of himself or his contemporaries was the plain and unequivocal doctrine of Paul. Above all, that revelation in majesty tremendous which should inaugurate the kingdom—that unimaginable Advent of love and salvation, of wrath and fear—that glorious Apocalypse 'at his appearing and his kingdom,' accompanied with appalling natural phenomena, the darkened sun, the bloodshot moon, the falling stars, the roaring sea—attended with still more astounding celestial portents, the myriad hosts of heaven, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, the judgment of the quick and dead, the wailing of the lost, the gathering of the elect, the vivification of them that sleep, the rapture of those that are 'alive and remain'—that inexpressibly awful 'Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,' for which all the disciples were bid to watch, ³ and which some of their number should be alive upon earth to see, ⁴ cannot be reconciled with the theory that the kingdom announced by him who came not to destroy but to fulfil the Messianic hopes of his nation was simply spiritual, and that the glowing images under which it is delineated merely exhibit an inversion of the more literal conceptions of the ancient prophets. ⁵

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 14. ² 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. ³ Mark xiii. 37. ⁴ Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27. ⁵ See, 'Daniel, or the Apocalypse of the Old Testament.'
2. A further insight into the Gospel originally preached by Jesus and his disciples may be obtained from that ancient, yet most imperfect, record of primitive Christian teaching contained in the Acts of the Apostles. That the Messiahship of Jesus, an opinion entertained with hesitation during the season of his ministry, assumed after the resurrection a defined and positive shape, may be inferred from the question directly put to him by the disciples, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' a question of a purely Messianic character, implying that the time had arrived for the fulfilment of the promises made to the Jewish nation, and for the Son of Man to receive the kingdom about which he had been previously speaking to his disciples. Without disclaiming for himself the office of Messiah, or attributing a spiritual meaning to the kingdom which was then supposed to be at hand, Jesus is said to have answered, 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in his own power,' —a reply, indeed, of an evasive character, yet not calculated to remove the accomplishment of the event beyond the horizon of the apostolic age, and comprising a period during which the disciples who should not have exhausted the cities of Israel before the Son of Man be come should be witnesses for Christ 'in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' —a task accomplished during the life-time of the

1 Acts i. 6.  
2 Acts i. 3.  
3 Matt. x. 23.
apostles themselves. With still more decided reference to the Messianic qualities to be exercised by Jesus, two men in white apparel assure the disciples, as they were watching his upward ascent in the cloud, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;' not only asserting a personal return in the clouds of heaven, but implying, in connection with the preceding question, that the object of his return was to establish a kingdom upon earth. It will then scarcely be denied that the earliest, and indeed the only record we possess of primitive Christian teaching, opens with a distinct recognition of the Messianic character of Jesus, and it may be interesting to inquire whether similar conceptions are entertained in the rest of the book.

In the first Christian sermon which was ever preached, Peter, after declaring the glossolalia manifested on the day of Pentecost to be one of the signs of the last times, describes, in language borrowed from ancient prophecy, the marvellous phenomena which should introduce the consummation: 'I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that great and terrible day of the Lord come,'—a passage descriptive of the convulsions of the material universe, by which, it was thought, the

1 Col. i. 23; Rom. x. 18.
Second Advent would be attended. He further exhorts the house of Israel to 'save themselves from this untoward generation'—a generation which had filled up their sins to the uttermost, and which should not pass away till all things were fulfilled in the Advent of Messiah. In the second Christian sermon the same apostle, after affirming Jesus to be the Messiah by a reference to Moses and all the prophets, proceeds to anticipate the glories of the Messianic reign, and urges upon his Jewish hearers the necessity of repentance and conversion in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things: a distinct recognition of the fact that Messiah is to be a heaven-sent prince, and that his appearing would be the signal for the commencement of the new age.

In addition to the testimony already afforded, it may be safely said of that distinguished fellow-labourer of Peter, although in a different sphere, whose history occupies the latter part of the Acts, that the sum and substance of the Gospel which he preached is that Jesus is the Messiah. At the commencement of his ministerial career, Paul gave an earnest of the shape which his theological convictions had assumed when he 'confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ,'—i.e., Messiah indeed. At Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians derisively, in consequence, perhaps, of their fond delusion respecting
their Master's speedy return, he affirms that God, of the seed of David, 'hath raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus,' thereby proclaiming him to be the Messiah. At Thessalonica and at Corinth, Paul testifies to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, i.e., Messiah. At Athens, Paul proclaims to those overscrupulous venerators of the gods the Deity whom they ignorantly worshipped, reminding them at the same time that former ignorance could no longer be overlooked, but that 'God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he is about to judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained,'—i.e., the Messiah, to whom alone so important an office could be intrusted. At Ephesus, according to his habitual practice, he testifies both to Jews and Greeks 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ'—as the Messiah. Before Felix and Drusilla the apostle reasons of 'righteousness, temperance, and judgment (soon) to come'—a judgment to be executed at the appearing and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ and whose proximity was notably indicated by the appointment of a day for that purpose. And the scene closes with Paul at Rome, receiving the Jews into his lodging, 'expounding and testifying the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening . . . preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 1.
which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.'

Strange, then, as it may appear, it is, nevertheless, not more strange than true, that the message of salvation delivered in the present day throughout the churches of the land, a message whose sufficiency we extol, of whose purity we are the self-constituted judges, of whose full and unreserved proclamation we are jealous 'with a godly jealousy,' a message which we deem of such vital importance as to justify the transmission of it to the heathen, and for which we demand at once their prompt attention and their unqualified acceptance—is not that originally set forth by Jesus and his apostles. Singularly free from the Calvinistic features exhibited by those who arrogate for themselves the exclusive privilege of preaching what they call the Gospel, the message delivered by the first emissaries of Christianity affirmed Jesus to be the Messiah by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, offered forgiveness of sins upon repentance and faith to all that should accept him as the Deliverer promised to the fathers, proclaimed the speedy approach of a day when the man set apart by God for that purpose should judge the world in righteousness, and announced the glad tidings of an immediate restitution of all things. It was the good news not of a spiritual, i.e., an invisible and moral kingdom as some have vainly endeavoured to show, but of a literal reign of Messiah upon earth—a reign declared by the Great Teacher and his disciples to be impending, and, therefore,
the object of devout expectation. This, and not the doctrine of the resurrection alone, which it is plain could not have been preached by the Baptist, Jesus, or by the twelve prior to the crucifixion, was the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which the Apostles proclaimed through flood and fire, for whose dear sake they were willing to give up their lives, and respecting whose pure and uncorrupted transmission Paul affirmed twice with characteristic energy, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema.'

3. To the objection that Jesus is reported to have said, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' a passage in direct antagonism to Rev. xi. 15, 'The kingdom of the world was (or, became that) of our Lord and of his Christ,' it may be answered that the late date of the fourth Gospel, together with its silence on the subject of the last things, goes far to show that a spiritual view of the kingdom of heaven had taken the place of more literal theories, and that the words in question could not have been spoken by Jesus, but convey, as is common in that Gospel, the theological views of the writer. Similarly the much disputed clause, 'The kingdom of God is within you,' interpreted contrary to the general scope of the passage of a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, may simply mean that the object of the expectation of the Pharisees was not so much a kingdom from without as one whose foundation was already laid

1 Gal. i. 8, 9.  
2 John xviii. 36.  
within and in the midst of them. To the further objection, that in a few texts, e.g. Matt. xi. 12, xii. 28, the kingdom of heaven is said to have commenced during the ministry of Jesus upon earth, or rather is represented as a gradual process which was growing up to more perfect development, it may be replied that it can only be said to have commenced in the sense of a preparation for the approaching Messianic reign, as the sealing of the spirit was an earnest of inheritance 'until the redemption of the purchased possession,' and as believers are described to be already under the 'powers of the world (soon) to come.' In the parable of the tares and the wheat, which inculcates patient waiting for the development of the kingdom of heaven, the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one who are undistinguishably mixed together in this world, are separated at the time of the harvest; showing that although the kingdom may be said to have commenced on earth, it was not to be finally established till the end of the age, when 'the righteous should shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' The same gradual progress is noticeable in the parables of the grain of mustard seed and the leaven; the kingdom, small at first as the stone cut without hands, afterwards becoming a great mountain and filling the earth. To this it may be added, that as no long interval was expected to take place between the proclamation of the Gospel of the

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1 Ephes. i. 14.  2 Heb. vi. 5.  3 Matt. xiii. 43.  
4 Matt. xiii. 31, 33.  5 Dan. ii. 35.
kingdom and its arrival, it was conceived that those who had already pressed into it would be 'alive and remain' unto the coming of the Lord—the intervention of death between the period of their Christian calling and their reward being a contingency not contemplated by 'the heirs of the kingdom,' who would simply experience a mysterious change, without which 'flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God.'

Hence the Scriptures connect the judgment of the quick (those then alive upon earth) with 'his appearing and his kingdom,' and speak of the Son of Man coming 'in his kingdom' to reward every man according to his works before some of those then living should have tasted of death; the kingdom being only 'nigh at hand,' when the disciples should see the signs of the Advent itself, thereby proving incontestably that it had not previously arrived. Although the qualifications for admission into it were virtues acquired upon earth, the season of final entrance is deferred to the time of the general judgment at the coming of the Son of Man. The Baptist connected its development with the grand assize of humanity, for it is surely not of the moral enlightenment of mankind, but of the final judgment, that the words are spoken, 'Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire;' or that the warning is given to the Pharisees to 'flee from

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1 Cor. xv. 50.  
2 Tim. iv. 1.  
Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Luke xxiii. 42.  
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the wrath (soon) to come. It is to a period subsequent to that solemn event, called by Clement, 'The judgment of the kingdom of Christ,' 2 that the condemnation points, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,' and the benediction refers, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' that kingdom being represented as an 'inheritance,' a possession not then enjoyed, but to be enjoyed hereafter, a 'heavenly kingdom,' 4 a 'kingdom of glory,' 5 and consequently, not established during Christ's ministry upon earth. Hence Jesus connects his reception of the kingdom with the period of his return. 6 Hence he declares that he will not drink of the fruit of the vine 'until the kingdom of God shall come.' 7 Hence the disciples are taught to pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' as for something which had not then arrived; and the two ambitious disciples, James and John, request to sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of their Master, 'in his kingdom '—a kingdom, of course, then future. To this it may be added, that the terms 'the kingdom of God,' and 'eternal life,' are used interchangeably, 9 and it is difficult to conceive that the latter phrase refers to a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.

The same idea of the kingdom of God as a kingdom

1 Matt. iii. 7, 12. 2 1 Epist. xxi. 11. 3 1 Pet. i. 4. 4 2 Tim. iv. 18. 5 1 Thess. ii. 12. 6 Luke xix. 13. 7 Luke xxii. 18. 8 'In his glory,' Mark. x. 37. 9 Matt. xix. 16, 24; xxv. 34, 46.
shortly to be manifested at the appearing of Messiah, is common to the apostolical fathers. Thus, Clement: 'If we shall do what is just in the sight of God we shall enter into his kingdom, and shall receive the promises which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man; wherefore let us every hour expect the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, because we know not the day of God's appearing.'¹ Similarly, Barnabas, 'They (says Christ) that will see me and come to my kingdom, must through many afflictions and troubles attain unto me.'² 'The Apostles,' says Clement, 'went forth to preach the good tidings that the kingdom of God was soon about to come.'³ The author of the preface to the Apocalypse of the second Esdras represents the kingdom as shortly to be manifested at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 'Thus saith the Lord unto Esdras, Tell my people that I will give them the kingdom of Jerusalem, which I would have given unto Israel . . . pray for a few days unto you that they may be shortened: the kingdom is already prepared for you: watch. . . . Look for your shepherd, he shall give you everlasting rest, for he is nigh at hand that shall come in the end of the world. Be ready to the reward of the kingdom, for the everlasting light shall shine upon you for evermore.'⁴ Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, also support, although with much extravagance, the notion of a mundane-celestial kingdom.

¹ 2 Epist. iv. 14, 15. ² Barnabas vi. 15.
³ 1 Epist. ad Cor. xix. 3. ⁴ 2 Esdras ii. 10–35.
It is unnecessary to repeat the numerous passages in the Apocalypse which describe this kingdom as a 'kingdom of this world,' in which Messiah and his saints should rule over the heathen with a rod of iron, and reign upon the earth.¹

4. The misapprehension which pervades the whole of the New Testament respecting the immediate coming of Christ in his kingdom necessarily extends to the doctrines connected with that event; to prolong, therefore, their application beyond the limits by which their influence is bounded involves them in an anachronism which distorts their primary and legitimate meaning. This will appear evident when the terminology which runs, like a thread, through the New Testament is allowed to have its proper weight. Thus the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world are events which are declared in terms of deep solemnity, and with minute circumstantiality of place and occasion, to happen before the generation which had heard the words of Christ should pass away.² The Advent of Christ in the glory of his Father, with his angels, to reward each man according to his works, is a catastrophe which is to take place before some then standing there should taste of death.³ The Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end shall come,⁴ an end declared by St. Peter to be 'at hand.'⁵ Wheat and tares grow

¹ Rev. ii. 26, 27; xii. 5.
² Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.
³ Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27.
⁵ 1 Pet. iv. 7.
together until the harvest, unto which the fields were 'already white,'¹ and 'the harvest is the end of the age.'² The evangelisation of the cities of Israel is to be interrupted by the coming of the Son of Man.³ Timothy is charged to keep the commandment, without spot, unrebukable, 'until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,'⁴ a charge which supposes that the Advent would take place during the term of his natural life. The hint is thrown out respecting John, that he might tarry till he came, suggesting that the Son of Man would be revealed before the career of the beloved apostle came to a close.⁵ The resurrection of the dead and the change of the living are announced in terms which intimate that Paul and his contemporaries might be alive upon earth at the time of these mysterious transformations; the words, 'we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,' implying that although all, the living as well as the dead, should be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,' some of those then living when the apostle wrote should be alive at the time of that change.⁶ The day of the Lord, which should come 'as a thief' during the life-time of some then living (and it is evident that it could not come suddenly upon them if they were dead) was to be attended; not only by the resurrection of those who had fallen asleep in Christ who should rise before the living should receive their summons to meet him in the air as he descends to this earth, but also by the

¹ John iv. 35. ² Matt. xiii. 30, 39. ³ Matt. x. 23. ⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 14. ⁵ John xxii. 23. ⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.
rapture in clouds of those who should be ‘alive and remain,’ amongst whom Paul thought that he and his fellow-Christians might be included. The judgment to be executed upon ‘the quick and the dead’ at Christ’s appearing and kingdom, comprises a sentence to be passed on those then living (the quick) who should continue to live on until the Advent, as well as upon those who had died before that solemn event. The Mediation of Jesus, who had entered Heaven, then to appear in the presence of God in behalf of the Church of that period, is circumscribed by the return, when he should ‘appear the second time without sin unto salvation’—an appearing which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expected within the briefest conceivable period. The righteousness of God, which is, through faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, is a justification earned for the Church of that age as their ground of merit in the approaching day of the Lord, when those who had been justified by his blood should be ‘saved from (the) wrath through him’—even Jesus who delivereth us from the wrath to come—justification by faith alone, although in a sense different from that assigned to it by traditional theology, being articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae even in those primitive times; the faith demanded being faith in Jesus as the Messiah, who was able to save to the uttermost in the great and terrible day of the

1 Thess. iv. 15-17.
2 Acts x. 42, Rom. xiv. 9; 1 Pet. iv. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 1.
3 Heb. ix. 24-28.
4 Heb. x. 37.
5 Rom. v. 9.
6 τὸν ῥομφανον.
7 1 Thess. i. 10.
The Atonement is a satisfaction made unto God by the death of his Son 'in the end of the world;'

in behalf of the Church of that time, the benefit of which had already been received by faith;

the advantages accruing to the believer from this sacrificial act not extending beyond the time of the Advent, when 'there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall (soon) devour the adversaries.'

The message of reconciliation, a message the more pressing because of the judgment then thought to be impending, is confined to the ministration of apostolic ambassadors who urged its immediate reception in terms of vehement importunity, 'Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation;' the days in which this offer could alone be made being 'these last days' in which Jesus Christ was manifested to the world. The examples afforded by the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness are written not so much for the admonition of future ages, as for that of transgressors of apostolic times, upon whom the ends of the world had come; the beatification of the faithful departed being also delayed for that of the elect of the same period: 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises. . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' The duty of instant repentance, without delay, is enjoined on

1 Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 13. 2 Heb. ix. 26. 3 Rom. v. 1, 11. 4 Heb. x. 26, 27. 5 2 Cor. vi. 2. 6 Heb. i 2. 7 1 Pet. i. 20. 8 1 Cor. x. 11. 9 Heb. xi. 13, 40.
the ground of the judgment to be executed at the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'; or, as the necessity for haste is elsewhere indicated, God 'now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will (soon) judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath set apart' for that purpose; a day in former times not absolutely determined, but whose imminent approach was now thought to be assured by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Salvation is not so much a deliverance from moral guilt as from 'the wrath (soon) to come' at the approaching Advent, 'when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ'—a salvation 'nearer' when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans than when he first believed in Christ, and 'ready to be revealed in the last time.' The Mosaic law, whose ordinances are imposed 'until the time of reformation,' continues in force until the end of the then-existing age, for 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;' its obligations ceasing with the arrival of that consummating period of whose proximity Jesus asserted in terms of a sacramental character, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,

1 Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17.  
3 Matt. iii. 7.  
4 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.  
5 Rom. xiii. 11.  
6 1 Pet. i. 5.  
7 Heb. ix. 10.  
8 Matt. v. 18.
but my words shall not pass away.'¹ The miraculous gifts of the Spirit last only 'unto the day of redemption,'² a season contemporaneous with that of the Advent itself³—a statement involving one or other of two dilemmas, either that the period unto which these gifts should continue has not arrived, in which case they ought to be still present.⁴ or, at any rate, in abeyance in the Church, or that it has passed away without a fulfilment, since we no longer have the gifts.

Besides the limitation assigned to doctrines connected with the Advent, a multitude of texts may be added which are only intelligible on the supposition that the Coming of the Lord would take place within the term of the natural life of the persons addressed. When Paul gave thanks to God on behalf of his Corinthian converts, and described them as 'waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who should establish them unto the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,'⁵ he intimated that the end, with

¹ Matt. xxiv. 35. ² Ephes. iv. 30; i. 14; 2 Cor. i. 22. ³ Lukexxi. 28. ⁴ The followers of Edward Irving having rightly concluded from Scripture that certain gifts of healing, tongues, prophecy, &c., were to be exercised by Christians until the time of the Second Coming, have been naturally led to expect a continuance of these miraculous powers, and, according to traditional theories which represent the Advent as yet future, are consistent in saying that they ought to have the gifts. Yes, they ought to have them, but where are they? Show us but one miracle, and it sufficeth us. This futile attempt to revive extraordinary powers which were only of a dispensational character, demonstrates that the period by which they were said to be bounded cannot be extended beyond its proper limits; the separation of these gifts into ordinary and extraordinary being merely a theological invention unknown to Scripture. ⁵ 1 Cor. i. 7–8.
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its accompanying parousia, would overtake them while yet in the flesh. So, again, when he says, 'For we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge, and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus,'¹ he anticipated that those whom he addressed would continue to live on to the consummating period called 'the end,' and would be 'his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus at his coming.'² So when it is said, 'We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,'³ it is implied that they who had accepted the Christian calling would continue to live until they 'received the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.'⁴ So, again, Christians are encouraged to 'hope to the end'⁵ for the grace (which was being) brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 'the end,' in all these passages, being not only associated with the coming of Christ, but conceived as a consummation which should arrive during the natural term of the persons addressed. The idea of a catastrophe which could not be deferred beyond the life-time of those then living is further conveyed in the direction given to the Thessalonians to 'wait for (God's) son from heaven,'⁷ or as the same command is again repeated,⁸ 'The Lord direct

¹ 2 Cor. i. 13, 14.  ² 1 Thess. ii. 19.  ³ Heb. iii. 14.  ⁴ 1 Pet. i. 9.  ⁵ τελεῖος.  ⁶ 1 Pet. i. 13.  ⁷ 1 Thess. i. 10.  ⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 5.
your hearts unto the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ;' the attitude denoting not the unconscious insensibility of persons who had been long dead, but the active expectation of living men. The good work begun in the Philippian converts is to be performed 'till the day of Christ,' and the prayer is offered for those whose 'fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now' had been so commendable, that they might continue to be 'sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.'

The saints at Corinth, who are assured that they shall judge the world and even angels, are intreated to 'judge nothing before the time until the Lord come;' the apostle, although conscious of nothing against himself, thinking lightly of man's day, or human judgment, because he anticipated the 'approaching' day of the Lord—'the day,' the well-known day, which

1 Phil. i. 6, 10.  
2 ἀνθρωπινης ἡμέρας.  
3 The New Testament insists much upon the developments of a day approximately future, when Jesus should be revealed in his true character of Messiah. Even in the Sermon upon the Mount, a discourse supposed, but erroneously, to be devoid of Messianic conceptions, the punishment of the wicked as well as the reward of the righteous, is deferred to a great day of assize in which Messiah will sit upon the throne of judgment. It is of the condemnation of the former at that time that it is said, 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.' (Matt. vii. 22; xxiv. 36; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 8). It is of the blessedness of the latter at the same period that it is also affirmed, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven' (Luke vi. 23)—that well-known day which needed no further definition, as the Advent itself was familiarly expressed by the terms, 'He that is soon about to come'—τοῦ μέλλοντος—(Rom. v. 14), 'The coming one'—δ έρχομαι (Heb. x. 37), without further comment. It is elsewhere called 'The day of God' (2 Pet. iii. 12): 'The day of Christ' (2 Thess. ii. 2; Phil. i. 6-10; ii. 16): 'The day of the Lord' (1 Thess. v. 2; 1 Cor. i. 8, v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; 2 Pet. iii. 10): 'The
should test his work, and make it manifest, 'because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' The session of Christ at the right hand of God (for the heavens must receive him 'until the times of restitution of all things' lasts unto the time of his coming, called 'the end,' when the Son himself should be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all—the 'coming' and 'the end' being associated in the same order of chronological accomplishment as in the question put by the disciples to their Master, 'What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?' In these passages—and more might be added—the Advent is conceived to be a veritable 'end of all things;' the consummation to which all the doctrines of Christianity point, and beyond which their application does not extend. Before the mind of the writers of the New Testament 'a vast terminus looms out overpowering other objects. Their glances at the immediate past are brief; they do not dwell upon the present, but fix their gaze on the near future, where a mighty phenomenon fills the sphere of their vision.' It is difficult on any other supposition to account for the limitation which per-

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1 1 Cor. iii. 21.
2 Acts iii. 21.
3 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.
4 Matt. xxiv. 3.
vades their statements, or for the necessity which existed for the rapid promulgation of the Gospel within a given period. If in our day the Gospel of the Church has usurped the place of the Gospel of the kingdom, and we have cast our hopes and expectations into a form different from that assumed by the first preachers of Christianity, it is not the less true that the older and more literal doctrines which we have repudiated represent the real teaching of Jesus and his apostles.

5. The position we have occupied will appear yet more unassailable when the doctrinal confusion caused by the postponement of the Advent beyond the period appointed in Scripture for its development is taken into account. Of the theological differences caused by this anachronous postponement it may be said that their name is Legion, each equally false and equally at variance with each other. The disputes of divines respecting the doctrine of Election might have been less bitter, had it been understood that this doctrine, as revealed in the New Testament, is concerned with the salvation of a chosen few out of the world who should be delivered from the wrath to come at the approaching advent of Messiah. The invidious theory of Predestination might have attained less notoriety, had it been understood that the 'vessels of wrath' and the 'vessels of mercy' spoken of by St. Paul, comprehended those only whose destruction or redemption was then 'drawing nigh;' the former to be punished

1 2 Tim. ii. 10.
with everlasting destruction (in that day) from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power;'¹ the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory' being also limited to those within the Apostle's own immediate circle, 'Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles.'² The presumptuous notion of Effectual Calling and Final Perseverance³ might have been attended with less mischievous consequences, had it been seen that the grace, or favour, unto which Christians were called was being brought⁴ unto them 'at the Revelation (or, apocalypse) of Jesus Christ,'⁵ and that the perseverance of the saints was to receive its reward at a consummating period called 'the end,' then supposed to be imminent. The declamations fulminated from many a pulpit against the world and the things of the world which are not unfrequently represented as injurious, might have been thought superfluous, had it been perceived that 'this present evil world' out of which Jesus should take⁶ his people,⁷ is not identical with that in which we are now living, but is that expiring course (or, age) of the world which was about to pass away⁸ and to be immediately followed by the world (soon) to come—the age of the Messiah. The sins laid to the charge of the Prince of this world, that most convenient scapegoat of recalcitrant humanity, might have been fewer, had the reflection suggested

¹ 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. ² Rom. ix. 22–24. ³ See Westminster Confession of Faith. ⁴ ἐκνεῦμα. ⁵ Gal. i. 4. ⁶ 1 Cor. vii. 31.
itself that Satan was supposed to be the god of the world that then was, but that his powers of temptation would be crippled, and himself bound, in the coming age. The failure which has hitherto attended missionary efforts might have been less keenly felt, had not the fact been overlooked that the Gospel had been preached in the apostles' days in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and that the message now delivered to the heathen is destitute of that Messianic element which characterised the teaching of Jesus and his apostles, and which formed the secret of their success. The labours of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, whose efforts for the conversion of only one Israelite have not unfrequently been so costly and for the most part attended with such indifferent success, might have been spared, had it been understood that the declaration of St. Paul, 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace' refers to Jews of apostolic times, and not to those of our own—these Israelites who 'had obtained' the election being identical with those who were being saved from that 'untoward generation,' and whom the Lord added daily to the Church. The attitude assumed by the priesthood of the Church of Rome and their Anglo-Catholic imitators might have been less presumptuous, had the text by which their claims are thought to be supported been interpreted upon just and critical principles; a very

1 Col. i. 23; Rom. x. 18.  
2 Rom. xi. 5.  
3 Tous σωζόμενους.  
4 Acts ii. 47.
slight examination being sufficient to show that when the Great Master assured his disciples of his continual presence with them in their task of making known his Gospel 'all the (remaining) days, even unto the end of the age,' he confined his remarks to those whom he addressed: 'the Lord (it is said) working with them (and not with their so-called successors of future times) and confirming the words with signs following,' signs of a miraculous nature peculiar to the apostolic age, and which were to be the tokens of their commission.¹ The monstrous assumption of the power of the keys might have been less confidently asserted, had it been perceived that they are 'the keys of the kingdom of Heaven,' and that the commission of this authority to the Apostles did not confer upon the clergy of future ages the prerogative of binding and loosing in the ordinance of priestly absolution, but merely gave to the former the right to admit into or to exclude from the approaching kingdom of Messiah.² The Sacramental commemoration so warmly advocated in the present day might have been less earnestly recommended, had the limitation enjoined by St. Paul, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye announce the Lord's death till he come,'³ received sufficient consideration; the object of this memorial of Christ's adieu being accomplished with the arrival of the time when 'he should drink it new with his disciples in his

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20; Mark xvi. 17–20; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Heb. ii. 4.
² Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; John xx. 23.
³ 1 Cor. xi. 26.
Father's kingdom. 1 The obligation to baptise all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 2 might have seemed less stringent, had it been acknowledged that the administration of this rite is commensurate with the preaching of the Gospel as a witness unto all nations before the end should come, a task, as we have seen, accomplished in the Apostolic age. Even the duration of the Church itself, an institution fondly deemed perpetual, is necessarily circumscribed by the period appointed for the Advent; the office of its ministers to proclaim the Messianic kingdom ceasing with the coming of the King himself. To assert therefore a permanence for the Church beyond the term occupied by apostolic men, is to create a state of things not contemplated by its original founders, and foreign to the conceptions of the writers of the New Testament.

This point receives confirmation from the circumstance that, with the exception of a few directions in the Pastoral Epistles, the genuineness of which has been deservedly questioned, no provision seems to have been made for its future guidance and support. No creeds emanate from the apostles, no liturgies, no canons. No cathedrals rise, no permanent institutions are founded, nothing is done that exhibits a desire to establish a national Church, or betrays the hope of a long and uninterrupted ecclesiastical rule. The manner in which the Gospel was first preached indicates, on the contrary, urgent haste. A pressing necessity exists for proclaiming a message of tre-

1 Matt. xxvi. 29. 2 Matt. xxviii. 19.
mendous import within a limited period. The region once traversed by the beautiful feet of those who preach the gospel of peace may not, except under peculiar circumstances, be traversed again. Like the Master who said, 'I must preach to other cities also, for therefore am I sent,' so the apostle, having declared at Corinth the counsel of God, desires to be 'enlarged by them according to his rule (showing that it was his usual practice) abundantly to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond them.' The Gospel, moreover, was preached before it was written, and even after the composition of the evangelical histories, a preference was for some time given to oral instruction. 'How,' said the apostle, 'should they invoke one whom they did not believe? but how believe in one of whom they had not heard, and how hear without a preacher, and how preach except they be sent?' It did not occur to him to ask how they should believe in one of whom they had not read; the expectation of an approaching end of all things rendering all teaching, except oral teaching, unnecessary. To this it may be added, that Jesus neither himself committed to writing, nor took any means to preserve his genuine teachings in that form, so as to avoid the errors of memory on the part of those who have handed them down to us, and the corruptions of time and oral tradition. The more this fact is considered, the more inexplicable it will appear on any other ground than this, that neither he nor his apostles saw any necessity for so doing,

1 2 Cor. x. 16.
2 Rom. x. 14, 15.
because they believed that the world was coming to an end in their own time. Had Jesus entertained the idea that the Christian Church was to last even five hundred, to say nothing of eighteen hundred years, during which time every doctrine and precept was to become the subject of angry dispute and violent controversy, nothing could excuse or explain his conduct in not himself providing for the genuineness and the infallibility of his teachings, which should remain to future ages as an authoritative standard of faith. It is well known that most of the troubles which disfigure the history of Christianity are traceable to this omission, and that the religious world would not have been distilling its agony of bloody sweat for the last eighteen hundred years had it been assured with certainty upon such points as the Trinity, the Supremacy of the Pope, Transubstantiation, and the Divinity of Christ. It is difficult, moreover, on any other supposition than that of the expectation of an immediate end of all things which superseded the necessity of written documents, to account for the late date of composition attributed to the evangelical histories, and to conceive that the publication of narratives upon the truthfulness of which our eternal interests are thought to depend, should be deferred to a period sufficiently distant from the events related, to detract from their credit. A glance at the divisions, not only of apostolic men but of theologians of the present day, when, as Mr. J. S. Mill has observed, 'There is no united authority, when the specially instructed are so divided and
scattered that almost any opinion can boast of some high authority, and no opinion whatever can claim all, not only shows the insufficiency of existing documents to ensure an unanimous verdict on matters of faith, but justifies the desire for an authentic original from which there could be no appeal. This, as we have seen, was not compatible with the peculiar circumstances under which the Gospel was made known to the world; the interval between the proclamation of the approaching kingdom and its arrival being thought too brief to admit of more than a hurried and verbal message.

And uncharitableness, as well as confusion, is the necessary consequence of this prolongation of doctrines beyond their natural limits. The animosity so painfully exhibited by Christians towards each other, is traceable, not so much to diversity of opinion on moral questions, as on those of a purely doctrinal character; each of the thousand and one sects into which Christendom is unhappily divided professing to draw its tenets and to derive its authority from the sacred source alone, and claiming the possession of truth to the exclusion of other religious communities. The failure of pious and thoughtful men to arrive at doctrinal agreement is hard to be reconciled with the fact that the Great Teacher desired, above all things, unity for His Church; and can only be accounted for on the supposition that a serious mistake has been incorporated into primitive Christian teaching, which has prevented exegetical harmony,
and which is reflected in the controversies which are agitating the world.

6. In bringing this subject to a close, we desire to repeat our conviction that one more important in its issues cannot well be imagined. Darkness is indeed upon the face of the prophetic creation, and the inspired interpreter who shall unravel the difficulty has not yet been found. Is it too much to say that this desirable object is not likely to meet with an accomplishment, and that the Church, if she would maintain not only her usefulness but her very existence, will have to reform her creeds and to abandon her traditions? A late dignitary of the Church has observed, 'I have not the slightest doubt in my mind, that the next ten years will bring forth and sift to the very bottom all the great doctrines on which the Church of Christ is built. There is nothing which will not be the subject of discussion, and we shall enter upon a great conflict, to which all the conflicts which have taken place during the last twenty-five years will be mere child's-play. I cannot doubt, looking to the legal decision recently made, the publications issued, and the tone of public preaching, that everything now reverently received and held will be questioned—the authority and inspiration of God's word, the miraculous character of the Old Testament, and by consequence that of the New; even the nature of the doctrine of the great atonement.' For ourselves, so far from sympathising with these gloomy forebodings and indulging sad anticipations respecting the issue of the conflict upon which
we have already entered, we regard this activity of the human mind as a hopeful symptom. It is better that the evidences of our faith should be examined, even by adversaries, than never examined at all. A religion that wraps itself up in its own virtue, and obstinately refuses inquiry, is not suited for reasonable men—much less can hope to extend its influence to distant lands, or to exact from other systems a right of investigation which it declines for itself. Churches are no more made for eternity than buildings; they only prolong their existence by timely and judicious restoration. This may be more easily done in the case of the Church of England, which is essentially a Protestant, and therefore self-reforming Church, than in that of ecclesiastical establishments which claim to be infallible. She did not at once and for ever arrive at an immutable perfection when, three hundred years ago, she severed herself from Rome, but only laid down the principle by which she would afterwards be guided, as the political reformers of 1832 laid down the principle which has led to recent changes. The Reformation, it has been said, was only 'the first act of a drama which has yet to be played out, and it may be expected that our own age will see questions stirred, more searching even than any that were mooted then.' It is our firm belief that the time for putting the remaining scenes upon the stage of public opinion is not far distant. Doubts, never dreamed of till now, are rising to the surface; old opinions are breaking up, apathy and indifference are among the things of the past, and ministers who
hold high office in the Church affirm in common with us that a serious mistake is incorporated in her creeds and formularies. What answer will be made to this heavy and crushing charge we cannot tell. A method not unfrequently adopted is to meet such latitudinarian theories with contemptuous silence—a method, however, wholly inexcusable in the case of men who claim for themselves the office of ministers and stewards to prepare and make ready the way of the Lord’s Second Advent in the spirit and power of Elias, and whose reticence on the subject of prophecy and its interpretation is even more culpable than the hierophantic ravings they are wont to condemn.

The religious history of eighteen centuries enables us to assert with positiveness that, if it would become the universal religion, Christianity, 'as hitherto understood,' must give place to Christianity as it can alone be understood hereafter—not as a state of high religious ecstasy as in the apostolic age—not as controversial protest against Roman Catholic doctrine, as at the Reformation—not as a string of bare dogmatic assertions, as formulated in the creeds—not as a system of dry theological propositions, as stereotyped in the articles—not as the Gospel of the Kingdom then supposed to be imminent—but as an 'Everlasting Gospel'—an Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, not attended with the crash of empires and the convulsion of material things, but with the downfall of dogma and the upheavings of traditional theology—a coming of the Son of Man, not accompanied with the sound of the trumpet and the rush of angels, but in the
The Gospel of the Kingdom.

'power' of social regeneration and in the 'glory' of a new life—a Church of the future, recognising the moral teaching of Jesus as the most perfect rule of life and conduct, and the example of Jesus as the highest type of active and disinterested virtue presented to the imitation of mankind.

THE END.
By the same Author.

DANIEL,

OR

THE APOCALYPSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

(Williams and Norgate.)

'Recently have appeared two works on the subject, by Clergymen of the Church of England, maintaining different sides of the question: one by Professor Pusey, of Oxford, in Nine Lectures on "Daniel the Prophet;" written for an object in its nature apologetic or polemical, this work contains little valuable criticism and a good deal of the argumentum ad invidiad. The other work, "Daniel, or the Apocalypse of the Old Testament," written in the spirit of an earnest and cautious inquirer, is by Philip S. Desprez, B.D., Incumbent of Alvediston, Wilts, with an Introduction by Rowland Williams, D.D., London, 1865.'—Hebrew Prophets, vol. ii. p. 395. By George R. Noyes, D.D., Professor of Hebrew in Harvard University.

Von Lengerke's "Daniel" and Dr. Pusey's "Lectures" may be considered in respect of our entire book as the two authorities standing to each other in strongest antithesis. The view taken by Mr. Desprez occupies an intermediate and moderate position. . . . The readers of Mr. Desprez's popular and lucid exposition will probably find the difficulties in "Daniel" fewer than they expected.'—Introduction to Daniel. By Dr. Rowland Williams, pp. xxiv. xli.